



# Filipinas



MAY 2020

The Official Newsletter of the Filipino American Association of Pittsburgh, Inc.



## FAAP DAY OF GIVING: MAY 5, 2020

#GIVINGTUESDAY

Tuesday, May 5th is Giving Tuesday in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important now more than ever to support the Filipino American Association of Pittsburgh. Because FAAP events and fundraisers have been either postponed or cancelled, our main sources of revenue have been reduced. Donations from our members will help to sustain our association and allow the doors of the Philippine Center to reopen.

Please consider making a monthly donation to FAAP through one of the following methods:

1. **Facebook:** Search "FAAP The Filipino American Association of Pittsburgh" on Facebook, click Donate, then indicate One-Time or Monthly Donation and enter your payment method.
2. **FAAP website:** Go to [www.thefaap.org](http://www.thefaap.org), click Donate Online, then enter your payment and contact information in the form.
3. **By check:** Address check to "The Filipino American Association of Pittsburgh" and mail to FAAP Treasurer at 200 Church Street, West Mifflin, PA 15222.

With sincere gratitude, we thank you for your support during this tumultuous time. We hope and pray that our members are staying safe and sound!

## FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT

By Teodora Gaitte Schipper

Dear FAAP Members and Friends:

We have been very sad because we missed our activities, dance practice, Zumba and all the other events that we love. We missed all of you and the children. After the lockdown is lifted we look forward to seeing everybody at the Philippine Center.

With the Covid 19 pandemic the FAAP was not able to participate in the many fundraising activities that we normally do. The FAAP sponsors the Cultural Outreach, raises funds for charity abroad and in Pittsburgh. Recently we donated funds to the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank, Brother's Brother Foundation, Bethlehem Haven, Ronald McDonald House, Project Bundle up and The Queen of Peace orphanage in the Philippines. We sponsor various cultural, educational and charitable events like the annual 10K Race, Santacruzán, and Multicultural Event to promote Cultural Diversity just to name a few. This Sept. 12 we are sponsoring Cultural Outreach at the Philippine Center. If you need assistance in shopping, reach out to **YFAP Chair, Don Mike Mendoza, at [donmichael.mendoza@thefaap.org](mailto:donmichael.mendoza@thefaap.org)** or if you are facing hardship, please contact the **Charity Committee at [charity@thefaap.org](mailto:charity@thefaap.org)**.

Through the combined efforts of the FAAP, PAMS and PAPAG we dedicated the Philippine Nationality Room on June 9, 2019 at the Cathedral of Learning (Room 313) University of Pittsburgh as our lasting

legacy to our community. We are doubly proud that The FAAP realized our dream of having our very own Philippine Center after 40 years. The FAAP has renovated the building and parking lot, and we are currently seeking grants and donors for the Commercial Kitchen and the Stage,

Right now the FAAP faces new challenges on how to pay our utilities, maintenance, taxes and insurance. We need at least \$20,000 per year to cover these expenses. Consider donating \$5.00 or \$10.00 a month to help the FAAP pay the bills and accomplish its mission and vision. Please refer to the front page of the newsletter for three ways to donate.

Thank you very much for your donation. With your help we are surely investing in our lasting legacy. We will be able to weather the storm and keep our doors open. Mabuhay at maraming salamat po!  
If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,  
**Teodora Gaitte Schipper**  
Fundraising Committee Chair  
[teody.schipper@thefaap.org](mailto:teody.schipper@thefaap.org)

**Evelyn Abola**  
President  
[evelyn.abola@thefaap.org](mailto:evelyn.abola@thefaap.org)



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To the Members and friends of the FAAP,

We all have gone so far through six weeks of social distancing and state lockdown and in varying degrees have somehow survived this global assault. We all kept our faith and prayed like we have never prayed before for the safety of everyone, but the fact remains that as of today, April 28, 2020, there are 3.08M confirmed cases, 214K deaths worldwide, 1.02M confirmed cases, 57,962 deaths in the United States, 7,958 confirmed cases, 530 deaths in the Philippines and still counting.

