

The Louisiana

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BEdS MAKES HISTORIC WIN IN LANTERN PARADE '24

COVERStory

🔥 Cajucom, M., Zabala, F., Rosas, I.

“Our team planned to ensure that the Venezuelan spirit of Catholic identity would be presented to the public, and it would showcase the strength of Basic Education School.”

Baguio City, Philippines – Saint Louis University - Basic Education School (BEdS) captured its historic championship win in the 16th Saint Louis University Lantern Parade on December 1, 2024, held at Session Road and Melvin Jones Grandstand, making it the school's first-ever Championship title in one of Baguio's renowned events during the yuletide season.

Along with the Championship Title, BEdS also received a cash prize worth Php50,000 and various awards in multiple categories, such as "Best Rhythmic Accompaniment" and "Eco-Lantern Innovation Award;" in addition to the awards given, they also bagged the "Best Field Performance" and received the second runner-up for the "Best Street Performance" under minor awards category.

In addition, the School of Nursing, Allied Health, and Biological Sciences (SONAHBS) received the first runner-up, as well as minor awards, including "Best Street Performance" and first runner-up in "Best Field Performance;" furthermore, they also received special awards, which are the "Most Disciplined Group," "Most Colorful Group," and "Best in Illumination."

The School of Medicine (SOM) clinched the title as the second runner-up. It was also declared 2nd in the "Best Field Performance;" meanwhile, the School of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts earned the 1st Runner-Up award in "Best Street Performance."

The significant people behind the outstanding performance of the BEdS team were Mr. Sandy Selga, who supervised the choreography, and Mrs. Marivic Macadaeg, who supervised the musical accompaniment.

The 2024 Lantern Parade showcased various countries with unique Christmas celebration all around the globe and unify the spirit of cultural unity through its theme, 'Missio et Excellentia: Championing Sustainability, Promoting Inclusive Education, Pioneering Education,' wherein competing participants embodied and represented the following countries: Basic Education School (BEdS) - Venezuela, School of Nursing, Allied Health and Biological Sciences (SONAHBS) - Iceland, School of Medicine (SOM) - the United Kingdom, School of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts (STELA) - Austria, School of Engineering and Architecture (SEA) - Netherlands, and School of Accountancy, Management Computing and Information Studies (SAMCIS) - The Vatican.

SLU BEDS VICTORIOUS IN MATHEMATICAL OLYMPIADS, EMERGES IN GOLD, SILVER, AND BRONZE

🔥 Cabanilla, H.

Math Olympiads Training League Inc. (MOTU) contestants from Saint Louis University Basic Education School (SLU-BEdS) emerged once again and won medals at the Thailand Mathematical Olympiad (TIMO) and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Mathematical Olympiad (HKBBB), held on October 27 and December 1, 2024, respectively.

Eight Louisiana leaguers at TIMO brought home medals; Felix Francis Sison secured a gold medal, closely followed by Jon Nathan Ladimo with a silver medal. Chris Lorenz Bautista, Athena Evangelista, Dionel Jude Aquino, Gabriel Unah Bautista, Jaysen Larie Rosana, and Francis De Guzman each earned bronze medals, adding to SLU's Olympic triumph.

"One thing that motivated me was the excitement of earning gold medals from international competitions. It was also fun and thrilling since I was accompanied by my fellow grade 12 students from the honors list, and that made me strive to review more," said Sison.

Following this major win, Louisiana HKBBB mathematicians also displayed notable success as Jemriel John Parlan joined Sison on the gold podium, while Evangelista, Aquino, Rosana, and De Guzman earned silver medals. They were joined by Phoebe Sabangan, Carl Inso, Xavier Apigo, Clyde Viray, John Revilla, and Hiramishi Santos, lastly, Alexandra Garcia earned a bronze medal, rounding out the team's achievements.

"During training, I didn't have much confidence in myself, so I was shocked and happy when the winners were announced. I couldn't sleep after. To those who want to compete in international olympiads, don't hesitate. Step out of your comfort zone, and just try," Parlan shared in an interview.



Numerical Breakdown

The breakdown student population of Saint Louis University Laboratory High School - Senior High per strand.

1430

Total Population

144

ABM Students

180

HUMSS Students

1106

STEM Students



Trump Declares Illegal Immigration a 'National Emergency', Pushes Mass Deportation

BORROME0, E.



22 January 2025 — US President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order declaring a national emergency to address the crisis in the U.S. Southern Border after a four-year surge in illegal immigration.

Said executive order commands the Secretary of

Defense to send additional military presence in the Southern Border, including the Armed Forces and the National Guard.

"As commander-in-chief, I have no higher responsibility than to defend our country from threats and invasions, and that is exactly what I am

going to do," said Trump in his inaugural speech, fortifying his commitment to mass deportation of immigrants.

From fiscal year 2021 to 2024, an unprecedented 8.72 million border encounters have taken place at the southern border, resulting in about 550,000 children

SLU Marching Band

ROSAS, I.

CLANGS Pagalingan '24

Saint Louis University (SLU) Marching Band secured the Championship title in the Pagalingan 2024: Marching Band Competition held at Polo, Valenzuela, as a part of the celebration of the Feast of San Diego de Alcalá last November 12, 2024.

Besides the Championship title, the SLU Marching Band also received a cash prize worth Php 100,000, and they also bagged three out of five special awards, specifically the 'Best Color Guards,' 'Best Majorettes,' and 'Best Uniform.'

They contended against Banda 85 Sta. Maria Bulacan Inc. from Bulacan, Angono Wind Ensemble Inc. from Angono, Rizal, and Banda Kabyaw Inc. from Cabaio, Nueva Ecija but settled with the 1st-runner-up with a cash prize of Php 80,000, the 2nd-runner-up with a

cash prize of Php 70,000, and the 3rd-runner-up with a cash prize of Php 60,000, respectively. Additionally, the Banda 85 Sta. Maria Bulacan Inc. also received awards in the 'Best Drum Major' and 'Best Music.'

"For our victory, it means hard work, cooperation, and discipline. All of us had really worked hard for it," Band Master Ma'am Marivic Macadaeg shared. She also stated that "discipline" made the SLU Marching Band achieve victory because, despite the cancellation of classes during the preparation and the hot weather at the competition venue, all band members still gave an outstanding performance.

The Marching Band began preparing for the Lantern Parade on December 1, which will be held in Baguio City, Session Road, where thousands will watch this awaited annual event.

Photo by: Macadaeg, M.

Music of Champions. SLU Marching Band in Pagalingan 2024 held at Polo, Valenzuela last November 12, 2024

BORROME0, E.

Gaza War Ceasefires after 15 months of Genocide

19 January 2025 — Israeli regime and Palestinian nationalist Hamas agreed to a ceasefire deal, marking a stalemate in the 15-month war since the Israeli forces launched an invasion in the Gaza Strip.

This ceasefire is the result of pressure directed to Israel by citizens across the world led by Palestinians in Gaza. This movement of justice garnered support from people in different countries.

Countries that mediated in the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel were Qatar,

Egypt, and the United States.

Agreed ceasefire was broken down in three phases, with Phase 1 initiating the halt and Phases 2 and 3 to proceed after 42 days.

Phase 1 included the release of 33 hostages from Hamas and 30 imprisoned Palestinians for each Israe-

li civilian and 50 for each female soldier, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip, and the return of Palestinians to homes.

Phase 2 would be signaled by the release of remaining hostages by Hamas, followed by Phase 3 where bodies of deceased hostages

in Gaza will be exchanged for bodies of deceased Palestinian fighters.

However, it was noted that if a deal is not reached as to how Gaza will be governed within the first 42 days, the Israeli regime could resume its genocide in the Gaza Strip.

#SANAMAgtulungan Raises Funds for Typhoon Victims

NARCISO, J.

From July to December 2024, Saint Louis University - Senior High, Sanggunian ng mga Nagkakaisang Mag-aaral (SANAMA) has raised thousands of pesos in monetary and in-kind donations in support of relief efforts to typhoon victims and local charities according to the transparency report that was released last December 31, 2024, through SANAMA's official social media pages.

The organization spearheaded a fundraising campaign last July for those affected by Typhoon Carina,

collecting a total of Php 1700, with Php 1000 donated to the San Beda Student Council and Php 700 given to the Kabataan Partylist to aid their respective operations.

During Typhoon Kristine, SANAMA mobilized resources and obtained Php 4263.60 in monetary and in-kind donations. Of which, Php 2100 was donated to Kabataan Partylist, while the rest went to Kaya Natin Youth! Moncada. SANAMA was also one of the 15 organizations that joined forces in packing relief goods at the Cordillera Youth Center to be given to typhoon victims.

They were also a partner organization of the National Union

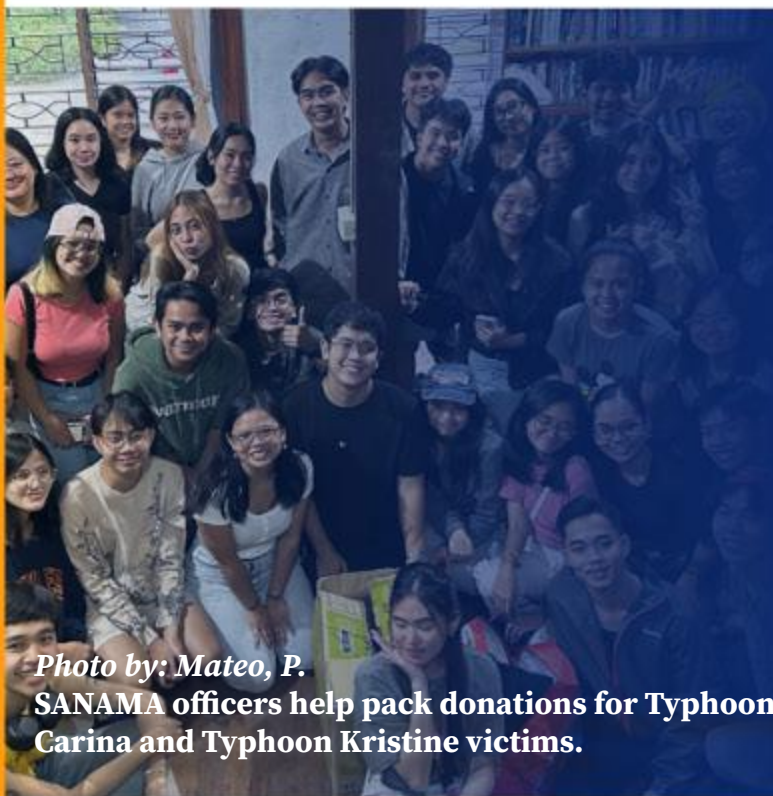
of Students in the Philippines (NUSP) and Tulong Kabataan (TK) in the national initiative Campus 2 Communities (C2C) to assist those affected by Typhoon Pepito.

In December, SANAMA launched Secret Santa, where they earned a total of PHP 4000, and the proceeds were donated to the SLU SHS Social Science Club, which funded the gift-giving event the club along with SAMAFIL (Samahan ng Mag-aaral na Filipino) and the Young Entrepreneurs' Club (YEC) organized for the Regional Haven for Women and Girls in Baguio City.

In its posted transparency report, the organization extended its heartfelt gratitude towards the Louisiana student

Photo by: Mateo, P.

SANAMA officers help pack donations for Typhoon Carina and Typhoon Kristine victims.



YEC features SHS Entrepreneurs in University Week, Profits 100K

ANDROY, R.

Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) received a P35 billion budget from the national government's funds for infrastructure development and road connectivity, contributing to the region's improvement, said by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)-Cordillera director, Khadaffy Tanggol, last January 29, 2025.

The budget allocated for the different road improvement projects, such as road opening, road paving, bridge improvement and maintenance, has been approved for the CAR.

"For 2025, we have allocated P35 billion for our capital expenditure in the form of infrastructure, roads, (and) bridges that make traveling comfortable," Tanggol said in the media interview.

In addition, Tanggol showed his gratitude to the national government for regularly acknowledging the needs of the region and importance of road connectivity.

"Nakakakuha naman tayo parati ng magandang budget kahit maliit na region tayo," Tanggol said.

According to the data of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Tanggol mentioned that the region's development increased by 6.9 percent in 2023 because of the road construction and development which helped the daily lives of the people.



Koro Luwisyano Debuts as Champions at 16th BCC Chorale Contest

BORROMEO, E.

Photo by: Jose, J.

Born for the Stage. Koro Luwisyano's debut performance for the Baguio Inter School Chorale Contest hosted by Baguio Country Club, December 15, 2024.

In the limelight of veterans, Koro Luwisyano sang victoriously and was hailed as the champion in its debut performance at the 16th Baguio Country Club (BCC) Inter-School Chorale Competition at the Baguio Country Club, Baguio City on December 15, 2024.

Koro Luwisyano won against eight other schools around Baguio City in the senior high school category, beating

pioneers in the field despite competing for the first time.

Its warm-up piece "Kumukutikutitap" and standout rendition of "Ang Magandang Parol" among the rest of the contenders was the one that set the spotlight to Koro Luwisyano.

Jayloumae Jose, the President of Koro Luwisyano, said that the highlight of the performance was the moment the chorale

have expressed the feelings they meant to convey to the audience, followed by the relief they felt once the competition was over.

"I was very shocked because although we have hopes for our choir, we didn't expect to be hailed as champions as the other contenders like the [Baguio] City High [School] were very established. But when we heard our name, it's ecstatic," shared Jose on the winning of the chorale.

Jose anticipates the Louisian community for future performances of Koro Luwisyano inside the school, and hoping for another opportunity to compete outside.

Koro Luwisyano was recently established during the academic year 2024-2025 and became the official student chorale of the Saint Louis University Basic Education School - Senior High.

CCW's LANDAS Career Orientation Guides Students for Future Endeavor

ROSAS, I. & OFRASIO, A.

Center for Counseling and Wellness (CCW) organized an informative Career Orientation for Grade 12 Senior High Students at Charles Peter Covered Court, last January 28, 2024, in which they listened to the educational lectures from university teachers of Saint Louis University (SLU), wherein it will help them to decide on their future career path.

