Bato-Bato Pick

A Game of Chance. A Glimpse of Childhood.

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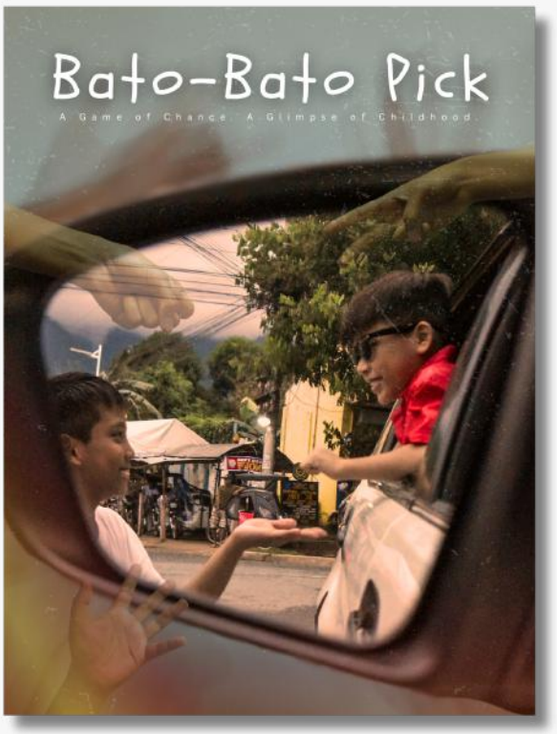
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Hinggil sa Pabalat



Sa tahimik na silid ng ating kabataan, kung saan ang oras ay mabagal at ang sikat ng araw ay bakas sa mga mukha, may isang laro na hindi kumukupas—Bato-Bato Pick. Naaalala mo ba noong ika'y unang inaya maglaro? Ano ang una mong itinaya? Ito ba ay bato, papel, o kaya naman, gunting?

Sa bawat galaw ng kamay, ang Bato-Bato Pick ay nagsisilbing simbolo ng mga pagkakataon—mga walang pangako ngunit matamis na sinasalubong. Bawat daloy ng laro, hindi alam kung ano ang resulta ng hugis na itataya. Minsan mananalo, minsan matatalo, sa huli, hindi ito kontrolado. Ang makakapagsabi lang kung sapat ba ito, ay kung masaya ka sa resulta ng itinaya mo.

Sa paglipas ng ngayon ay mabilis na oras, ang resulta ng mga taya na ito ay nauunawaan nang may higpit sa puso. Nauunawaan na ang mga kaganapan sa buhay ay walang katiyakan—na may pagkakataong ang papel na iyong pinili ay hindi pala mananalo sa gunting na kalaban. Pero, gaya ng daloy ng buhay, may pag-asa itong magbago at manalo ang papel mo.

Sa Bato-Bato Pick, hindi sigurado ang resulta ng bawat laro. Gayunpaman, hindi nito napipigil ang pakikilahok ng mga manlalaro. Dahil dito, ang pagtanggap ng talo, pagkagalak sa panalo, at pagiging handa sa kasunod na laro, ang nagbibigay pundasyon sa panibagong pagkakataon—kahit hindi sigurado.

Mula sa Patnugot

Ang buhay ay puno ng misteryo. Hindi sa lahat ng pagkakataon ay laging sigurado.

Tulad ng larong minsang naging paborito—Bato-Bato Pick, sa buhay, hindi mo masasabi kung kailan ang pagkatalo at pagkapanalo. Ngunit hindi ba't masaya rin kapag minsang hindi sigurado? Dahil dito mas nagiging kapana-panabik ang laro. Tunay ngang masaya kapag nanalo, ngunit hindi dahilan ang pagkatalo sa paghinto at pagsuko.

Katulad ng papel, hindi ang pisikal na istruktura ang nagdidikta ng pagiging mahina. Tulad din ng bato, gaano man katigas ito, ay minsan ding natatalo. At ang gunting, gaano man katalim, ay kaya pa ring talunin.

Sa Gabaldon, may mga taong isinasabuhay ang pagiging bato—na kahit gaano man kahirap ang buhay ay nananatiling matibay at buo. Sa bawat pagsubok, sila'y nananatiling matatag, nagpapatuloy sa laban, tulad ng papel na kayang talunin ang matigas na bato, at gunting na kayang talunin ang papel.