Since the onset of the statewide lockdown, Don Michael Mendoza, Hannah Locop and the YFAP have offered to provide services in helping procure grocery needs and medication pickup for our homebound and senior members. Please avail of this invaluable service should you need it.

At the second quarter board meeting of the FAAP on April 18,2020, the board decided that inasmuch as charity is one of our pillars, the FAAP will in a small way extend our help to our members in need and donate to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Bethlehem Haven, Ronald McDonald House, Project Bundle up and Brother's Brother Foundation.

When this pestilence is over, after we have mourned for those who passed away, after we have given thanks and gratitude to those who have risked their lives and after we give thanks for those of us who have survived, I certainly hope that we all will look at our earthly existence in a different light.

That we will be kinder to Earth, our communal home, the only one we have. Mother Earth who has nurtured and provided us with all the means of survival all through the ages most definitely deserves to be cared for so much better than what we have globally done to her.

That after this crisis, we will look for what is best for everyone, regard and care for every human being with dignity and respect regardless of race, religion and beliefs.

That we shall see a movement from being so egocentric to being more egalitarian. It is not surprising that nine out of ten countries in the world with the highest happiness index are Scandinavian countries. The tenth country is New Zealand.

That it will dawn on us after this is over, that this crisis is telling us something ...

"Ingat" Take Care, Stay Safe and looking forward to the time when we can hug each other again ever so tightly,

**Evelyn Abola**  
President FAAP2020

# 2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jan. 4 Cavaliers Game  
Jan. 5 Q1 Board Meeting

Feb. 4 Miss Saigon  
Feb. 8 Valentine's Day Party

Mar. 21 Cancelled: Weirton Festival of Nations

Mar. 22 Cancelled: Pitt FSA Barrio  
Apr. 18 Q2 Board Meeting

May 10 Mother's Day Celebration  
May 16 Spring Cleaning

May TBD Western PA Conservancy Gardening

May TBD Bataan Death March, Memorial Walk, Wellsburg, WV

June 13 Independence Day  
Father's Day Celebration

June 20 Q3 Board Meeting

July 12 Summer Picnic

Aug. TBD McKeesport International Village Festival

Aug. 1 & 2 Moraine State Park Regatta

Sept. 12 Consular Outreach  
Sept. 13 Fall Classic  
Sept. 26 Dragon Boat Festival

Oct. 10 Halloween Party  
Oct. 23 Cancelled: Induction Ball

Nov. 8 Q4 Board Meeting  
Nov. 14 Multicultural Event

Dec. 12 Christmas Party  
Dec. TBD Christmas Carolling

\*FAAP will not be participating in festivals until proper determinations have been made by the state and the Center for Disease Control regarding social distancing and infections.

# 2020 CENSUS

Did you know the next census will take place in 2020? Responding to the Census is our civic duty and affects the allocation of funding for public resources, how we plan for the future, and our voice in government. What matters to you? Schools? Transportation? Hospitals? Data from the Census help inform planning efforts for Pittsburgh and the region.

Nationally, 1-in-5 Asian Americans may not be counted in the 2020 Census, according to the nonprofit Asian Americans Advancing Justice, meaning that our communities may receive one-fifth fewer resources over the next decade for programs like free and reduced school lunch, Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP (food stamps), and more. This underscores the importance of counting our families, friends and relatives in the 2020 Census.

Visit <https://my2020census.gov/> to fill out the Census online today.  
Dial 844-330-2020 to fill out the Census by phone in English.  
Dial 844-478-2020 to fill out the Census by phone in Tagalog.



COUNT US IN 2020

## The census allows you to respond in the comfort of your home!

The self-response portal is live NOW at [www.my2020census.gov](http://www.my2020census.gov).

You can respond online, by phone, or by mail via a paper form which you will get in mid-April.