All schools of the SLU

discussed during the symposium were: School of Engineering and Architecture (SEA), School of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts (STELA), School of Medicine (SOM), School of Nursing, Allied Health, and School of Accountancy, Management, Computing, and Information Studies (SAM-CIS)

Meanwhile, the guest speakers invited were: Ma'am Daphne C. Leal from SEA, Dr. Mary Pauline E. Namoca and Dr. Teresita Ignacio from STELA, Dr. Ma. Margot Flor Yasay and

a 2nd year medical student, Mr. Caleb Chung from SOM, Dr. Mariflor Valdez-Valbuena, Ma'am Rachel Cacho Alfonso, Mr. Christopherson P. Mata, Ma'am Crislena D. Feleciano, Mr. Cydrick Jhan L. Vito Cruz, and Ma'am Jennifer T. Buya from SONAHBS, and Ma'am Jennifer T. Buya from SAMCIS.

The theme of the career orientation, LANDAS: Tungo sa Paglikha ng Makabuluhang Kinabukasan, helped the Grade 12 students to determine their future career.



Photo by: Venturozo, K.

Dr. Ma. Margot Flor Yasay from the School of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts (STELA) gave her talk during the career orientation on January 28, 2025.

Clubs Extend Gifts to Women's Shelter

VALENCIA, A.

On December 19, 2024, the Social Science Club of Saint Louis University Basic Education School - Senior High (SLU BEdS - SHS), along with SANAMA, SAMAFIL, and the Young Entrepreneurs' Club, launched the "Ako si Santa" initiative, delivering gifts to the Regional Haven for Women and Girls in Baguio City—the event aimed to spread hope and offer Louisians a chance to give back to the community.

The students gave various items, including towels, sweet treats,

and books, touching the hearts of the residents. Ms. Rojhelia An Marie S. Claur, Head of the Rehabilitation Center, Regional Haven for Girls and Women DSWD CAR, expressed deep gratitude for the students' generosity and welcomed the Louisians to return for future initiatives.

The "Ako si Santa" event brought holiday cheer and underscored the importance of community involvement. It serves as a reminder of the power of collective efforts and the spirit of giving.



'Paskong Hilaga' Lights Up Navy Base Campus

AMANSEC, D.

The Sanggunian ng Mga Nagkakaisang Mag-aaral/United Student Council (SANAMA/USC) of the Saint Louis University Basic Education School (SLU BEdS) Junior and Senior High School lit up the Navy Base Campus with the grand campus lighting event, 'Paskong Hilaga,' held last December 6, to kick off the holidays.

Students cheered as they watched the dance performances and a creative roleplay of the Nativity of Jesus Christ by the Society of Performing Arts (SPA), followed by free-for-all holiday games and activities.

The program also featured Koro Luwisyano, the official chorale of SLU BEdS, as students marked their stage debut with a Filipino classic ren-

dition of "Kumukutikutitap." Louisians then gathered excitedly as Mr. Alejandro Pablico, principal of SLU BEdS, led the countdown of the lighting ceremony with glimmering Christmas lights and a grand fireworks display, accompanied by multiple serenades from the SPA band.

Throughout the event, free treats, such as coffee, sopas, dirty ice cream, and binatog, were handed out to the audience.

Additionally, students strolled around to check out the junior high school merch stall and multiple vendors selling cotton candy, twinkling headbands, and lighting balloons stationed at the open court.

Assistant to the Principal

Mrs. Lorna Lucas finally closed the ceremony with her expression of joy and gratitude for the Louisians' joint efforts and participation, supported by the Teachers and Employees Association (TEA) and the Prefects of Student Affairs, Mrs. Arlene Dacanay and Mrs. Maricris Tolentino.



Photo by: Brub, J.

A night of lights and laughs. SANAMA spearheaded the tree lighting event of SLU-BEdS held in Navy Base Campus Open Court last December 06, 2024.

National Book Month: Literature Breaks Down Barriers

OFRASIO, A.

The month of November welcomes The National Book Month, a time dedicated to appreciating the wonders the literature has brought to society — The National Book Month encourages readers of all ages to pick up a book and rediscover learning especially in the digital age, breaking the barrier between traditional literature and digital literature.

The Philippines marks National Book Month with various events, including the Na-

tional Book Week celebration at Saint Louis University Basic Education School Senior High School, which featured activities such as Trailer Making, Haiku Writing, Slogan Making, and Trivia Games under the theme "Magbasa, Mangarap, Magdiwang".

The National Book Month, celebrated throughout November, encourages readers of all ages to rediscover the joy of learning and appreciate the wonders of literature in both traditional and digital forms.

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A

Editorial

FLATLINING NATION

AMANSEC, D.

Amidst the overcrowded emergency rooms, a wound sulks and festers deep, untreated, and left to rot — a cut that no stitch can mend. In this day and age, when the scars of the healthcare system are only blissfully ignored, and the exodus of world-class Filipino nurses dramatically drains the hallways of our educational institutions, it is time to afford the question: How much more of our own blood are we willing to lose before the nation flatlines in front of us?

The Philippines is known for being a top global exporter of nurses, feeding the prevailing demand for world-class care. A 2021 estimate revealed that 51 percent of licensed Filipino nurses, or a gigantic number of 316,000, had left to work in foreign countries. It is a word of pride to witness firsthand this legacy of sending out healing hands everywhere at the same time that they bring approximately \$8 billion to the economy annually. However, while it is comforting to see them catch the lure of secure workspaces and comfortable salaries in exchange for their priceless dedication, it is a shame to us for standing idly as they succumb to grunt work here, waiting until they realize that their overworked and underpaid talent at home is welcomed dearly with a red carpet in a stranger country.

Ironically, the Philippines is facing its own growing shortage of about 127,000 nurses as of 2023, a number expected to nearly double by 2030. Among the related sentiments of these Filipino health workers are meager wages, delayed benefits, and job precarity. With this precedent, the choice is one and the same: Training educated nurses and teaching them to think critically and competitively will obviously point them down the road they deserve to walk, where they do not need to sacrifice their respective lives to save the nation's.

Now, the burden is bound to hit us wide open, collapsing under the weight of its neglect. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic is a wake-up example, revealing the fragility of our healthcare system in the absence of reforms: Patient-to-nurse ratios were

imbalanced, public hospitals had hit rock bottom, a lack of personal protective equipment put everyone at immense risk, and at least two resignations were penned every week, so patients were assigned to overworked front liners and fresh graduates. This culture has been cultivated even after the pandemic in exchange for entry-level pay in the Philippines — one of the lowest in Asia — comparable to cents worth in foreign shores.

What makes this crisis even more tragic is that the Filipino minds have painstakingly trained nurses to be excellent and outstanding, just for them to have no choice but to work overseas. It is only questionable on our end that the same cradle of care we have invested in them abruptly stops as soon as they exit the university hallways, leaving them to fend for themselves in harsh realities. So, to cope with this turn of tables, nurses have treated educational institutions as their taxicab instead, a simple, direct ticket to a better future non-existent in the streets where their roots have grown. This foresight has thus created a more competitive wave of admissions in nursing, mainly because they wish to join the assembly line of employees with one foot already out the door.

In Saint Louis University alone, its School of Nursing, Allied Health, and Biological Sciences (SLU-SONAHBS) bagged the 3rd Top Performing School in the November 2024 Philippine Nurses Licensure Examination with an exemplary passing rate of 99.64%. Six out of its 280 new nurses are topnotchers. While congratulations are in order and the proud tarpaulins are printed,

these numbers will not matter if the country cannot pick itself up and cater to them with as much pride as the day they first stepped into nursing school. Until then, we can only study how to accept the accompanying repercussions of losing them to better workplace conditions miles away, a decision for which we do not have the right to put them at fault.

As a response, the government has institutionalized policies, although only met with frustration and bitterness. For instance, deployment bans to restrict nurses from seeking opportunities abroad and issuing temporary licenses for those who almost passed the licensure examination have become in the works. In this sense, the government's so-called "quick wins" are, as they claim, simply quick, fleeting, and hollow — a half-done stitch to the wound of this pressing issue. These actions prove that for so long as we cannot dignify the nursing profession in our nation by stopping the hemorrhage we have caused, it is pointless to build them up just to push them away in the end.

It would be an understatement of a threat to say the Philippines should start panicking because how we train our nurses as mere economic exports more than a backbone of our society will soon bite us with bliss while the rest of the world will rejoice in what we have taken for granted. It is high time to finally realize the life and the pride we are losing because a wound left open this long will eventually leave us with nothing to resuscitate — no pulse, no lifeline — only the corpse of a nation and its legacy that killed it.

VALENCIA, A.

Students brave different life challenges daily to get where they want to be. Education has long been celebrated and deemed a bridge toward a bright future and vast opportunities, a tool that breeds national progress. However, over the years, the Philippines has continued to face issues regarding education because, despite the continuous and vigorous efforts to produce globally competent students, the country still finds itself submerged below the rankings. In the Philippines, 47,612 public and 12,861 private schools are nested, indicating that the nation lacks educational institutions. This factor, along with many others, sparked debates regarding the issue.

One remarkable argument is the inadequate funding for the education sector. Funding is a determining factor in having a high-quality and accessible education. Funds put books on the shelves, chairs in the

classroom, and the classrooms themselves on the school grounds, so what more than a sufficient budget can undoubtedly boost the country's current educational stage at this moment in time? Countries such as Switzerland, Denmark, Germany, and

Finland exemplify this claim by allocating between four percent and six percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as

suggested by international organizations.

The recent results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) released by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in December 2023 are a loud cry for increased educational funds. According to the assessment, the Philippines lagged behind most of the world for five to six years of education. This data shows that Filipino students do not achieve the learning competencies of international standards. Compared to our Asian neighbors like Singapore, Vietnam, and Malaysia, the results are the uncomfortable truth of

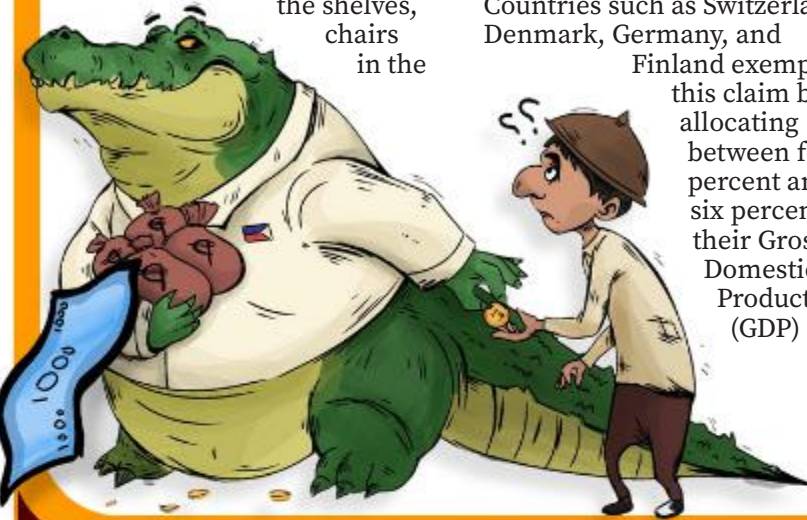
our country's system.

Arguably, funds are not the issue regarding the quality of education. Citing the 2022 PISA results, Vietnam outperformed Malaysia despite the latter's higher spending on education. However, Vietnam spends 13,800 dollars per student while the Philippines spends 11,000; the difference between the 2,800 dollars per student is not much, yet Vietnam scored more than 100 points on all core subjects. Such an instance sparks the question: What is the Philippines doing wrong?

Even though the 1987 constitution mandates the Department of Budget and Management (DPM) to allocate the most prominent and highest budget in the

education sector, it feels like it is never enough. The inadequate funding of the education sector takes form in the deteriorating classrooms, the lack of learning resources, and the low slots of admissions that state universities could cater to. Students became victims of mismanaged funds; students are being robbed of the future they desire.

Education is a bridge towards a brighter future, and we have seen how it progresses a nation. Therefore, it is time for the Philippines to listen to the upholders of our hopes and dreams, to invest in those who truly matter—our students who will soon lift the country up.



Editorial

Resilience is Bliss

AMANSEC, D.

After a telltale of resilience during the six consecutive typhoons that hit us the previous year, we are now right in the eye of another one — this time, not of torrential winds and heavy rains, but of the deep-seated education crisis, where classrooms are lacking, the paint is peeling, and the Philippines, like a kid stuck on crutches, clings to the unsung hero of Brigada Eskuwela that it is. But, in an era where resources are stretched thin, where armchairs creak when moved, and yet confidential funds usher in while the rest of the country drenches, what is there for those upholding the spirit of Bayanihan if all we are bound to do is mop the floors under a roof that still leaks?

The sorry situation of education in the country is no secret. In Vice President Sara Duterte's 2023 Basic Education Report, she cited infrastructure as the most pressing issue in the sector. In fact, out of 327,851 school buildings across the nation, 89,252 required significant repairs, and 21,727 were set for condemnation. Only about half of the intended classrooms were also built; thus, the previous academic year was opened with an extreme lack of facilities, not to mention the insufficiency of the most basic learning materials pupils needed. With this precedent, children continue to be at the crossfire, stepping into the warzone to face the consequences we set up for them.

Welcome to Brigada Eskuwela: the Department of Education's (DepEd) annual school maintenance event and countermeasure since 2003, where stakeholders—students, teachers, parents, and private companies—pool their resources to replenish school materials, repair rooms and chairs, and beautify, especially the public institutions. It is, in fact, the perfect shelter program from rain, a testament to the classically untethered resilience in our barangays. Two weeks before the first day of classes, community members would gather to prepare basic school supplies, repaint furniture, decorate rooms, and clean up with the support of private organizations and local governments. After all, Filipinos were not joking when they said it does take a village to raise a child.

The problem? Brigada Eskuwela might have just burned bridges more than it has built. Just when it hits us that complacency is indeed the worst enemy, the program has turned against its very own purpose, becoming a double-edged sword for authorities to shirk governmental duty and shy away from the masses' rights to be served enough government budget to rebuild the long-term issues of the education sector. Ironically, while the Constitution mandates the most significant portions of our funds be allocated to education, the recently signed 2025 national budget has just further narrowed down the funding for state universities and computerization programs, and the investigation on

confidential funds continues to be cut off. The next Brigada Eskuwela will certainly never hear the end of it.