Ngunit ang buhay, tulad ng laro, ay hindi laging madali. Ngunit sa bawat pagbagsak, may aral kang natututuhan, at sa bawat laban, lalong lumalakas ang iyong pagkatao. Ang mahalaga ay ang pagbangon at pagpapatuloy sa laban, kahit na hindi sigurado ang mga susunod na hakbang.

Huwag kang matakot sa hindi kasiguraduhan ng buhay. Sa bawat pag-aalinlangan, mayroong lakas na naghihintay. Patuloy na lumaban, patuloy na bumangon, dahil sa huli, ang mahalaga ay hindi kung sino ang nanalo, kundi kung paano mo hinarap ang bawat hamon sa buhay.

Kaya't piliin mo pa rin sanang lumaro kahit hindi tiyak ang pagkapanalo.

Samantha Nicole Roldan
Editor-in-Chief, The Boulders

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Aling Lorena, ang Bato!

Lyan Balingit & Cryshel Jorduela

"May buhay sa bato"

Sa bawat hakbang ng tao sa mundong ito, naroroon ang mga batong tila walang halaga—tinatapakan, sinisipa, at madalas ay binabalewala. Ngunit sa likod ng kaliitan at pawang walang silbi ng mga batong ito, may kaakibat itong pag-asa sa buhay ng isang taong nagpatunay na may buhay sa pagtitinda ng mga bato—si Gng. Lorena Mendoza-Gloria.

Si Aling Lorena ay mula sa Bagting, Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija. Labindalawang taon pa lamang siya ay nagtitinda na siya ng mga bato. Sa kasalukuyan ay mayroon siyang anim na anak. Hindi man marangya ang hanap-buhay niya, nagsilbi pa rin itong pangunahing pinagkakakitaan ng kanilang pamilya.

Sa palabas na "Darna" ay nariyan si Ding marinig lamang ang katagang "Ding, ang bato!", at si Darna ay humahayo na upang tulungan at magsilbing pag-asa sa bawat taong nangangailangan. Sa totoong buhay, si Aling Lorena ay para ring si Ding, marinig niya lamang ang katagang "Aling Lorena, ang bato!" mula sa kaniyang mga suki ay nagsisilbi na rin itong pag-asa para sa kinabukasan at pang-araw-araw nilang pamumuhay.

Ang kanyang simpleng hanapbuhay—ang pagtitinda ng bato—ay hindi lamang kabuhayan, kundi simbolo ng lakas, sakripisyo, at pagmamahal. Sa bawat batong kanyang pinupulot upang ibenta, ito ay may kasamang pangarap, pag-asa, at buhay. Tunay ngang sa kwento ni Aling Lorena, may buhay sa bato.

"Ginto sa Lupa: Ang Kabuhayan ni Aling Lorena

Sa pagsikat ng araw, paglitaw ng buwan, banta ng ulan, at maging sa hagupit ng bagyo—mayroon itong bunga na ikinatutuwa ng ilan. Matapos ang pagtulak ng mga patak ng tubig sa lupa, ang mga batong tahimik na naghintay sa ilalim ay nasikatan—handa nang mabigyan ng panibagong destinasyon. Mula sa kabundukan hanggang sa dalampasigan, ang mga bato ay siyang pupulutin, masimulan lang ang buhay na maluwag sa bulsa. Sa bayang kung saan sagana ang kabundukan at katubigan, matatagpuan ang trabahong minahal ng mga tao kapalit ng kasaganaan—ang pagtitinda ng bato. Ang mga batong matatagpuan lamang sa lupa ang siyang naging ginto sa buhay ni Aling Lorena.

Ayon kay Aling Lorena, siya ang unang nagtinda ng bato sa kanilang lugar. Ang pagtitinda ng bato ay hindi inasahan ng karamihan sapagkat makikita naman ang mga bato sa bawat sulok. Gayunpaman, ang suporta ng kaniyang pamilya ang nagbigay sa kaniya ng kasiguraduhan.