COUNTUSIN2020.ORG

## REGISTER TO VOTE BY MAIL

The Pennsylvania state primary election has been moved to June 2, 2020. If you are eligible to vote, FAAP encourages its members to take part in the primary and general elections. Due to COVID-19, registering to vote by mail is the safest and most secure way to exercise your civic duty.

Register to vote, check your registration status, and sign up to vote by mail at <https://www.votespa.com/>. Apply to vote by mail by May 26, 2020.



## MEMBER ASSISTANCE

Social distancing is a proven method for limiting community spread of COVID-19. For some of us, this may also mean limited access to goods or services we may need. For members with limited mobility who would like assistance in grocery shopping, medication or supply deliveries, **please let us know by filling out this form** or emailing **YFAP Chair Don Michael Mendoza at [DonMichael.Mendoza@thefaap.org](mailto:DonMichael.Mendoza@thefaap.org)**. If you are a FAAP or YFAP member with access to a vehicle who would like to assist with deliveries, **please indicate your availability here**.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

Every so often, we run into someone or receive a phone call from friends regarding a serious illness, hospitalization, or demise of one of our members. Because we consider ourselves as one extended family and/or we may not hear of such events in a timely fashion, we would be very grateful if you would call or email us so we can get in touch with said individual or family members(s). It would be truly appreciated! Thank you so much.

Phone: 724-728-2296 • email: [charity@thefaap.org](mailto:charity@thefaap.org)



# MAY: ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

Check out these events hosted online by local nonprofit All for All to celebrate Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Pittsburgh.

- Join an online conversation on May 4th to learn about unique challenges faced by the AAPI community during the COVID-19 pandemic and how all Pittsburghers can be a part of the solution in combating hate.
- Watch Jasmine Cho's TedX Pittsburgh talk 'Cookies as a Form of Activism,' or read her book *Role Models Who Look Like Me: Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders Who Made History*.
- Get takeout from one of the Asian restaurants featured on this list from NEXT Pittsburgh.
- Sign up for a free Bystander Intervention Training to stop Asian/American and Xenophobic Harassment.
- Check out and share this compiled resource sheet for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander in-language resources on COVID-19.
- Stay tuned on the All for All facebook page for ongoing updates and resources throughout the month!

## SALITANG FILIPINO

Bulaklak - flower

Sakit - sick

Bahay - House

malusog - healthy

araw-araw - everyday

Halimbawa:

*Maging malusog araw-araw*

*Be healthy everyday*

# CHARITY COMMITTEE REPORT

By Jun Calejesan

## Ang Kommunidad

In 2014 the FAAP raised \$70,000 in aid to victims of the 2013 monster typhoon Haiyan. A portion of the funds, \$19,000, was issued in 2015 and 2016 to Ang Komunidad in order that it can continue its livelihood projects targeting two groups – a Fisherman's group in the village of Bislig and an Organic Farmer's group in the village of Cacao. View a summary presentation by Ang Komunidad of the things accomplished through the help of FAAP. Ang Komunidad deems the projects complete and proposes to channel the residual funds of about \$3,700.00 to another local affiliated Charity namely the "Five Loaves Two Fishes" (5L2F),

## Giving Locally During COVID-19

The charity committee will be donating a total of \$1,000 to local charities in support of local programs to aid those in need due to the COVID-19 crisis. The FAAP and YFAP have volunteered with each organization in the past, and we are proud to continue supporting them throughout this time.

*Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (\$600)*

*Bethlehem Haven (\$100)*

*Ronald McDonald House (\$100)*

*Project Bundle Up (\$100)*

*Brother's Brother Foundation (\$100)*

# SPORTS AND RECREATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

By Irna de Leon-Knapp

FAAP night at the Theater was a huge success! Recent shows included "MISS SAIGON" that included a pre-show private reception with FAAP and the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust as well as a post-show Meet & Greet with the cast in February. Early March included a night out with "THE BAND'S VISIT" as well as a Meet & Greet with the cast. COVID-19 put a halt in other activities during the quarantine period. For now we are still on for the annual Volleyball and Basketball Tournaments at the Summer Picnic in July and the 13th annual FAAP Fall Classic Race, September 13. Runners are encouraged to register online at [FAAP5KRace.yolosite.com](http://FAAP5KRace.yolosite.com). We hope to be able to plan a Pirates game, a summer concert, Kayaking, Liberty Magic show, Hamilton the Musical and other fun events. Any updates on current and future events will be announced as PA State guidelines for safe outings become permissible.