As bitter as it is to see political faces plastered on government ayuda during disasters, the same logic applies to this program, where photograph shutters have never been as loud. One would not be surprised to see a malnourished armchair, a brown paint roller, and the Marcos-Duterte administration in one picture because there it is. Recently, two cities have also utilized the event as a struggle for power, as Makati and Taguig both pulled strings on their ends by going full-on with the implementation of Brigada Eskuwela to let citizens know which authority is really in control, leaving teachers and parents confused.

Public education is given a hopeful chance for at least the first two weeks before the rust behind the paint inevitably resurfaces. From there, the same long-standing issues will persist unaddressed and patched up: the exodus of Filipino teachers, the miseducation of public school students, and a two-decade classroom shortage, among others. Worse, the idea of Bayanihan is misdirected, placing more pressure on those who step up than those in power. Hence, it is time to demand lasting solutions, not temporary fixes. Pushing for actual investments in public education, calling out government inaction, and addressing the gaps in more transparent budget allocation must be done so the nation can prepare for a system that opens its arms wide for the students.

Having tales of resilience to tell is a badge of honor not everyone can claim—a strength forged in nights of studying under flickering candlelight, and meals scraped together from what little remains on the table. Yet, while we take pride in this enduring spirit ready to bear all storms, let us remember: resilience is not always bliss; it is not right to stay silent, mopping the floors beneath a roof that still leaks simply because we have learned to embrace the downpour.

For the People, not the Few

OFRASIO, K.

The University of the Philippines (UP), often regarded as the nation's premier university, is a mark of academic excellence and one of the top producers of the country's top leaders and innovators. Aside from its prestige, it is crucially a public institution offering free tuition fees funded by the republic's taxpayers. In recent years it has found itself in boiling water due to new data revealing that its typical student is from the upper class, raising public questions about academic equity and accessibility.

Like other state universities, UP was mostly established to provide higher education to the broader public. With tuition fees waived, one might expect UP to have a diverse range of students differing in socioeconomic status. However, reality seems to differ as 72% of its students belong to the A and B income brackets. While UP's admission policies do not specifically discourage the well-off, it is only arguable that their enrollment at the university is in conflict with the institution's mission to serve the Filipino masses.

UP cannot be entirely blamed for this issue, but the role of privilege cannot be overlooked. While it is free, being admitted in is a strenuous feat. The University of the Philippines College Admission Test (UPCAT) is one of the most competitive tests in the country. Only the brightest of the nation's youth can qualify for its highly selective examinations, with only 10% to 15% of applicants passing each year. Unfortunately, the brightest often overlap with the privileged. Thanks to their vast access to elite private schools, advanced resources, and review programs, they have a significant advantage in the grueling UPCAT process compared to those from lower-income households.

This does not mean that the marginalized are not bright or lack competence; rather, they are left to compete with far fewer tools at their disposal. With the UPCAT heavily reliant on proficiency in these areas, students with better access to facilities and resources are expected to have an advantage. But with many public schools suffering from inadequate resources, outdated equipment, overcrowded classrooms, and poorly maintained facilities, the barrier just thickens further between social classes.

This then points to a larger systemic issue: the government's failure to provide access to quality education for all. Education is a tool to bridge the gap between social classes, but the economically disadvantaged are consistently being left behind. This can be seen in the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment, where private schools had higher scores than public schools in reading, scientific, and mathematical literacy.

With stark inequalities present at the time, UP should bridge the gap between them. It is high time to adopt a more equitable and inclusive admission system. This is not an urge for the institution to compromise its standard for inclusivity's sake but rather a call to ensure a just admission process. At the same time, the government is to be held accountable for its responsibility to ensure quality education across the country. Education holds the future of the youth, and the future of our country. Therefore we must assure that it is accessible to Filipinos of all walks of life.

While UP does not promise itself as an institution exclusively for the marginalized, it misses a crucial point: UP is not the only premier university in the country. For the affluent, UP is just one of their many options; they have access to other universities offering the same, if not better, quality education. Their privilege affords them the freedom to choose wherever opportunity calls, unconstrained by

financial limitations.

As for the underprivileged, UP and other state universities are often their lifeline to attain higher education. When these slots are taken by those who are capable of affording alternatives, what happens to these students who have nowhere else to turn? Where will they go now?

This is not to question the competence of affluent UPCAT passers. True, UP is an institution dedicated to shaping and exerting the fullest out of the youth's "cream of the crop". However, we fail to see that UP is not merely a prestigious institution; it is a public university funded by the nation's taxpayers — the people.

It is time to ask: for whom does UP truly exist? The answer should always be clear—it is and must remain, a university for the people. We should not let the promise of "iskolar ng bayan" become hollow. The term is rooted in the idea that UP students represent and come from the Filipino masses. They are funded by the people, and they belong to the people.



Editorial

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

As I write this letter, I am staring at the last newspaper you have released. I can't believe it is already another newspaper writing season. The Louisiana shows me the angles of the school grounds I could have easily ignored. You capture emotions in photographs, drawings, and articles so we Louisians can relive the experience repeatedly.

As your works reach beyond the lobby and into the hands of a wider audience, they will touch lives just as profoundly as they have touched mine. Your passion and artistry preserve our school's memories and kindle a sense of pride and unity among Louisians.

Thank you for being our school's voice and encouraging us to see the world—and ourselves—with fresh eyes. I eagerly await the next edition, knowing it will again testify to your unwavering commitment to excellence.



Unmasking the Unforcomfortable Truth

VALENCIA, A.

This is not strength or resilience. It is about time we recognize something for what it is. Poverty is poverty regardless of what pen you used to write it down. You see poverty outside your comfortable car – damaged roofs, soiled skin, carton beds, and single-digit lifetime savings. Poverty is what our privileged minds refuse to accept most of the time.

It is saddening how most Filipinos glance in the wrong direction. The Philippines houses 19.9 million poor people. It is a huge number to ignore. With that population, a small nation can have enough citizens to fill essential positions. Poor people walk on the same street as us, yet we find it easier and more convenient to ignore them.

Poverty lingers and persists. It strides through generations tracing back to the Spanish Colonial. The system which the Spaniards stained our lands with produced a societal hierarchy, putting price tags on the Filipino souls. This kind of society breeds corruption and power is only granted to those seated near the political throne (Batu, 2017). And if you can't still see how poverty gained its seat in our table, look at how Manila – which houses wealthy families at the time – was almost untouched by the destruction of the Philippine Revolution and Philippine-American war.

Perhaps it was pride; as citizens of our motherland, we refuse to find flaws. After all, patriotism rushed into our Filipino blood. Or maybe it was disgust. People who grew up in a gated home with warm, home-cooked meals don't necessarily find poverty pleasant. Knowing poverty is uncomfortable because it forms guilt even though we live within our means.

Most of all, it is uncomfortable for people with low incomes to be pitied and recognized for something they can barely do – living. More so, this romanticism of poverty fosters a toxic cycle. They are being praised because of the scarcity they experience, so why would they try to escape their realities? We are not doing them a favor. We are not helping by romanticizing their experiences; it feels good, but what about it? Will heartfelt words suffice to fill the hunger in their stomachs?

If we care, we won't love the taste of nothing. Genuine compassion lies in doing something for people experiencing poverty, not with sugar-coated words. Save your speeches for anti-poor advocacies, and recognized for something they can barely do – living. More so, this romanticism of poverty fosters a toxic cycle. They are being praised because of the scarcity they experience, so why would they try to escape their realities? We are not doing them a favor. We are not helping by romanticizing their experiences; it feels good, but what about it? Will heartfelt words suffice to fill the hunger in their stomachs?

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Baguio CiFEE?

VALENCIA, A. Editorial

Due to its ideal location with breathtaking spots, cool climate, and top-performing universities, Baguio City is undeniably on the top list of sought-after cities in the Philippines. Additionally, the city's cost of living is significantly lower than major cities like Manila. These key characteristics are what entice tourists and migrants to experience life in the city of Pines. According to PhilAtlas, the population of Baguio increased by 281,820 over the course of 50 years. The high number of residents and tourists causes an increase in the demand for goods and living, therefore resulting in thriving businesses within the mountains. However, despite its significant impact on the economic growth of Baguio City, the continuous population growth poses concerns about whether the city itself could cater to all the needs of its residents.

There is a taunting reality behind the lively crowd of the city. The city is, realistically, made to shelter only 25,000 residents, and it has been a long time since we surpassed that. Every day, thousands, if not millions, of settlers and tourists alike walk in the streets of Baguio, just as much as there are private and public vehicles circling the main roads. Such instances are prominently evident in the busy streets of the Central Business District (CBD), where major establishments like hospitals, malls, banks, and government offices allow residents to flock daily for errands and necessary calls. This concern significantly affects the day-to-day lives of citizens. A survey by Rappler recorded that 28 percent of youth indicated traffic congestion as a top problem.

The heavy traffic toll imposed on the people living in Baguio City urges an innovative solution to mitigate the problem. One solution the government is currently eyeing is implementing a congestion fee

in the CBD, a regulation that encourages drivers to avoid unnecessary trips. This system is applied in many metropolitan cities worldwide, such as the Manhattan District in New York City, Singapore, London, Stockholm, Milan, and Gothenburg, and yielded impressive results. Thus, adapting this sub-charging system might just be the solution we are looking for to finally arrive at our destinations on time without walking for miles.

The spread of the information garnered mixed emotions and thoughts from the public. However, it is unknown to the masses that the congestion fee is part of a bigger and more elaborate scheme for reducing traffic and the pollution it causes. The Smart Urban Mobility Project (SUMP) is a proposal made by Metropolitan Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC) that aims to mix advanced technology to create a sustainable city. The project aims to address five key areas: reduction and redistribution of traffic, improvement of public

transport system, efficient road network utilization, reduction of traffic accidents and violations, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The plan encompasses infrastructure and public transport upgrades designed to make Baguio City more liveable.

The main concern regarding the congestion fee is that citizens think this charge will be imposed every time they enter the CBD. The SUMP indicates otherwise. In accordance with the proposal, the congestion fee will only be charged during peak hours. Moreover, Baguio City residents are entitled to seven weekly passes per household. Additionally, this fee will not be levied on public utility jeepneys (PUJ), emergency response vehicles, and senior citizens and people with disability (PWD). Furthermore, the rates will range from 50 pesos to 150 pesos only, far from the known and widely bashed 250 pesos. The accumulated charges shall be used to fund the development of better infrastructure.

Looking at the progressive development of the countries implementing the system of congestion fees, it is hard to ignore the positive effects that come with it. Congestion fees can collect money to improve the city and instill the value of discipline and environmental consciousness in private vehicle owners. Furthermore, this pricing system promotes the utilization of PUJs, elevating public transportation drivers' wages. This initiative recognizes that the roads of Baguio City have a limited capacity and must not be abused while addressing economic and environmental costs.

This proposed mobility project holds immense potential for enhancing the city. After all, many people with different goals walk in the streets of the town because we all have places to go. The city does not just house residents, tourists, and students but also dreams. In such a place, the streets must keep moving towards the future as it will not wait for us.

Navigating the Labyrinth of Time

NAMOCA, L.

Like any other person in this bustling world, a lot of students, with their different activities, struggle with balancing their schedules. From their academics to their clubs and personal lives, each demands a schedule that the person must meet almost daily. It is a struggle to keep up with the demands of these agendas, especially without proper time management. Thus, this question surfaces: Do these help us become more organized and help us learn to manage our time better, or do they add to the overwhelming confusion?

Because of the different schedules we have, many students face challenging situations wherein it becomes difficult as they already have to choose one over the other. This often results in sacrificing their time to accommodate their commitments. The constant juggling of these activities can lead to burnout, making it hard for students to manage their schedules more effectively.

On the other hand, juggling multiple commitments can also teach valuable time management skills. It helps students develop a sense of

responsibility for their own time to accomplish their obligations easily. These experiences prepare them for the future, where they can achieve much in time. This skill helps them work through their time and schedule complexities.

These schedules, which may be challenging initially, will always impact a student's life. This may teach them to manage their time better, or it may be a source of stress for a student's everyday life. However, it is up to the student to take their side of the coin. As we grow older, we will inevitably face more

schedules. Students may allow these schedules to overwhelm and confuse them, but they can always use it as a training ground to manage their time better in this bustling world.

Time will always keep moving, no matter the circumstance. It will always be a complicated maze with very high walls. It will always be an obstacle in our fast-paced, bustling lives. However, time will never stop, and it is up to us to find our way

through its labyrinth continually.



FOMO: For Our Missing Outspoken



BORROMEEO, E.

In the dead air of the dark, they are taken without a trace, their where activism has been shedding light on marginalized communities, the Philippines is grappling with enforced disappearances targeting those who dare to speak out, which has intensified in recent years. At least 14 people have been reported to be abducted by the state since Ferdinand Marcos Jr. assumed presidency, according to the

human rights group Karapatan. These abductions are extremely alarming as they threaten our freedom to echo the truth and, therefore, should collectively be addressed.

Environmental activists Jonila Castro and Jhed Tamano have been working with fishermen opposed to reclamation activities in Manila Bay. They went missing on September 2, 2023, in Bataan. When they resurfaced at a government-organized press conference, they revealed that they had been abducted by the

military, contradicting claims of voluntary surrender. The following public outcry led to their release.

Another pressing case I cannot forget was the disappearance of Indigenous Peoples' rights defenders Dexter Capuyan and Gene Roz Jamil "Bazoo" de Jesus on April 28, 2023, in our Cordillera region. Indigenous activists have long been targeted for their resistance against grabs of ancestral lands, mining operations, and government-led projects that threaten their domains.

The lack of transparency and accountability on these cases and dozens more strengthens the notion that speaking out against injustices can harm people's lives. This must not be the norm in a democracy, where freedom of expression is presumed protected.

The Supreme Court has taken steps on some instances such as these. Wrist of Amparo and habeas data were issued on December 2024, made public

on February 5, 2025, in favor of activist Felix Salaveria Jr., who has been missing since August 2024.