Ang proseso nito ay simple lamang. Una ay ang pagpulot kung saan pinipili nang maigi ang mga bato base sa kulay, laki, at uri. Ang mga bato ay inilalagay sa iba't ibang timba at dinadala sa bakuran upang simulan ang paglilinis—ang ikalawang proseso. Kadalasan, ang ulan na mismo ang lumilinis sa mga bato ngunit binabasa pa ito muli ni Aling Lorena upang maging mas kaaya- aya at lumitaw ang totoong kulay. Matapos nito, hinahayaang nakabilad sa banig ang mga bato, at 'pag natuyo, ay isinisilid na sa buriki. Mula sa prosesong ito, maaari nang ibenta ang mga bato.

"Noong umpisa, matumal talaga. Hindi naman mabilis kumita, kailangan talaga may tiyaga ka," aniya.

Isa sa mga naging pagsubok ni Aling Lorena ay ang paghahanap ng mas marami pang mapagbebentahan sapagkat alam niyang hindi lalago ang kaniyang negosyo kung maghihintay lamang siya sa kanilang tahanan, kung kaya ay naisipan niyang ibenta ang lupang ipinamana sa kaniya ng kaniyang ama. Naisipan niyang siya na lamang ang pumunta sa may mga malalaking hardin na naghahanap ng kukuhanan ng bato. "Wala akong service noon, nag-arkila lang ako ng tricycle para makarating sa Tarlac," wika niya. "Doon sa Tarlac, nakahanap ako ng mga tao na magiging suki ko. Sila 'yung, hanggang ngayon, ako pa rin ang nagde-deliver sa kanila," dagdag pa nito.

Sa ilang taong pamumulot ng bato ni Aling Lorena, nagkaroon siya ng mga kasamahan na naging interesado rin sa negosyo niya. Ang kaniyang lupang dati ay siya lang ang tagapulot, nadagdagan ng mga taong humahanap ng mabilis na pera. Ang kinita ni Aling Lorena sa mga nakaraang benta ang ibinabayad niya sa mga tauhan. Ang bawat buriki nito ay may katumbas na presyo: 25 piso sa tao, 5 piso sa buriki, at 5 piso sa paghakot—may kabuuang 35 piso. Ito ang ibinabayad ni Aling Lorena sa bawat buriking mapupuno. Kasunod nito ang pagtitinda sa presyong 55–60 piso bawat buriki, kasama ang delivery.

Naging maluwag para kay Aling Lorena ang pagkakaroon ng mga kasamang mamulot, ngunit nang nagtagal, nagpasya na rin ang iba na magsimula ng sariling negosyo sa pagtitinda ng bato. Ito naman ang sumubok kay Aling Lorena sapagkat mas dumami na rin ang kompetisyon.

Madami man ang kaniyang nagiging kompetensiya, ang mga dating customer ni Aling Lorena ay sa kaniya pa rin nagtutungo. Hindi napapawi ng presyo ang tiwalang ibinigay nila sa kaniya.

Ito ang hanapbuhay na bumuhay at nagbigay ng pag-asa sa simpleng pamumuhay nila Aling Lorena. Ito rin ang patunay na ang maliit na bagay ay konektado sa malaking bagay—katulad ng mga batong tila maliit na bagay lamang sa tingin ng iba, nagsilbi itong malaking pag-asa sa buhay ni Aling Lorena.



Bunga ng Bato: Tagumpay Mula sa Sipag at Tiyaga

Sino nga ba ang mag-aakala na dahil lamang sa bato ay mayroong tao ang nagkaroon ng pag-asang mangarap at magsumikap para sa magandang kinabukasan? At mula sa sipag at tiyaga, ang mga batong ito ay nagbunga ng tagumpay sa buhay ni Aling Lorena.

Sa pabalik-balik na biyahe, benta, at palitan ng produkto, si Aling Lorena ay nakabili ng dalawang lupa. Katulong ang kaniyang mga anak, hindi pa sumisikat ang araw ay namumulot na sila. Sa patuloy na pamumulot at pagtitinda ng bato, nakapagtapos ang apat sa anim niyang anak. Sa kasalukuyan, dalawa na lang ang nag-aaral.
“Sinasabi nila sa’kin noon, ang dami ko daw anak, paano ko daw bubuhayin. Pero ngayon, nakikita naman kung gaano ka-successful ang pagod ko,” wika nito sa kaniyang naramdaman nang magbalik-tanaw.