# CULTURAL COMMITTEE REPORT

By J. Delos Santos



The FAAP participated in the Lunar New Year parade in Squirrel Hill last March 1st. Due to the subsequent lockdown and stay-at-home order caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, events that the FAAP dance troupe (DT) are scheduled to perform have been canceled, such as the Festival of Nations in WV, the Pitt FSA event, and the EQT Children's Theater Festival. The regular Sunday practices of the DT have been suspended, and any DT plans or commitments for future events have been put on hold, pending lifting of the stay-at-home order and safe resumption of public gatherings. On a positive note, new tablets and stereo speakers have been acquired for the use of the DT. This will enable simultaneous practices for different Philippine folk dance routines.

# COMMITTEES IN ACTION

## YFAP

In February, the YFAP successfully hosted another Valentine's Day Party themed Roaring 20's in celebration of the new decade. Although it became the last in person gathering for the youth group, there is plenty for YFAP to look ahead to. YFAP Chair Don Michael Mendoza and YFAP President Jaimee Cabili want to invite YFAP Parents to a youth group check-in and discussion in May with the date and time to be announced on the FAAP social media pages. Together, they plan to work with Cultural Chair Junriz Delos Santos to see how educational opportunities and dance troupe gatherings can shift into an online format during the quarantine period. They will also seek out what youth group members interests are for future volunteer opportunities organized by the FAAP Charity Committee.

*Chair: Don Michael Mendoza*

*President YFAP: Jaimee Cabili*

## INDUCTION BALL

Due to the grave financial impact of Covid 19, the FAAP Board of Directors and the Induction Ball committee have decided to cancel the planned Oct. 23rd event at the Fairmont Hotel. We are watching the situation closely and will be planning a smaller, less costly and more intimate event in the fall of this year. We will keep everyone posted on the new date, venue and plan for this annual celebration and ceremony.

*Chair: Lani Mears*

# MEMBER STORIES



"After the terrifying shock and paralyzing fear that a very literally deadly pandemic was upon us, I asked myself, what are Jaime and I to do, what about our children, our "apos", our families, our friends, the FAAP?"

We were in the Philippines when the Corona virus hit the news by the third week of January. The Filipinos were ready, we already had N95 masks to protect them from possibly inhaling the volcanic particles of ash from Taal volcano's eruption that occurred January 12.

Our children pleaded that we return to Pittsburgh immediately because "it is safer here". We told them that we will avoid crowded places and if we do go to the malls we promised to use our N95 masks. We did not change our return schedule and arrived in Pittsburgh on February 27. We were surprised at Joji's birthday party the following day that people were still doing "beso-beso" and "mano-mano".

Shortly after that around March 12 came the University of Pittsburgh lockdown followed by the State. There was not one place in the world that could possibly be a safe haven. So, Jaime and I looked at each other and said, "now what"?

Like everyone else, we made a checklist:

1. Provisions - we had enough frozen stuff in the freezer to last us a couple months at least, hoarders like everyone else.
2. Paper and cleaning products - I admit I did buy a mega size package of toilet paper.
3. Sunday Mass obligation - Youtube to the rescue, we could choose whatever church in the world to hear mass. We even viewed the Easter Mass of Pope Francis in a virtually empty St Peter's Basilica.
4. What to do on a daily basis - we decided to tackle the things to do "when we came around to it" like the basement, garage, old children's clothes, clearing the house as if we were going to move. We also decided to take daily walks around our neighborhood and parks nearby. We were pleasantly surprised that we began to see things in nature that we were oblivious to before. That is my half glass full story.