These writs are legal remedies designed to protect the constitutional rights of people. I commend the Supreme Court for this effort, but it would still not suffice for the innumerable cases awaiting resolution and future abductions almost as if inevitable in a nation such as this.

This repression threatens not just individual activists but the very foundations of democracy. If people are too afraid to voice their concerns, who will hold those in power accountable? This is why addressing this crisis should not be left to a few—it requires the collective effort of citizens and

civil society.

The constitution allows freedom of expression, but I believe this must bear fangs and be shielded with a law protecting voices and punishing those who cut them off. Activists who stand for the truth must not be considered enemies of the state.

These missing individuals on and off the records are not merely statistics but people with dreams and families. If we let these direct attacks on our democracy be, we will lose not just our voices, but our freedom. This crisis must be solved with our collective outrage and action. We must call for transparency, accountability, and justice for the missing, ensuring that activism in the Philippines remains a right, not a crime.

Baguio's Best Cuests

CABANILLA, C.

If you are to read "Breathe Baguio", there is one possible explanation that many would think. It is to visit and see Baguio from your own point of view, to literally breathe Baguio's air and see its beauty for yourself. This campaign is the reason for the average of 1.2 million visitors in the city of pines from year 2016 up to present. Yet, why not look on the other side of things? The latter where "Breathe Baguio" means leaving the city a bit of room for its people to breathe. The latter that hopes to not overcrowd the streets of this 15-degree Celsius staycation, as it is a place of educated hopes and dreams, now slowly being lost in the trail of tourist-season jeepney rides and tight bumper-to-bumper taxi routes.

Baguio has mastered the art of appeasing hungry guests, offering carefully put up spots displayed like a buffet, from meticulously crafted plant decorations in the Botanical Garden to a full-blown game of scavenger hunt for hidden cafés that TikTok creators like to play. SM Baguio, the only SM establishment with zero air conditioning, is often the go-to of everyone, where its 'all-you-can-eat'-like selection of items only intensifies the excitement to continue exploring. This is the livelihood of Baguio City: a place that caters to numerous people visiting—where Lower Session Road becomes modern-day Malacañang Palace during Ramon Magsaysay's era—opening its doors to welcome everyone, seven days a week.

You might think that it's a win-win situation to have a huge number of guests for everyone in Baguio City, since tourism is one of the most important sectors in the Philippine economy. Not only is it a steady industry every aspiring entrepreneur can invest in, it generates jobs to quash the country's 3.2% unemployment rate. In reality, Baguio is a one big conglomerate of businesses—compromising a population of about 400,000 in the last census by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) that caters to a number of 1.31 million tourist arrivals recorded by the City Mayor's Public Information Office in 2023. Nonetheless, unlike most, some would disagree. The inconvenience of the city being a landmark troubles countless students and communities alike, more so than it benefits them.

Much like the 2024 holidays when Baguio's Public Information Office traffic situation update bled red, the city's population exceeded the number it could handle. The roads more accessible to high schools and elementary departments became congested with cars struggling to get to Mines View and Session Road. Routes were filled instead with

foreign cars instead of buses that were for students going home to their provinces. Not even Waze could direct a social worker to a less crowded highway for him to arrive at his workplace.

Despite this, at the end of the day, income is served gourmet-style that satiates local business mongers after the guests finally had their fill, and only then will every tsuper finally concede that each pasada was worth the stress of going through a hair's length of traffic. This becomes a cycle in all the seasons that Baguio offers. However, know that there is more to Baguio than what meets the eye. The 'guests' that boom this cosmopolis' population and livelihood by a ton only get to see a snippet of what truly characterizes our city, missing out on what is hidden in overwhelming mounds of university textbooks and a grave longing for the province air.

Contrary to the picture of an ideal vacation, Baguio is, in fact, home to great schools where students from all over Luzon come to study. For one, the renowned Saint Louis University (SLU), the graduates of which pass their licensure examinations with a history of 95% to perfect passing rates, comprise one of the top performing institutions among all others in the Philippines. Not only is it known for raising learners to bring topnotcher numbers home, but it is also recognized for landing 131st in the 2025 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Rankings that assesses academic reputation, student-faculty relationship, and published school papers. Its students from all around the nation top board exams and set standards in their respective fields despite being away from the comfort of their own families and only finding solace in the breeze that greets them 'good morning,' and at the same time, 'you're late!' Baguio is where their favorite laundromats operate, as every turn and tumble of washing machines is accompanied

by the gut-churning feeling of homesickness. Nevertheless, these students stay.

It is the student body who learns to walk the city, as breathtaking as it may be. They know how to fight for at least half a seat in the compact 2,164 licensed jeepneys recorded by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and are wowed by the 11-peso fare, given the expensive lifestyle usually afforded by a tourist's fanny pack and rented express van. They take public commutes, learn the city's ways, and, most importantly, stay with us longer. Long after the hype of the holiday season has died down, these students are the primary source of income for the 1,200 registered accommodation establishments in Baguio, a number by the Philippine News Agency.

The popularity of Baguio City has often betrayed the best interests of students, where they are burdened with the heavy consequence of the city opening its doors too wide. It is a paradox wherein our pride feeds on their academic achievements and topnotchers, yet we turn university streets into rotundas where traffic kills one's hopes of going to school on time. What was once an affordable price has now become a tuition's worth to bring out the best of "tourism," such that the price of a small taho serving climbs up to P40 instead of the usual P15 pesos. It is only right to ask ourselves, must we compromise the welfare of one guest in place of another? Too much is unhealthy. With too many commuters in school-bound jeepneys and too many visitors in travel hotels, the streets forget who its other guests are—the people who stay when it is high time for tourists to go home. So, may Baguio remember who sticks with it longer after everyone is gone, and when it is time to cater to its students again, may they be served with the same fervor as the once-welcomed tourists. They are, unarguably, Baguio's best guests.



aNORMAlly

ROSAS, I.

How would you act in a place that is not in your accustomed habit? Would you still act in your own way? Or would you act right, depending on your situation? "Tayo ay nasa fine dining-restaurant," one of the renowned lines of the influencer named Toni Fowler featured in an episode of the YouTube show ToRo Family, wherein she is reprimanding Mikay, a member of the ToRo Fam who acted disrespectfully during a formal event with other influencers when they dined in a fine dining-restaurant.

The line became an internet trend, wherein various people already made their own versions in their native languages. The parodies brought joy and laughter to broad audiences. Yes, it is given that Filipinos always find ways to incorporate happiness, even in recent events. According to World Happiness, it indicates that the Philippines is the second happiest country in Southeast Asia. It indicates that upbeat and loud personalities are really innate in us, Filipinos. Other than the jolly personalities we have, Filipinos still have flaws and unideal attitudes.

Behind those jokes and satirical parodies, we would look into a more profound perspective after watching the video of Toni Fowler disciplining Mikay due to her lack of manners. You will probably think, are we Filipinos, really forgetting the difference between politeness and being humorous? Because of our jolly personality, do we tend to neglect etiquettes? We tend to be insensitive and disrespectful because of our ignorance. According to GetRealPost we Filipinos have inadequate knowledge of self-respect and how we apply it in our daily-lives. It indicates that Filipinos do not necessarily know how to respect themselves and other people.

Another issue that is addressed in the viral video is how we Filipinos do put shame on our own family in front of others. The Sinaunang Panahon stated, Filipinos tend to lack "hiya" or shame, causing people or family members to act not in accordance with the current situation or do some embarrassing things, which causes shame towards our family.

This is what Mommy Oni (Toni Fowler) felt during their dining with other influencers when Mikay displayed a very unruly behavior.

Aligned with unruly behavior, Mikay displayed improper etiquette, this is due to lack of cultural awareness and knowledge about right behavior in a dining restaurant. In which proper etiquette is an important factor we consider if we are in a different place, especially in prestigious public spaces such as fine-dining restaurants.

Based on Food & Wine, dining etiquette in fine dining-restaurants are implemented to maintain the elegant and promising ambiance. The reason for Toni Fowler's rage towards Mikay is due to her negligence of proper etiquette and low awareness in a fine dining-restaurant. In which we can relate it to the attitude of most of this generation, wherein they seem so disrespectful. The study of Professor Tony Cammpolo said that this generation (Gen Z), is a generation filled with narcissists, spoiled brat, and disrespectful.

In conclusion, this is not only about proper etiquette in a restaurant, but rather the knowledge of basic human decency and respect for others. Your jolly and loud personality will not make up for the disrespectful and lack of ignorance behavior you do, but rather your ability to adapt and get along with the changes in your environment, even if it is not accustomed to your habit, because it does not mean that it is normal for you, it is already normal for everybody.



THE



OF RASIO, A.

FLAW

Traces of a closed conversation stained the vandalized wall. "Galingan mo d'yan, nak." My phone lit up the darkened alley. Meanwhile, the sparkles of my dress stayed opaque. It was a message my father sent at 1:52 in the morning.

In the tapestry of life, there runs a long dark thread – the fatal flaw, a thread that slowly unravels, ultimately leading to one's downfall. Collapsing even the purest and most resilient souls. The weaves of fate had not been kind to me as they slowly unraveled and revealed their intricate patterns. I once held the firm notion that such a flaw does not exist. But as the threads of time begin to unravel. As my naivety crumbles. So does my notion. I have come to realize that I possess such a flaw – the need for nicotine's gentle caress and the solace burn of liquor. It is a moment of peace. A fleeting escape from the binders of homework and the tenfold responsibilities brought upon me.

It is a well-known fact that we students, the future of our country, turn to these dark Dinges for a sense of foundation – amidst these students' struggles, these vices are like a moth to a flame, bringing down anyone who dares touch the ever-glowing flame. Entrapped by the fires of silent embers, we students dive in. We start with the tip of our fingers, testing the fire, and once we get burned, there is no turning back. You see, we like the burn; we find an eerie satisfaction in the thrill.

I have read many articles in my life and watched a handful of news reports, some of which consist of students diving deep into the euphoric thrill of nicotine and alcohol. These plunges lead to oceans that are hard to venture into and almost impossible to swim through. When a few of us swim through, we plunge head first into a messy shore lost within the grains of sand. I once read that among 10 Filipino students, 3 turn to vices as relief. I never thought I would be one of the three; what about the other seven? Will they turn to the same vices I did?

Growing up on the gentle shores of the province

where the golden sands whisper. I was taught that dreams do not come forth in a snap of your fingers but bloom from the rise of the earth you have nurtured. Success, I learned, is a garden that we tend to. Where dreams come from roots that blossom into success once watered with hard work and determination. Each setback manifests into a seed sown by the heart. I felt like I was a piece of driftwood – Each lesson was taken with a grain of sand that I had to understand to reach the shoreline.

The narrow world of my studies, met my soaring ambition. From enjoying a book on the shoreline to reading textbooks in a dark dormitory. Building sandcastles turned into stacks of homework at my desk, that eventually manifested into a wave pushing me to the shore. As I drew closer to the coast, I felt a vine wrap around my foot, slowly creeping up until it held my neck.

Here is the thing about wanting to be great and giving it your all – your hope drifts further apart and is replaced with inertia. The world outside your dorm's comfort tempts you with friends' laughter. But what awaits is a haze – a cloud of smoke that wraps around our throats, giving us a comforting high. This detour leads us to a fleeting camaraderie as if saying, "Comrade, join us in our dance of vices." It dances into our consciousness, leading us into a new flame.

"This is living." We whisper to ourselves. Purple, pink, blue, green, and a plethora of colors dance around us as we take shots of alcohol. The night unfolds like a blur; laughter and music wrap us like a siren's song – alluring and hypnotizing. We rise with the sun, disoriented, with the scents of last night's spirit lingering in our hair, yet you never forget to print your homework

for the day ahead at the last minute.

And there lies the crux of our addiction – the thrill of distraction, seducing us away from the shoreline, leaving us like jellyfish floating in the ocean. It wraps us around its weeds, dulling our dreams and potential. My sun-kissed cheeks have gone pale from the nightlife as we find a perverse comfort in all the chaos, a craving for highs that drown out the lows that academia has brought forth. As we drift deeper into this illusion, we must question – will we stay adrift forever? Is this where life has led us? What of the fire that once burned brightly? Is it too late to reignite the flame?

I now stare at my phone as a different tale of woe has played out. At 1:52 in the morning, my father's daughter stands in the middle of the dance floor, her feet moving with the rhythm of the lies she has woven. The clock now reads 1:53, a somber reminder that while the truth slumbers, the devil dances. As the clock ticks, I ponder the consequences of this dichotomy and my father's silent pleas – that we must never forget the beauty of authenticity in our pursuit of greatness.



Decade

Knots of TETHERED SHADOW DREAMS

I wonder what material the string tied around my neck is made of. It's thin, yet it stings. It carries years of honor and promises a future of glamour. It doesn't clang like armor nor shine like it. Yet, the mightiest sword I've ever wielded knelt in its greatness. I've seen brave warriors before me, with the exact string around their necks, stride with immense pride, burdened by its weight. And now, I walk in their footsteps, constantly wondering what this string is made of.

If I ever discover its composition, will I craft the sharpest scissors to free myself from its grasp? After all, it has stolen so much of my childhood. It locked me in my room for hours with only a mountain of textbooks and a hefty dose of determination. It stole moments with family and friends, leaving empty spaces in my photo album and journal pages.

A single string did that. A single string

forced me to perform out of obligation, not passion. A single string deprived me of sleep. A single string is shared by 94.39% of Filipino students.

On average, Filipino youth spend 16 years in school. With a life expectancy of 71.79 years, we devote nearly a quarter of our lives to building our futures within four-walled classrooms. In those 16 years, we grow—from scribbling messy strokes to solving complex problems. But between those moments of triumph, we also endure long stretches of staring at the ceiling, suffocated by the pressure to perform.

The string, the pressure, takes many forms. It could be molded from years of familial expectations. From the slow applause of your parents' approval to high marks on your papers, gradually crawling to become the string around your neck. It's not a rare case. In a family-oriented country like the Philippines, children often listen more to their parents' whis-

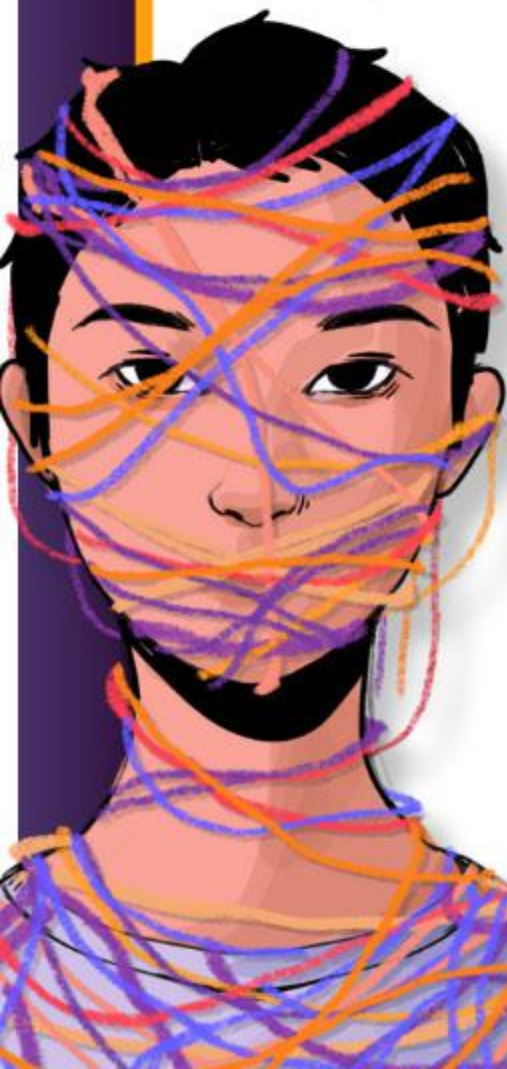
pers than the screams of their own bodies. According to Alampay (2019), behaviors and decisions related to education reflect the family rather than individual welfare. At the end of the day, we trace back our steps back to the money, time, and effort spent on us.

The taunting future could also birth this string. One moment, college is far away, and in the next, it's just months ahead. Suddenly, 50 tabs are open on your laptop, filled with hopes of getting into a university that can fulfill your dreams. We compete against youth with the same aspirations for a price not everyone can afford. There are only 102 State Universities and Colleges in a country of 17.5 million citizens that cannot afford basic needs like education. The line at the registrar's office stretches endlessly, and as you glance at the papers in your hands, your mind races: "What's next?"

And then there's us, staring intently at our own reflections. We see clearly how to remove the string from its roots. But at the end of the day, we still want something great for ourselves. We yearn for that future we once dreamed of in childhood games. We want recognition. We want to hear the words affirming that we did well. So, we just continue to stare.

If I ever discover what the string is made of, I will create a statue of us. It will stand for centuries, just as the pressure has endured for generations. This statue will cast no shadows, guiding future dreamers—so they won't have to wonder. I will build a structure so grand that it will shatter toxic labels, stigmatized actions, and the lack of empathy toward us—towards me, you, and them.

VALENCIA, A.



WHEN AN ANGEL

MANAOIS, A.

LOSES ITS WINGS

Rules are invisible ink tattooed on our bodies. It guides every movement of muscle and every twist of joints. At home, shoes are removed to protect pristine floors from the realities we've walked through. In our neighborhood, trash knew the names of the rightful bins to preserve the crisp air of sanitation and the sun ray of wellness. In public spaces, even the wind whispers reminders to lower our lips, to keep our voices down, and to ensure a shared respect for the people around us. However, if there's one place where the ink stings slightly more

The artists that live within us are occasionally awakened from their deep slumber. Perhaps you were once enamored with the wonders of vibrancy, which led you to boldly flirt with the idea of dyeing your hair a bright color. Or maybe your artist saw the stars as its muse, thus making you smitten over the act of piercing your ears like a constellation. The point here is that you have become a canvas. But as the hunger to fit in, belong, and be considered a part of something grows, the brush begins to move in untrodden directions and form unusual shapes, creating a version that doesn't resemble you anymore. Hence, you ask yourself: What kind of museum thrives on monotony, where every piece mirrors the next, leaving little to no room for the beauty of individuality?

Most educational institutions, particularly private schools, have rules with bolder inks. Every stroke honors discipline, moral values, and academic excellence. Rules such as compliance with the school dress code, adherence to the daily schedule, and prohibition of specific language use are typical policies that one often encounters throughout their life as a student. These practices are meant to ensure the welfare of everyone, including the establishment itself and the student body. However, sometimes, these rules bind us, almost as if forever tethered to the unrelenting sun, scorching us before we have the chance to embrace something many of us hold dear: self-expression,

The moment you've felt as if the vibrancy of your essence has dimmed. Perhaps you've chipped away pieces of yourself as you remove the nail art your nail technologist worked on for more than six hours. Maybe your confidence faded as you bid farewell to the platform shoes that took you days to decide. At some point, many of us have felt like we were drowning—trading

parts of ourselves in exchange for compliance with these rules, letting its remnants sink along the harsh abyss. After all, failing to do so puts shackles on our toes, tying us to the ocean floor of lost identities. Gradually, we will fall to the never-ending depths of discontent until we find the spark that rekindled in our eyes once again,

Whenever people say, "An angel lost its wings," we hark back to moments of defeat where we are forced to succumb to our discomforts for the interests of others. Every time we dress, act, and speak according to what is deemed morally acceptable under these scholarly roofs instead of what is in line with our heartfelt desires, it feels like surrendering our singularity for something that feels staged and synthetic. Over time, it becomes the tangible proof of how bland and tasteless we've become just so we can fit in the nonexistent mold, ultimately becoming replicas of each other as we conform to a singular archetype of the "perfect" model student.

But have you ever stepped into the lake of reflection and stared at the waters as it spelled out a brighter prospect to all of this? Consider this: Rebellion is as much of a cage as obedience is because they both mean living your life in reaction to someone else's way instead of forging your own. Sometimes, we all sacrifice a piece of ourselves for something we believe is worth it. Even if school compels us to subdue our character, it still shapes us—continuously lighting the fires of knowledge and guiding us toward becoming the best version of ourselves. We may not recognize the canvas we are now, but it only means we are still an unfinished masterpiece.

Undoubtedly, self-expression is of invaluable importance; however, just like everything else, it has its own limits. Hence, we must see eye to eye that it doesn't disrupt the boundaries of others. Without a doubt, humans have always had in store the primal inclination to defy, overthrow, and revolt against society, believing that by undertaking these pursuits, one will be rewarded with something more significant. But this mindset often leads to frustration and conflict. We must shatter the notion that laws, which have existed since the dawn of everything, are meant to strip us away of our individualism and uniqueness.

In fact, it's quite the opposite; rules were made for all of us to coexist in peace and agree on a mutual ground without the risk of

offending or hurting anyone who might be affected by the actions we choose for ourselves if we were given the choice to do as we want in this fleeting world of frailty. The etched ink of rules we try to erase are bridges of tranquil connection. School rules, just like any other rules, were imposed upon us, not to stop us from becoming the "true" version of ourselves but to ascertain that everyone who is concerned could be kept under control, which eventually paves the way for all of us to exercise our freedom in a way that fosters camaraderie, sympathy, and mutual respect.

Self-expression isn't just about how you look and present yourself but also how you treat others around you. As far as this goes, schools are some of the best grounds to meet a diverse range of people you can connect with, learn from, and grow alongside. The small sacrifices we ought to make in how we look, dress, and communicate are an excellent call for the transformation we will achieve from within. It's not about putting on a mask to hide who you really are; it's about learning to wear a face that society accepts—so that even when the mask comes off, the person underneath embodies those values.

Balancing self-expression whilst maintaining lawfulness and submission can prove challenging to master and learn, especially for those who've sworn to live their lives without being repressed by the world's expectations. However, that doesn't mean it's entirely impossible. We must understand that creativity doesn't just falter at a moment's notice—a fire snuffed out into darkness, never to be regained again. In fact, creativity is something that we establish and nurture within, meaning it can thrive under limitations.

The choice we make to embrace the constraints that come before us as catalysts for inventions and measures makes us unstoppable in the end. After all, when an angel loses its wings, it isn't about giving up their ability to fly—instead, it's about learning to soar heights in a way that doesn't disrupt the harmony of the skies. Remember that every day is a reminder that we mustn't mistake these long-imposed practices for mere hindrances. The only things that can genuinely hinder us aren't external, only those that fester internally. Break free from the mold, not the rules, and you'll find that self-expression thrives most when it's guided by respect, growth, and the understanding that individuality and unity can coexist in this ever-shifting world we live in.

True's Obedience

For many stu- process feels

NOVAL, I.

dents, "Isang Aya, Isang Tara" is far more than just an invitation—it's a vibrant, unspoken culture pulsating with the irresistible energy of spontaneity. It carries an overflowing amount of pressure, like a gravitational pull, to join, be part of the group, and never miss out. From every cup of an overpriced coffee, each indulgent bite of a cookie, and spontaneity, the stipends they've so carefully budgeted slowly vanish, slipping away through their fingers unnoticed in the glow of pleasures. But where does this all lead? Is this a treat or a threat in disguise?

A familiar and vivid scene in universities unfolds: students in the bustling cafeteria waiting for their brewed coffee. The rich aroma fills the air, mingling with the chatter of friends and the hum of conversation—a subtle manipulation of indulgence. For many, this daily ritual is a comforting pause in a busy schedule, a moment to recharge, or a way to bond with peers. The brewing

most magical—the enticing smell, the clinking cups, and the anticipation of that first sip. At the same time, the comforting embrace of coffee and spending think like a small luxury; all of these are temporary excitements that can vanish in one click. And beneath this inviting scene of students, three financial personalities emerge: the spender, the saver, and the pretender.

The spender splurges unapologetically, leaving others in awe or envy and always ready to treat themselves and others without a second thought. On the other hand, the saver religiously tracks every peso and declines every invite with a firm, "Maybe next time," while silently keeping tabs on their growing bank balance. Then, there's the pretender—armed with a tight budget but unable to resist the pressure of FOMO (fear of missing out), often spiraling into overindulgence masked by the mantra, "I'll manage it later." Despite being out of work and relying heavily on allowances, these students today have their way of handling their stipends.

"I'll start tomorrow" is the biggest lie you must tell yourself. But the

truth is, it's a relentless cycle. The arousing excitement of a spontaneous plan—friends inviting, plans solidifying—quickly shrinks a carefully budgeted allowance into a few coins jingling in the pocket. And it's not even halfway through the week. The reality of this concept is aligned with a study by Gulati (2017), highlighting that peer influence can impact students' spending habits, considering they spend more time in school. Teenagers base their spending on most of their peers to fit into a group or be liked by them.

So, It's not just about the coffee, the cookies, or the trendy restaurants—it's about keeping up, blending in, and feeding that craving for connection. Well, is the constant spending worth the joy of spontaneity? Are the shared memories worth the sting of seeing your wallet empty before the week is over?

The "Tara na!" culture values shared moments as priceless, regardless of the cost. It revolves around unity, belongingness, and the unforgettable moments that complete the idea of hanging out. The students feel the pressure of mounting expenses. It's a silent competition—who gets the trendiest drink, eats at luxurious places, and posts the most Instagrammable stories. It's a call to drop everything and enjoy life with friends. But as fun as it sounds, this culture of impulsiveness isn't always as carefree as

WHEN THE MONEY SPENDS,
THE POCKET BLEEDS

it seems—a tug of war between financial trap and social belonging.

How do we end this financial trap? Since friends are the people we trust the most, communicate honestly. True friendships should flourish on understanding, not materialistic gestures. Instead of expensive shop meet-ups, suggest a student-friendly alternative where the vibe remains—minus the steep bill. As students, we want to have everything! The trendy clothes, brand new makeup, and even accessories to look different from everyone in your class. Add to the cart here and there until the day of delivery. For good fashion, you're sacrificing the meals that you need. Indeed, you deserve a treat for every little win, but you also don't deserve a financial threat that would cause you long-term regret.

So the next time someone says, "Gala na?" take a moment to think. Whether it's a quick run or an all-out adventure, let your response come from a place of balance. Proper discipline lies in knowing when to say yes and having the strength to say no. After all, the best memories aren't made by what you spend but by the people you share them with.



TWIN



where have you been?

by DACULAN, J.

“Nobody knows me like you do.” A familiar phrase that speaks to a strong connection and the understanding that often goes unnoticed. Although it is not visible, this bond is deeply felt by students. The late-night study sessions shared frustrations over academics and unvoiced empathy that flows between classmates without needing explanation. These simple yet meaningful moments could create threads of invisible support, forming the foundation of an honest and strong relationship.

There are numerous moments when we feel hopeless or like we’re not making progress—these experiences are typical for a student and common to all. Failing exams, juggling many activities, and dealing with the time pressure of multiple deadlines—these challenges are what make students’ bonds even stronger. It’s during these moments that we recognize the struggles of our classmates and, at the same time, empathize with them. Notice how, even amid a stressful environment, students can still laugh and socialize with each other. These moments are something we should cherish.

Being a student is naturally difficult, but we can navigate the path ahead with the right people alongside us. Empathy works without words, and it is through our actions that we show we care for others. Isn’t it true that our classmates can feel like siblings? Our diverse individualities make arguments inevitable, just like biological siblings.

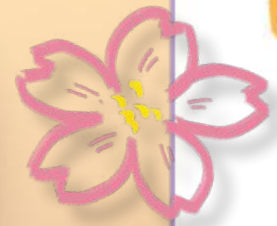
However, their warmth, love, and comfort are more significant than disagreements. Offering notes, checking in during tough times, or helping with lessons are small gestures yet meaningful enough to weave an invisible support.

With the right people, it’s as if we’ve found a long-lost sibling, twin perhaps—someone who truly knows us for who we are. Among all of the people we know, they are the ones who genuinely know us for who we are. And among the threads of support we have, they are the weavers—those who connect us to the strength we may not even realize we possess. The visible systems do more than just provide academic help; they also offer emotional assistance, reduce stress, and boost our motivation. We can feel seen, heard, and understood. With these people, knowing that we’re not alone can ultimately improve our well-being and ourselves as a person. Elsar-rani et al. (2023) highlight that a higher friendship quality

correlates with improved psychological and subjective well-being.