Kidding aside, here is my half glass empty story: these are very difficult and trying times. Our individual freedoms severely curtailed, our movements very limited. We could not see our family members and our friends, my cleaning lady couldn't come. My one son who lives in Pittsburgh has refused to come inside our house since the lockdown for fear of exposing his parents who are in a high risk group. We were not able to see our grandchildren at Easter, had to cancel family reunions and trips already planned for the year, we even cancelled the 2019 FAAP induction ball. Of note, the FAAP however had its Q2 board meeting via ZOOM on April 18.

God willing, this too shall pass, keep on fervently praying ..... there is always Hope."

*Submitted by: Evelyn Abola, President*



"Quarantine is the best time to learn a new skill! Seth Baldosano-Walker from Sharpsburg, PA is learning how to cook. After binge-watching several seasons of Master Chef Junior, here he is making breakfast for the whole family. Order up!"

*Submitted by: Majo Bucao-Walker, FAAP*

"Riley and her brothers started taking piano lessons virtually. Their teacher is over 70 years old, and she's adjusted to this new way of teaching. The older kids have been helping me with home schooling since I work from home, and I am in meetings all day long. Grateful for their help!"



*Submitted by Lani Mears, Chair Induction Ball Committee*

"The Knapp & de Leon families are doing well during the COVID19 quarantine period. To keep us physically and mentally healthy, we constantly practice frequent hand-washing, disinfecting, good hygiene techniques, exercise daily, eat healthy meals, wear masks if we have to venture to Giant Eagle, follow social distancing guidelines and listen to weekly sermons from our church minister. We miss seeing our friends and families in person but thankful for the use of social media to stay in touch with each other. Our elderly parents remain healthy and are on Facebook Messenger for group chats with the rest of the family. Mark still works and recently helped a family become US Citizens. Inna works in the hospital, sees first hand the incredible challenges of how COVID19 patients are cared for by nurses, doctors, dietitians, respiratory therapists, and housekeeping staff. She advises everyone to comply with the quarantine guidelines. Aubrie was glad to come home from college, return from a Miami Beach spring break, to continue her college studies, now via online resources. She is a Musical Theater & Dance major at Pace University but has nick-named it "ZOOM" University. As parents, we are happy she is home to see and hear her do her homework (singing & dancing). Alexandra & Josh stay in their homes during the quarantine period. We were fortunate to have Josh come home safely to us for a brief visit and to safely return to his home in Denver. He is cautiously waiting for when his restaurant/catering business re-opens. Alexandra lives in New York City the epicenter of COVID19. She teaches online Yoga classes and keeps up with her dancing as her recent performance shows and productions are postponed. We are all healthy and safe. Peace and health to all of you!"

*Submitted by Inna de Leon-Knapp, Chair Sports & Recreation Committee*



"For all of us, Covid 19 Pandemic brought sadness and feelings of isolation. We, at the FAAP are uniting to go through the challenging time together. The economic toll is devastating. So most mornings when the weather is nice, I wake up and go out for a half an hour walk. I listen to the chirping of the birds, and I smell the wild flowers. Then I prepare a healthy breakfast, listen to the latest news. Later, I read books, write a poem or two. Sometimes I cook for a few friends and share some food with them.

In the afternoon, weather permitting David and I go to the Fox Chapel Yacht Club to walk, watch the ducks and Canadian Geese swimming freely. I love the water, it reminds me of Puerto Princesa City though the river is no comparison to Palawan's crystal clear ocean.

At night I spend time calling friends and family. It was so delightful to call, hear the voices of friends and FAAP members. It is a good feeling to know how happy my friends are when I call them once or twice a year just to stay connected. It leaves me feeling good that I am not alone. The kindness and affirmation uplifts my soul and spirit. My grandchildren and I spend more time now sharing our thoughts, ideas and vision for the future. All five of them take turns on Facetime. They asked me to write my memoir, so I am having a great time doing just that. Likewise, I am eager to be with my son Marcel and Steph, his fiancée, who does all the shopping for me and David.