Humankind is genuinely fascinating when it comes to relationships. Sometimes, we meet someone and believe they are there, only for them to suddenly disappear. You could say that people genuinely come and go, and even if that’s the case, we must cherish the moments we share with them. Through these shared experiences, we can foster strong relationships that, though sometimes brief, leave lasting imprints on our lives. The invisible support we offer to each other, often unnoticed but deeply felt, can be the thread that sometimes holds us together. By valuing the quiet power of mutual support, we strengthen our academic communities and build the kind of relationships that help us grow—not just as students but as people.

Radiant Tales of Blossoms



by OFRASIO, A.

After a long, lingering day of academia, the leaves have descended from the branches onto the concrete floor. Farewells have been said, and high-fives have been put up. Darkness has dawned upon our school’s campus and melancholic breezes. The moonlight peeked and ravaged through some misplaced chairs. Pink lights stood out, putting even the moon and the stars in shame. Journeying through the dark hallways, faintly smiling, and with a few remarks for the day ahead – Blossoms.

The bell rang, signaling the end of busy knowledge and school spirit hours. Bags were carried, and a crowd of students flocked towards the school gate, their tiredness displayed in the gaps in their smiles. The faculty followed; they brought home not just the unfinished workload of the day but also the determination to mold the nation’s future. Before the gate could count how many taxis and jeepneys had passed, staff in vibrant shirts started to sing a melody that kept the campus a suitable place for harnessing knowledge. They sweep away the remnants of a messy Louisiana presence with the same hands they use to hold the people they love. The few scattered papers, leftover snacks, and forgotten pieces of class projects felt the gentleness of their caress. These school heroes embark on their nightly routine, ensuring every corner is sparkling clean and welcoming.

Their commitment transcends mere tidiness. Blossoms are artists who create a space wherein we can fully flourish and unleash our intelligence and talents. On the ground, where students walk in panic, counting down the hours and days they need to accomplish requirements, these staff keep kindness in their pockets. In honest ink, their names are written in the principal’s office, lost and found documents. Whether it be a treasured valuable or a pen that jumped out of a student’s bag, they ensure every lost item they found will find its way to their rightful place. The love that seeps through their everyday work makes the heavy days lighter.

By dawn, traces of yesterday sit in their laundry basket. The sun greets a pristine campus. The air blows, and there are no leaves on the ground.

The polished, unreachable corners they recently scrubbed reveal colors hidden beneath the dust. They are the Blossoms, the radiant flowers of our campus. Whenever they bloom, our school awakens from its slumber. The fragrance of their dedication – a reminder of their beautifully woven pursuits. They lay the canvas for a day of learning, their vibrant hues an invitation to explore.

Traces of their hard work linger around school even in silence, whether through the scent of cleaning products or the flowers that bloom because of their care – their fingers gently trimming the overgrown leaves and watering the bushes, giving them life. But it is not only their work that lingers. Their smiles and waves and short conversations with students and staff follow us until we are in the comfort of our own homes. These small interactions bring the students and staff closer together, forming bonds – friendships and companionship flowering from a simple “hello po” and “thank you po.” Each smile and wave scatter petals of positivity within the campus, warming hearts and spreading smiles.

The Blossoms are blessings we ought to celebrate. The flowers grace our campus with a multitude of colors and joy. In their bloom, we discover our own, and together, we cultivate yards of learning and a garden of hope.



Lost and Found

by AWISAN, N.

There was the usual chaos of Senior High in the hallway, but some students said the atmosphere felt oddly unfamiliar. They were not naive freshmen, but veterans who were facing challenges other than finding

their classrooms. It was kind of like getting on a moving train: right away you’re part of a social hierarchy that’s already set, relationships – in my case, my friends cried a little for me, they were sad that I was going to be gone – but established relationships are already in place, and an already rigorous academic program. They waved goodbye to their old school and familiar faces, while also facing the daunting prospect of starting over.

The first day had been a flurry of strategic moves – a hairdo so

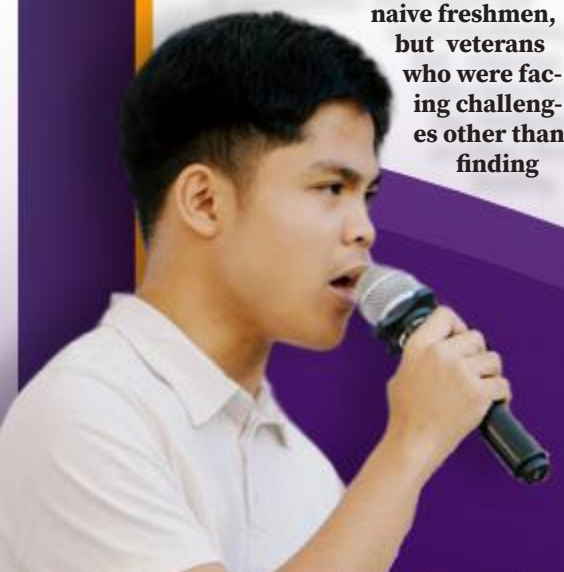
togged-up it almost looked as though it had been calculated to annoy, a perfume, chosen with care, that wafted through the mayhem, a newly acquired skirt whipping past busy corridors, courtesy of an impulse buy. Sneaky glances, brief touches, group giggles—pogi hunting season. But that initial buzz soon wore off, leaving behind stark loneliness. The bright colors of the school were muted, and the happy chatter seemed distant, like sounds muffled beneath the water. The smell of antiseptic from the clinic, so often taken for granted, now she was keenly aware of her loneliness as she moved back and forth between the two. The cafeteria food was bland compared to her mother’s delicious adobo.

The familiar comfort of home was replaced by a sense of unsettling dislocation. The blanket in the dorm room, meant to keep her warm, was foreign. The breeze, mirroring her desire, carried the smell of rain and earth, a cutting contrast from the serene scent of home, now so distant. The thrill of the chase had long gone, replaced by a painful longing for family, a heaviness in her heart.

But, contrary to her expectations, the school she thought would be alienating turned out to be a setting in which real friendships blossomed. These were real friendships forged via shared laughter, midnight cram-sessions and the mutual encouragement that only true friends can provide. The unexpected partiality weakened her yearning for home, modifying her perception and proving new

meaningful connections could blossom anywhere.

The simple act of moving to another school can be a powerful development driver. It underscores the initial fears, the loneliness of a strange place, and the bittersweet farewell to familiar faces and old friendships. But ultimately, it’s a story about change. Teenagers don’t just adjust, they evolve, becoming more resilient, confident and with greater self-knowledge. Their stories bear witness to the remarkable strength of the human spirit to survive but also to transcend tragic circumstances. The journey may chart unexpected waters, but the destination is a profound space for self-exploration.



HUEY: THE VOICE THAT Echoes Dreams

by GUMABON, Z.

In the quiet corners of Saint Louis University - Senior High School campus, hallways trap the scent of students’ sweat and tears. Classrooms are well-crafted gardens where dreams often bloom and wilt with the seasons.

This is where the imbalance between living life to the fullest and fame lives. Yet Huey’s voice is steady, determined to cut through the chatter of uncertainty. His journey is sung in a melody of highs and lows. Despite the demands of being a student, his burgeoning talent refuses to be silenced.

Once, Huey’s life was like a song waiting to be written. In Junior High School, he shelved his passion for singing, like a musician setting aside an old, beloved instrument. Instead, he picked up new creative tools—media filming and radio broadcasting—discovering other ways to express his artistry. While his voice fell silent, his creativity never ceased; it simply found new avenues to flow.

But even the quietest prelude gives way to the first stirring notes of a symphony. Grade 11 was the year Huey’s passion began to hum again. It started

modestly with his involvement in the Special Program in the Arts (SPA) club. His first performance was a hesitating step back into the spotlight – research proposal defense. A single decision that struck a chord, not just with his audience, but within himself.

Soon, opportunities followed like the steady rhythm of a heartbeat. At the CICM (Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary) meet, Huey’s voice soared, earning him a bronze medal—a testament to his resilience and rediscovered talent. From duet competitions to the nostalgic harmonies of CCA (Center for the Culture and the Arts) Timeless and Chorale singing, Huey’s voice began to thread its way into the fabric of school events, each performance a stanza in his unfolding song.

But every melody has its counterpoint. Managing rehearsals and

schoolwork sometimes felt like juggling musical and lecture notes in a hurricane. There were notes of dissonance – late nights trying to catch up on lessons with heavy expectations. But in the disarray of each day, Huey found cadence, conducting his life like a symphony. “It is always better to fail trying than to live regretting,” he reflects. The motto under which he lived, influencing every pitch his voice reached, was, “Every struggle teaches you; however, the fear of being unable to contemplate leads you to unused potential.”

Huey’s story is still incomplete. It remains a living composition, a symphony still in progress. Each performance adds a new movement and challenges his song to a deeper layer. He is both a student and an artist, a dreamer and a doer, balancing the delicate threads of his academic and artistic worlds with grace. His journey proves that within every student lies a symphony waiting to be played—if only they dare to listen to the music within.

Photo by: SLU U.I.O/Venturozo K. Huey T. Xavier, singing the National Anthem during the opening ceremony of the SLU-BEdS Intramurals ‘25 last January 16.

Hustle in the Bustle City

ZABALA, F.

Beep! Beep! Beep! Ah, it's the deafening sound of the alarm clock again. Five more minutes, ten more minutes... Pressing the snooze button to sleep for a few more minutes is a temptation we fight hard to resist, but nobody wants to be late for school, encounter heavy traffic, and end up lining outside the door of the Office of Students' Affairs (OSA) to get a tardy slip, right?

Dawn has come as another day begins. Birds chirpin, and the morning sun slowly rising. The cold weather of Baguio City embraces us early in the morning as we wake up to get ready for school. Most of us get up before sunrise, but what can we do? We have to... or else we will catch our ride to school.

As students, commuting is already part of our life in this bustling city of Baguio. Whether going to school in the morning and returning home in the afternoon or during holidays when we visit our hometown for a few days, commuting undeniably plays a huge role. Hundreds and thousands of students commute daily, facing struggles associated with it, such as traffic, which evokes frustration in most people. As they always say, outsmarting it is the key.

Aira Duran, a Grade 11 student of Saint Louis University - Basic Education School (BEs), started her commuting journey during her Junior High School days. Reflecting on her experiences as a commuter, she shared "Marami pong struggles as a commuter and as a student na rin, madalas pumipila pa ako nang pag-katagal-tagal talaga para makasakay lang sa jeep," Aira added during an interview. "Kailangan kong gumising nang maaga para maaga rin akong makarating sa school at hindi ma-late."

Similarly, Kreighn Dati, another Grade 11 student of SLU - BEs, also shared her struggles as a student commuter. "I have been a commuter for six months. I face several challenges, such as long queues, the scarcity of jeepneys, and the heavy traffic that often makes me late for school," she stated.

Baguio City is a nest of students, both locals and those from the neighboring provinces, to study at the top-performing universities in the city, such as Saint Louis University. As students flock to chase their dreams in Pines, having to commute daily evokes a sense of normalcy for most of us. Yet, commuting to school means dealing with long lines in the terminal and the eye-sore heavy traffic, often resulting in late classes. Do overpopulation and over tourism contribute to this?

Known for its cold climate that drops to 14°C, scenic attractions, and a combination of rural and countryside life, the city indeed invites tourists and people from different places to explore and live in it, which then results in the peak of population growth and heavy traffic, especially during the holidays. The mix of thousands of commuters, residents, and tourists who opt to use public transportation or private vehicles adds up to the traffic congestion in the city. As of 2024, Baguio City's population is estimated at 399,547 and is expected to reach 407,215 in 2025. Similarly, the city also recorded 1.31 million tourists in 2023. These whopping records severely affect transportation and the city's resources, leading to depletion and negative impacts. These students are one of those severely affected by heavy traffic.

As the time clocks fast and the hustle and bustle of the city starts in the morning, students are no strangers to rising up early. However, amidst all the heavy traffic and the struggles that come with being a student commuter, there lies the dreams we continue to chase and the goals we ought to achieve. Whether as a local or just a passerby for a few years to study in Baguio City, we all have one common goal—to learn and to graduate. We get up before the sun is completely up, catch our ride to school, work our way to study, and get back home at dusk — all for our dreams.



Photo by: Baguio P.I.O/Rosas I. The people of Baguio City are walking in the rain with umbrellas in Burnham Park.

RISING ABOVE STORMS

BOONGALING, T.

The cool mountain air mingles with distant rainfalls and bustling streets, and a group of students determined to surpass the storms of life find solace inside the doors of a dormitory. The dreams, hopes, and collective goals of each student from these far-flung provinces keep them going and furthering their understanding at Saint Louis University Senior High School. They leave behind their families and familiar surroundings, sometimes economically challenged regions, hoping the cycle of poverty might be broken out of it. The journey ahead is certainly not easy; it is likely a mountain of literal and metaphorical struggles they must bear to make a better life out of their battle.

Hardships alone construct their story on the very air one breathes in Baguio. Cool, crisp winds blow gently through the city, giving a chill to the skin, especially during monsoon seasons. It is the climatic ambiance and the feeling of continuous movement, as though life is always in motion. Students leave homes with trepidation in their stomachs. They can feel that tension of taking care of finances by themselves, the pressure of being good in academics without the warmth of their families around. Each morning, they wake up to the smell of damp earth due to rain and the stench of the dormitory rooms — a reminder that they are far away from home but also a step closer to their dreams.

The monsoons make the routines challenging for them. The sound of heavy rains thumping onto the roof comes as an echoing reminder to their ears that nature reigns over their lives. Commuting to school now becomes dangerous, and each footfall splashes puddles and creates the sounds of running water around. At times, streets resemble rivers, and dormitories even get flooded, accumulating already crushing loads. The cold seeps into their clothes, and their bones ache with a chill that seems impossible to shake off. Flickering lights and power outages send darkness into their lives like an unwelcome guest, and the weight of isolation presses

even harder on the soul. However, it is not only external forces that challenge these students. The emotional toll of being away from home becomes palpable. The taste of loneliness is bitter, and the absence of family warmth feels like an unbearable ache in the chest. The laughter and familiar voices of loved ones are replaced by silence, and the sight of friends sharing meals and memories back home intensifies the longing for connection. On their most challenging days, homesickness makes its presence known, clouding their minds and dampening their spirits.

As all these challenges are heaped upon their shoulders, the students of the dormitories rise in Baguio. They have a strength that runs very deep, an unconquerable spirit to face head-on the storms of life. Shared struggles like academic pressures, financial constraints, and emotional isolation bind the students in a way no individual could. They share experiences, understanding each other's battles in a way that only fellow travelers on a difficult path can. The dormitory halls heard their quiet laughter along with their determined effort, they were able to create an undeniable network of hope.

Over time, the storms don't look that overwhelming anymore. The comfort now exists in its tragedy. The sharp smell of rain reminds one of their growth, the

freezing winds, and their tenacity to fight. No matter how meager, each academic achievement raises them to new heights; they begin to realize poverty is not something to be borne for life but a stepping stone. This loneliness of dorm life turns out to be a strength as they learn to rely on each other and, more importantly, on themselves.

The storms within and without them are no longer obstacles but part of their journey. Each test they face becomes a lesson, and each hardship they endure is a story of triumph. They realize that such fights are only transitory—each one of those battles is but a transitory trial, and winning brings them closer to their dreams. They look at towering mountains surrounding the place called Baguio and no longer see themselves as ordinary students battered by a storm; instead, they see themselves as warriors who can face the tempest and continue to endure and learn that with every storm comes to its end, strengthening them and giving them a foothold in reaching a future always imagined.

And so they march into the storm, heads held high, hopes in their chest, and arms steadfast. They know the storms are a prelude to the unbreakable future they must build.

Numerical Breakdown

Typhoon Julian (Krathon)
(October 2024) Impact Report
source: ABS-CBN News

Legend:
● Baguio
● CAR



The Absent Heartbeat

OFRASIO, A.

In the quiet forests of Baguio City, where the sun spills from the gaps of never-ending pine trees, a heart beats slowly, longing for the warmth of maternal and paternal embrace — for two hearts from the same blood to be pressed together. Here, students carry the weight of both hoping and longing — a duality shaped by the absence of a parent. Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) parents. As the Philippines grapples with economic challenges, many families have turned to overseas work to survive. In the Philippines, 27% of students have OFW parents.

scars in the hearts of those young ones left behind. In this digital age, the power of technology is harnessed by many OFW families to bridge the gap created by physical distance. Video Calls and Messages allow for moments of connection, filling the holes left in parents' and students' hearts.

Despite the benefits, there is still yearning — the want for a warm pot of Sinigang over television in the dining room, the need for a warm hug with lingering notes of a mother's perfume or perhaps the rugged scent of a father after having his skin kissed by the sun. For many students, the distance bridged between seas manifests into an emotional void that is profound and difficult to express. There is a subtle confusion stemming from the thought of having a parent who is rarely around — wanting to hear their laughter, not just through the screen but within arms reach. In rooms where

longing resides, comfort is sought through the same skies. In the absence of parental love, children have found solace and warmth in the embrace of friends. Forming unbreakable bonds leading to founding families. Bonding through shared experiences and trauma, these found families serve as a 'temporary fix' to the absent heartbeat. This underscores the idea that family is not always blood but bond, teaching these OFW parents' children that comfort can be found in many ways and that if you look for it, love is everywhere, hearts beat everywhere, and absences can be filled. And, although the aforementioned found family is just a temporary fix, these bonds may last a lifetime if given a chance, creating a plethora of memories and love bundled up in a single time frame of a student's life. The reality of being an OFW's child is a testament to love, ambition, and resilience. In the absence of their parents, these students learn to navigate life independently, drawing strength from the few friends they meet along the way. The sacrifices of their parents become the fuel for their determination, enabling them to cope with the silence left by the absent heartbeat of the ones they love. OFW parents often bear the immense burden of heavy expectations, leaving students pressured to excel

academically to repay their parents' sacrifices. The emotional burden may be plentiful as these students navigate their dreams while feeling the weight of their parents' aspirations on their shoulders. Holidays bring joy and sorrow - Christmas, New Year's, and Birthdays become reminders of the distance between them. That fleeting moment when OFW parents journey back to the motherland laden with suitcases filled with snacks, shoes, and imported goods. The familiar phrase "You've grown so much" leaves these students grappling for responses, fighting the urge to respond "Yes, and so have you." The distance and time have made these hearts beat at different paces. In this delicate dance of love and longing, they continue to forge their paths, inspired by the sacrifices that shape their lives. In the end, the absent heartbeat returns more potent than ever. A household need not consist of the stereotypical four heartbeats of a father, mother, brother, and sister — as long as people feel love, heartbeats they will feel, and this pitter-patter will remind them of that.



MPOX

RISES ON BAGUIO CITY TOURIST SEASON

TARGADO L. & CAJUCOM, A.

Baguio City continues to impress tourists with its cold climate and popular tourist spots such as Burnham Park, Camp John Hay, and many more. However, the latest international concern landed in the city. Mpox cases have risen to four since its first discovery last January 17, which made the City's Health Services Office (CHSO) enforce campaigns to inform the general public.

Since the global outbreak of Mpox, first known as monkeypox, in 2022 that began in the Democratic Republic of the Congo due to the clade IIb strain, cases all over the world have started rising. It was later declared a "public health emergency of international concern" (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Last February 7, the Baguio Health Services Office (BHSEO) confirmed that the latest cases involved a 21-year-old woman and a 21-year-old man, adding up to the first two cases from January 17 and 25.

For the first case of Mpox reported in Baguio City, he completed home isolation and has already recovered. In the second case, reported on January 18, a 22-year-old male with no travel history outside the Philippines and with no close contact before the symptoms started was already discharged last January 21 and is advised for home quarantine until February 6.

According to WHO, there are five risk factors for contracting

Mpox – exposure to health workers who traveled to countries with high Mpox cases, having housemates with possible symptoms of the said case, skin-to-skin contact, having multiple sexual partners and engaging in men having sex with men or also known as MSM.

Baguio residents were assured that the CHSO will strengthen the monitoring of Mpox cases. The recent patients are currently under home isolation until February 16 and 24. Their close contacts are considered asymptomatic and advised to undergo health monitoring for 21 days.

The DOH advised the avoidance of the said virus by observing health safety precautions such as wearing masks in crowded places and avoiding sexual contact with probable patients. The public must also know the symptoms of Mpox – flu, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and cough. Other symptoms may include Headache, backache, fatigue, and muscle aches. Itchy and painful rashes can also be seen in the patient's body. Such symptoms will serve as an awareness for the community.

ScienceFeature

Diarrhea

TUGADE, H.

Dilemma

People have been tired all day, a sip of water might just be the solution for the impending dry throat and sore legs, but – what if that water could cause you a gallon of trouble?

In the City of Pines, there have been numerous reports of diarrhea cases that reached 2,200 ever since December 21, 2023. Due to the massive increase of cases, Mayor Magalong officially declared an acute gastroenteritis or diarrhea outbreak in Baguio City last January 10, 2024; however, after 8 days, Magalong also declared the outbreak's end last January 18. The main reason for such an outbreak is due to the water system with fecal contamination.

According to the Department of Health (DOH), there were fecal coliforms detected among the water samples that were tested. Fecal coliform bacteria basically means these bacteria are indicators of potential water contamination.

Diarrhea cases were reported an increase from December 21, 2023,

to January 11, 2024. The patient's age range starts from three months to ninety-two years, based on the Center for Health Development - Cordillera Administrative Region. There were also no reported deaths in this outbreak.

“Always use clean water for drinking, preparing drinks, cooking, washing, eating and cooking utensils, brushing teeth, and washing the hands and face.

There are lots of ways that could prevent an increase in such cases. Therefore, citizens must be extra careful on how they handle food and water, additionally checking on their food and water sources as well.

A simple trick taught by DOH that could help ensure a disinfection of a drinkable water source: “Water may be boiled for two minutes,” as well as “The use of chlorine-based water disinfection solution of tablets.” A simple recommendation could save you from unwanted diseases.

GETTING

e-Learning

TARGADO L.

The cries of unused materials dimmed the paths prophecies of the future and reached the ears of global situation. Amidst such chaos, a green light lead. Much like the stories printed in our childhood knight, ready to take on the unsustainable world where traditional education slows us down or miss the opportunity to fall back to the right path towards the unreachable sky full of fulfilled dreams.

Our cherished and bountiful forests lose about 4-8 billion trees a year just to meet the demand of human activities, according to the TNB Integrated Learning Solution. These trees serve as paper for crucial documents, chairs in important rooms, and tables where our future lies. Envision the impact we contribute to the environment: the lost natural habitats, the scarce resources, and the impending doom of climate change. Can you hear the sad songs our birds chirp? The number of trees cut down each year can't keep up with the number of trees planted. Or rather the number of unoccupied spaces in forests is so overwhelming that dedicated efforts succumb in its wrath? It will undoubtedly take years again to restore the beauty our existence took away from nature.

Educational institutions demand a lot of paper to provide learning materials such as modules, test sheets, and other paperworks. It is a basic requirement for students to have a tree in possession – in the form of a paper. The future of these learners relies



HUGO'S ing Knight!

usually taken. Murmurs filled the alleys and those who were deaf in the reality of today's emerged – built to pave the way and take the road, Genyo Hub manifests in an image of a digital world in swift and smart steps. In an era of technology, the rules remain simple: adapt to the pace of change. Ready to take a step? Or perhaps a soar.

heavily on the inks, marks, and even images engraved on these papers. A single paper weighs the future. However, the continuous demand for these materials sacrifices the present rather than brightening the future.

Such changes give birth to Electric learning, often called e-learning, has advantages in its flexibility and convenience for students. E-learning, such as Genyo Hub developed by DIWA, has notably lessened the use of paper. This innovative approach enables students and educators to bridge gaps in knowledge without a single paper wasted. The use of digital platforms and resources proves its practicality and convenience.

Genyo Hub, a digital learning platform, may offer an alternative approach through data analytics to empower the convenient distribution of learning materials through interactive multimedia content and foster a collaborative learning environment through gamified elements such as quizzes, shared blogs, and



When Milk Spoils, Water Breathes Life

 CABANILLA, H.

There you are, eleven and naive, a heavy Coke drinker and not so much a fan of water, full of life and dreams. Then comes the glass of milk that your mom brings you every night in hopes of giving you a good night's rest that you take for granted, leaving it to stay on your bedside... so it goes lukewarm until it's finally dead cold... and you find yourself seeking the same warmth of milk you once had as a kid, now growing up—until you realize that there was none. The milk had gone spoiled long ago, and who you once were as a young child is never going back. You find yourself miles away from home, in a cold place like Baguio City, studying in a foreign place called Saint Louis University, that offers not soft drinks, not milk, but only the harsh cold temperature of refills in their station, Water is Life.

It was hard, adjusting and coping up to the fast paced advancements of everyone around you. You feel like you were somehow lagging behind, ang lacking progress compared to your peers. Without your mom's warm glass of milk, you find cold water a hard pill to swallow, alongside with the realization that you are growing up yet slowing down. That you took everything offered to you on a silver platter when you were a kid, and now, there's no sweetness left to serve your taste.

Halfway into the harsh frost of staying alone, you get accustomed to it. Waking up every morning was not so hard, and the walk to your SLU campus doesn't seem so bad... because you know after that tiring, breathless hike, there goes Water is Life, patiently waiting for you and all other Louisians to fill your bottles and jumpstart your day. Without even realizing it, you find yourself bringing your tumbler and with every sip, the water isn't freezing anymore. Weeks had passed with the most pivotal moments of your life happening—you had your hard-earned title of "research defended!", your classroom won HOPE's interPE, and you are now reaching the final moments of being a senior high school student. Looking back on your entire journey, you can't help but notice that among all others who come and go, that SLU Water is Life station? It stayed, unchanging and constant throughout your highs and lows as a Louisian.

Did you know? A human's body is composed of 60% water—the brain and heart are composed of 73% water, the lungs are about 83% water, the skin contains 64% water, muscles and kidneys are 79%, and even the bones have 31% water (Mitchell et. al, 1945). Even everybody knows that the entire earth is composed of about 70% water. One, with or without a scientist's capabilities, can assume that water is truly essential in every biotic and abiotic system, more so for us Louisians. SLU's Water is Life is a gift from the school to us students. What is before just a refilling station becomes now a place that fuels everyone in their day-to-day activities. With every sip, we are watered with the motivation to enter our classrooms and strive for the best.

For many people, water may be bland and no fun to drink, but for Louisians? It's a station in each campus that became part of their academic life. It is what everyone looks for in every campus with their bottle tightly gripped on one hand. A student too exhausted from walking? Water is one glass away. Saving up your college money? There are free refills for everyone. Once a child grows up, he does not cry for milk, but opts for a cold glass of water—a drink to wake and power him up enough to face his everyday life.

So instead of mourning a spoiled glass of milk that would remind you of the childhood you grew out of, move forward and fill your cup once again, this time, with a drink more fit for a grown-up like you—water.



The Louisian Skills Go Beyond Any Field

 ROSAS, I.

November 2, 2024 — Marquis Xavier Zamuco, a Grade 12 STEM Student, won a Bronze Medal in the 6th Copernicus Olympiad in the field of Physics and Astronomy during the Preliminary Round conducted online.

Zamuco was chosen to participate in the said event despite his short exposure to Physics this Grade 12.

"It felt unexpected, pero, considering that I was only exposed to Physics for a few months this Grade 12, but it felt great and empowering knowing that I bagged the Bronze medal." Zamuco expressed.

He was now also invited to tour the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in Washington D.C, United States this upcoming January 5-10, 2025.



Photo by: Zamuco, X.
The Philippines team in the 6th Copernicus Olympiad awarding day held in Houston, Texas, last January 9, 2025.

SPORTS



Photo by: Cardenas, C.
12 STEM B, with pride and joy, celebrating their win in the Inter-PE HipHop event.

SLU-SHS Students Groove on the Dance Floor

ROSAS, I.