I express my gratitude to God for my friends and all His blessings. To all my three sons and grandchildren for helping feed the volunteers, provide financial and moral support to all his Deaf & Mute employees, staff and volunteers in the city. My oldest son Eric has turned his KA INATO restaurant into a "Community Kitchen" cooking food and distributing food to most of the volunteers, the Red Cross, stranded students at the Palawan State University, and the Orphanage in the city.

I also find time to help solicit, write grants and fundraise for the FAAP's Commercial Kitchen and stage. With Covid 19 the FAAP was not able to participate in the many fundraising activities that we normally do. I hope you will join me and give a small monthly recurring donation to the FAAP this coming FAAP Day of Giving May 6 Tuesday. You will be surprised by how energetic and stronger we feel in helping others. Above all, I feel deeply proud of what we can accomplish together this year. Looking forward to seeing you during the Joint Multicultural Event, FAAP Dance Recital and Fundraising Birthday Dinner on Nov. 14 (my 76th birthday) Saturday at the Philippine Center. Maraming salamat po."

*Submitted by Teodora Schipper Speer*

## NEW & RETURNING MEMBERS



*By Fanny Spanos*

Innah Abesmasis  
Marla Manangan  
Bryan Torralba  
Rae Krellner  
Andrew McElwaine  
Michael, Charise, and Sam Fashho

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

We hope that you, your families and your friends in the U.S., the Philippines and abroad remain safe and well. It is now more important than ever to remain connected with each other. The newsletter is just one way in which we do so. For this edition, we unfortunately were unable to provide printed copies to our members during quarantine. We apologize for any inconvenience. In anticipation of reuniting in-person, we hope that you continue to donate to the FAAP and the Philippine Center. Thank you for your support and your readership!

## OBITUARIES

*By Evelyn Abola*

We are saddened by the passing of two members of the FAAP:  
**Letty Perez and Cecile Castro.**

Cecille Espiritu Castro age 77, born in Manila, passed away February 6, 2020. Cecille and her husband Phil Castro were members of the then SPNP. Their children, Giancarlo, April and Kimberly were active members of the Filipino dance troupe.

Leticia "Letty" Basco Perez age 82, born in Pampanga, passed away on February 3, 2020. Letty and her husband Fred were active members of the then SPNP. She was a certified Montessori Teacher and in her later years volunteered for the Notre Dame service in Lourdes. She is survived by her husband Fred and her children, Gerry, Gilbert, current president of PAMS, and Gemma.

## FAAP OFFICERS BOARD MEMBERS 2020

Jaime Abola  
Cora Bakth  
Jaimee Cabili  
Jun Calejesan  
Irna de Leon-Knapp  
Junriz Delos Santos  
Rowena Lavador  
Lani Mears  
Don Michael Mendoza  
Becky Quemado  
Teodora Schipper Speer

### NEWSLETTER STAFF

#### EDITOR

Hannah Locop

#### Assistant Editors

Evelyn Abola  
Jun Calejesan

#### Layout & Graphics

Theresa Dzugan  
[www.theresadesigner.com](http://www.theresadesigner.com)

#### Contributors

Evelyn Abola • Majo Bucayo-Walker  
Jaimee Cabilli • Junriz Delos Santos  
Theodora Gaité Schipper  
Irna Knapp • Lani Mears  
Don Michael Mendoza  
Fanny SpanosAnna • Sheila Worthington

We welcome input from our readers. For consideration of print publication, please send an email to [newsletter@thefaap.org](mailto:newsletter@thefaap.org). Letters, comments, and articles will be edited for accuracy, clarity and length and should be in keeping with the FAAP Mission. All submissions should include the full name of the sender as well as contact information. Due to space constraints, we are unable to print items that are non-FAAP related. If you have related short news items, please consider for publication in FAAP Balita. Send an email to [balita@thefaap.org](mailto:balita@thefaap.org).

#### PUBLISHER

Filipino American Association  
of Pittsburgh, Inc