SLU BEdS Senior High students showcased their wellness routine during the Inter-PE held at Gerard Decaestecker (GD) Open Court last December 18, 2024, as part of their Health Optimizing Physical Education (HOPE) requirement, wherein Grade 11 students performed routines focused on aerobic, while, Grade 12 students grooved with their respective Hip-Hop dances.

In the aerobic competition, STEM F - St. Joseph was declared the overall champion, in which STEM C - St. Frances of Rome, STEM K - St. Athanasius, and HUMSS A - St. Blaise landed first runner-up, second runner-up, and third runner-up, respectively. Additionally, the fourth to seventh spots were secured by STEM J - St. Catherine of Siena, STEM G - St.

Pedro Calungsod, and STEM E - St. Patrick, who also unveiled remarkable performances. STEM B - St. Therese reigned as the overall champion, at the same time, STEM C - St. Francis of Assisi secured first runner-up, followed by STEM E - St. Jude Thaddeus for second runner-up, and ABM A - St. Maximilian Kolbe for third runner up. Moreover,

the fourth to seventh spots consisted of STEM G - St. Gertrude, STEM M - St. Stephen, and STEM J - St. Francis Xavier, where they exhibited excellent routines in the Hip-hop competition of Grade 12. Furthermore, the winners received a cash prize worth P5,000 for champions, Php 4,000 for first runner-ups, 3,000 for second runner-ups, and Php 1,000 for

third to seventh runner-ups. The Inter-PE started with the excellent performance of the SLU Band, followed by the announcement of the guidelines and rules of the competition; subsequently, the competition proper was initiated, and advisers and teachers also showed great support to their respective classes.

InterPE 2024 Results

Aerobics Exercise Competition



CHAMPION:
11 STEM F - Saint Joseph



1ST RUNNER UP:
11 STEM C - Saint Frances of Rome



2ND RUNNER UP:
11 STEM K - Saint Athanasius

Hip-hop Competition



CHAMPION:
12 STEM B - Saint Therese



1ST RUNNER UP:
12 STEM C - Saint Francis of Assisi



2ND RUNNER UP:
12 STEM E - Saint Jude Thaddeus

Game on!: SLU BEDs Introduces New Billiards hall

CLAVERIA, M.

Saint Louis University Basic Education School has recently introduced its new billiards hall, located in Gerard Decaestecker (GD) 105, the hall offers both billiards and darts and only requires players to have their own personal billiard cue sticks and dart pins, expanding the variety of recreational activities available to students on campus.

Supervised by Sir Salvador Dalang, the hall is available for open table practices from 12:30 PM to 1:00 PM on select days to allow students to maximize their skills in sports specifically billiards and darts; additionally, try-outs for the school's billiards and darts teams are held from 3:00 PM to 5:30 PM on select days to provide a chance for students to test their abilities in a more competitive setting. Throughout the year, the hall also hosts seasonal competitions, where SLU BEDs representatives face off against other students to encourage an exciting and competitive element to high school life, wherein these events allow students to showcase their talent while also building school spirit and sportsmanship.

The billiards hall is not only a place for a game of competition as it is accessible for every student as a place for fun and relaxation, in which Saint Louis University encourages students to visit the hall as a source of leisure from the stress of academics, Billiards and darts are sports that are often enjoyed by students as a way of engaging with friends as they encourage healthy competition and form a stronger bond; whether deciding to look for a casual game or aiming to compete, the billiards hall offers something for everyone.



SLU-CUBS DOMINATES

Brent Invitational, Bags Gold

AWISAN, N.

Photo by: Cardenas, C. SLU Volleyball Boys team's heartfelt celebration of a dominating victory, September 21, 2024.

Saint Louis University - Basic Education School (SLU-BEDs) Cubs Men's Volleyball team created history last September 21 at Brent International School Baguio after they achieved a decisive triumph at the Brent Invitational: Season 1 Cup Tournament and claimed the gold medal with an unblemished three-game winning streak.

SLU Cubs demonstrated their skill in the opening championship match against Saint Louis School Inc. (SLSI), triumphing 2-0 (25-12, 26-24) with excellent court coverage and tactical serves, indicating their resolve to face future challenges.

In a victorious display, the Cubs triumphed over a formi-

dable opponent in Brent International School Baguio (BSBI) on their home ground; while BSBI took the first set, the Cubs showcased their resilience and flexibility, adjusting their tactics to bolster their defense and execute powerful attacks in the following two sets, ultimately clinching the hard-fought three-set match 2-1 (26-24, 25-16, 15-9).

Driven by the memory of the last year's match where the Cubs obtained silver and the electrifying spirit of their supporters, the Cubs vigorously contested a resolute SLSI in a much-anticipated rematch, their exceptional collaboration, precise passes, and unyielding offensive strength ultimately shattering SLSI's aspira-

tions in a glorious 2-0 win (25-18, 25-21).

After their hard-earned win, the team shared their appreciation and contemplated their accomplishment; Team Captain Stephen James Soriano conveyed his joy at reaching their championship objective and aiming for the gold medal.

Star performer Justine Ariel Yumul credited his achievement to his persistent dedication and belief, modestly recognizing a greater force in their victory; he also added that this would be his last competition representing SLU in volleyball games.

During the celebration of their victory, Coach Bren Fajardo stressed the significance

of ongoing development and an unyielding quest for excellence, pointing out the essential elements contributing to their success: excellent team dynamics, thorough tryouts, and players who were receptive to coaching and committed to growth.

More than just a gold medal at the Brent Invitational, their triumph demonstrated their dedication, hard work, and teamwork—a significant achievement that not only highlighted their skills but also offered essential preparation for the demanding City Meet.

SLU BEDs Senior High Dominates District Meet and Crowned as Badminton Champions

DALIT, R.

The true definition of Louisiana pride was shown on the 2nd day of the District Meet last December 8, 2024, wherein the Saint Louis University - Basic Education School (SLU-BEDs) Senior High's Badminton Team reaped six golds after they vanquished the Don Bosco (DB) School of Baguio.

In the Men's Singles match, SLU's Samaki Merciales displayed unmatched dominance from start to finish; during the first set, Merciales took control early, executing sharp smashes and precise placements to secure a decisive 21-6 victory; following the second set, he maintained his momentum, overpowering Dustine Reyes of the DB Saints with ease to win, 21-5, resulting in final set scores of 2-0.

In the second game of the

Men's Singles, Jefferson Garcia remained as strong as he crushed Borrel of the DB Saints and took the first set, 21-2; he stayed composed and consistent to close out the match with scores 21-4, another commanding performance in the second set showing full display of sheer skill and focus, leaving the crowd thoroughly impressed, the match ended at 2-0.

For the first round of the Women's Singles match, SLU's player Maxine Devadeb dominated both games with remarkable skill and precision; in the first set, she set the tone early and won the set, 21-6, and later on overwhelmed her opponent Flora of the DB Saints in the second set with an incredible, 21-1, finishing the match with a set score of 2-0.

The second game followed a

similar pattern, as Aira Duran of SLU maintained her focus and consistency to win the first set, 21-7. She then closed out the match in style, securing the second set, 21-5, outlasting Orpilla of the DB Saints.

The Double Category in the tournament was a testament to the teamwork and coordination shown in the Men's Doubles category; SLU's Ancheta and Bulado delivered a strong performance, securing a closely contested first set with a 21-16 victory; they built on this momentum in the second set and found their rhythm and dominated, 21-10 against Lachica and Celibio from the DB Saints.

In the Girl's Doubles, SLU's duo Cosme and Tabec showcased their supremacy, overwhelming Tejada and Patricio of the DB Saints with a commanding 21-3

win in the first set and following it up with an equally dominant 21-4 victory in the second set. Both matches highlighted SLU's exceptional chemistry and tactical execution.

Following these outstanding outcomes, Team Captain EJ Ancheta said, "Masaya po kasi walang natalo," in reference to his pride in the group.

After triumphant victories in the District Meet, the SLU Badminton Team will now represent District IV in the City Meet.



Photo by: Ventura, K. Leon Hidalgo, Jasmine Faye Tabec, and Melissa Cosme during their matches in District Meet, held at University of Baguio last December 8.

CARAA 2025
FEBRUARY 23-28
BAGUIO CITY
Final and Official Medal Tally
Secondary Level



Pedaling To Triumph: SLU's Pride Shines in Batang Pinoy-Haring Ahon

JACQUIN R.

Like many young athletes, Gedwin Caliwan never imagined himself becoming a serious competitor in cycling. Yet, what began as casual rides gradually grew into a passion. At first, it was simply for fun, a way to pass the time. But over time, he found himself lacing up his shoes and getting ready to race—as the thrill of the ride grew, so did his determination.

On November 19, 2024, Caliwan from Saint Louis University-Basic Education School Senior High represented Baguio City in the prestigious Haring Ahon competition during the Batang Pinoy League. The event, held in Palawan, brought together cyclists from across the Philippines, including Davao City, Quezon City, Pangasinan, Ilocos Norte, and competitors from other regions. Caliwan competed in three challenging categories—Time Trial,

Criterion, and Road Race, wherein Caliwan showcased resilience and grit.

In the Time Trial, known as the "race of truth," Caliwan raced against the clock and secured an impressive 15th place out of 50 riders. Meanwhile, he finished 21st in the Criterion, a high-speed race that demands quick reflexes and sprinting power. In the final event, he earned 18th place in the Road Race, showing his ability to stay focused under challenging conditions.

Adjusting to Palawan's tropi-

cal heat presented challenges; the high temperature made it difficult to keep up the pace while positioning the

peloton and strategizing for the finish line required determination. Despite these obstacles, representing Baguio City added extra pride and motivation to his performance. "It's such an honor to represent my city. It's a reminder that athletes from Baguio can excel in any sport," Caliwan expressed.

"The competition was intense," Caliwan recalled. "The energy from the crowd and the pressure from the riders pushed me to give my best." Despite not reaching the podium,

Caliwan's results were a true reflection of an athlete. Battling against the best, Caliwan proved that the journey and determination to rise matter more than the medals won.

Reflecting on the experience, cyclist Caliwan said, "Cycling is about more than just winning—it's about growth, learning, and enjoying the ride." He credited this lesson to his Coach, Timothy Sumeg-ang, who has been instrumental in his development as an athlete. His advice to those looking to start their journey is simple: "Start slow, have fun, and when you're ready, give it your all. Progress comes with time."

Though Caliwan didn't take home a medal, his journey was one of triumph. For him, the true victory lies not in the rankings but in the heart he put into every pedal.

"It wasn't always about the race—it was about the journey and the people who believed in me along the way."



SPORTS



SLU-BEDS SENIOR HIGH
**IN IRAMURALS
2025**

**STANDING
1st**



2nd



3rd



4th



SLU-BEDS SWIMMER SIBLINGS, NABS 9 MEDALS IN CITY MEET 2025

Cajucorn, M., Zabala, F., Rosas, I.

This is not strength or resilience. It is about time we recognize something for what it is. Poverty is poverty regardless of what pen you used to write it down. You see poverty outside your comfortable car – damaged roofs, soiled skin, carton beds, and single-digit lifetime savings. Poverty is what our privileged minds refuse to accept most of the time.

Swimmer Siblings Ashton John Rivera and Ashley Jennelle Rivera of Saint Louis University - Basic Education Senior High School overpowered Baguio City high schools in the recently concluded Palarong Panlungsod 2025 Men's and Women's Swimming Competition, where they dashed and splashed to victory to snatch a total of nine medals – six gold and three silver last January 11-12 at the Baguio Athletic Pool.

Ashton Rivera from 11 ABM A took home four gold medals from 50m Freestyle, 100m Freestyle, 50m Butterfly, and 100m Butterfly, and he also took a silver medal from 200m Freestyle, bagging a total of five medals. Meanwhile, Ashley Rivera from 12 ABM B also rose to the top in the Women's Division, where she won four medals composed of two golds in 100m Freestyle, 1,500m Freestyle, and two silver medals from 50m Freestyle, and 50m Breaststroke.

In the previous year, Ashton only won one gold medal while Ashley got three silver medals, and the comeback that they made was extraordinary as they doubled the number of their medals, "What motivates me is the fact that I want to make a name for myself before my high school year ends," Ashton said, he also mentioned that his parents had

supported him and taught him the value of hard work as well as his faith in God inspired and motivated him in everything that he did.

"To beat my times and to be able to participate in the Palarong Pambansa 2025," Ashley answered regarding her goals now that she is qualified for the next level. Ashley also added that the best part of competitions was feeling the support of her family and friends, for they showed up despite their busy schedules; she is also grateful for the praises that she received from her parents and coach.

Rivera siblings began their journey in swimming because of their parents when they were young; their advice for those who want to take the same path as theirs is to seize every chance that is thrown at them and keep their heads high, "It will always be either something good for you or a lesson you should learn," Ashley said to inspire future athletes, "Never give up, even when it feels impossible," Ashton added.

SLU-BEDS Swimming Team is now preparing for the upcoming Palarong Panrehiyon 2025, where they will represent not just SLU but also the City of Baguio; the Rivera siblings are aiming to win their respective categories and represent the Cordillera Region in the Palarong Pambansa 2025.

Photo by: Venturozo, K. Ashley Rivera, doing a Butterfly stroke, will represent Baguio City in the Palarong Panrehiyon 2025.

SLUCubs Volleyball Girls claims a Roaring Victory in District Meet

TUGADE, H. & MARTIN, M.

On December 8, 2024, the Saint Louis University Basic Education School (BEDS) Volleyball Girls showed Don Bosco High School their unwavering spirit on the court as they advanced victoriously to the City Meet, the SLU Cubs played strong and consistently through three sets, showing their hard work in Don Bosco High School.

After an intense three-set encounter that left spectators on the edge of their seats, with both sides battling valiantly for each and every point, Saint Louis University Basic Education School (BEDS) defeated Don Bosco High School with set scores of 3-0, 25 - 16, 25 - 17, 25 - 18, and captured the heightened emotions of the spectators that took place on the court of Don Bosco.

As SLU captured their victory, their last set showed their continuous play even as fatigue caught up to them. Still, with a powerful spike by Helena Gicelle Abella, made the team go back on track resulting for the SLU Cubs to win triumphantly.