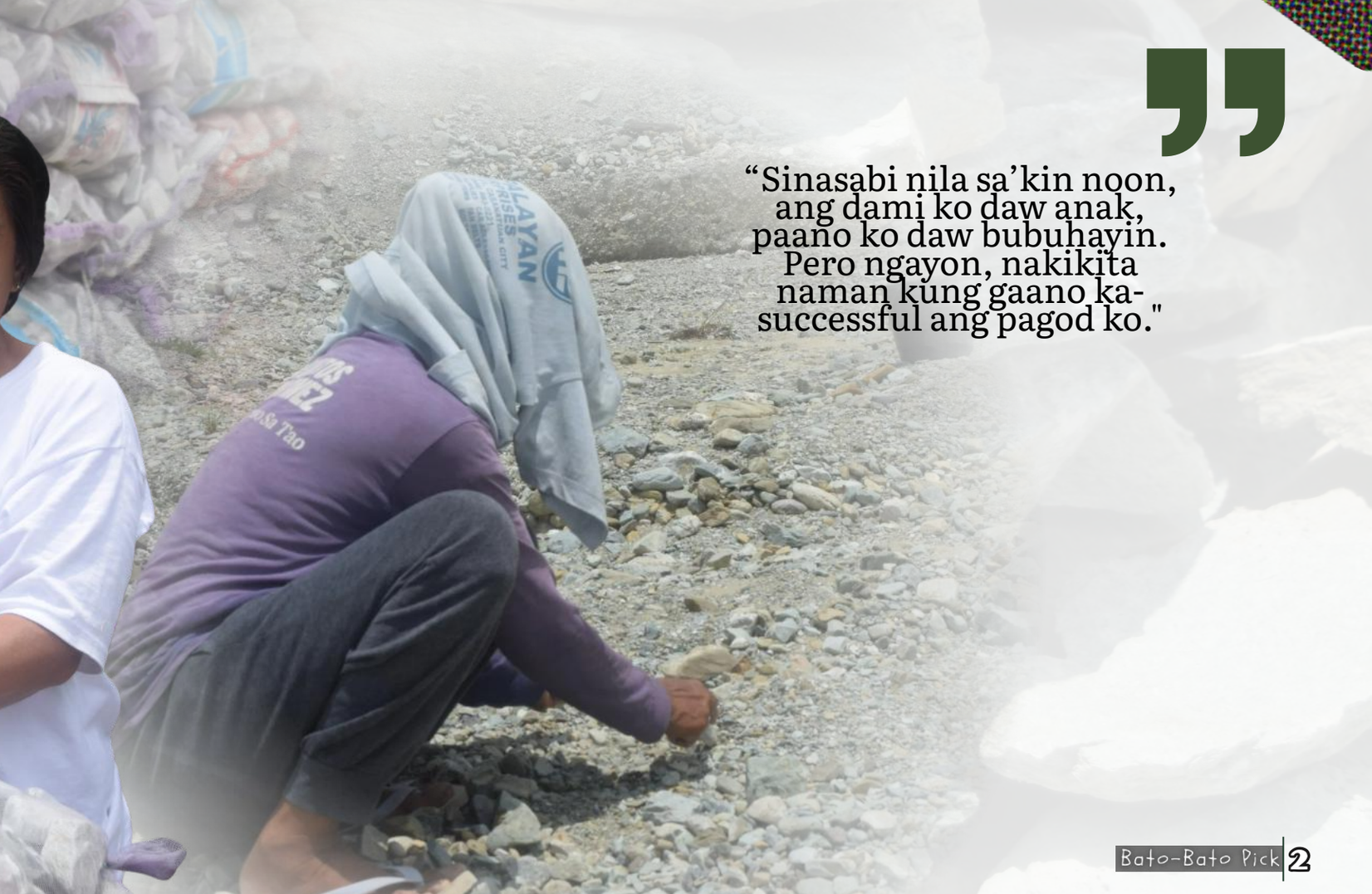
Lubos ang pasasalamat ni Aling Lorena sa mga batong pinagmulan ng kaniyang bagong buhay. Ang mga batong maliit at hindi mahalaga sa paningin ng iba ang naghatid sa kaniya sa estado ng buhay na hindi na kailangan makipulot sa ibang lupa.

Ang mga batong kaniyang inaapakan ngayon sa hardin ang dating nagsilbing “stepping stone” upang magkaroon ng maluwag na pamumuhay.

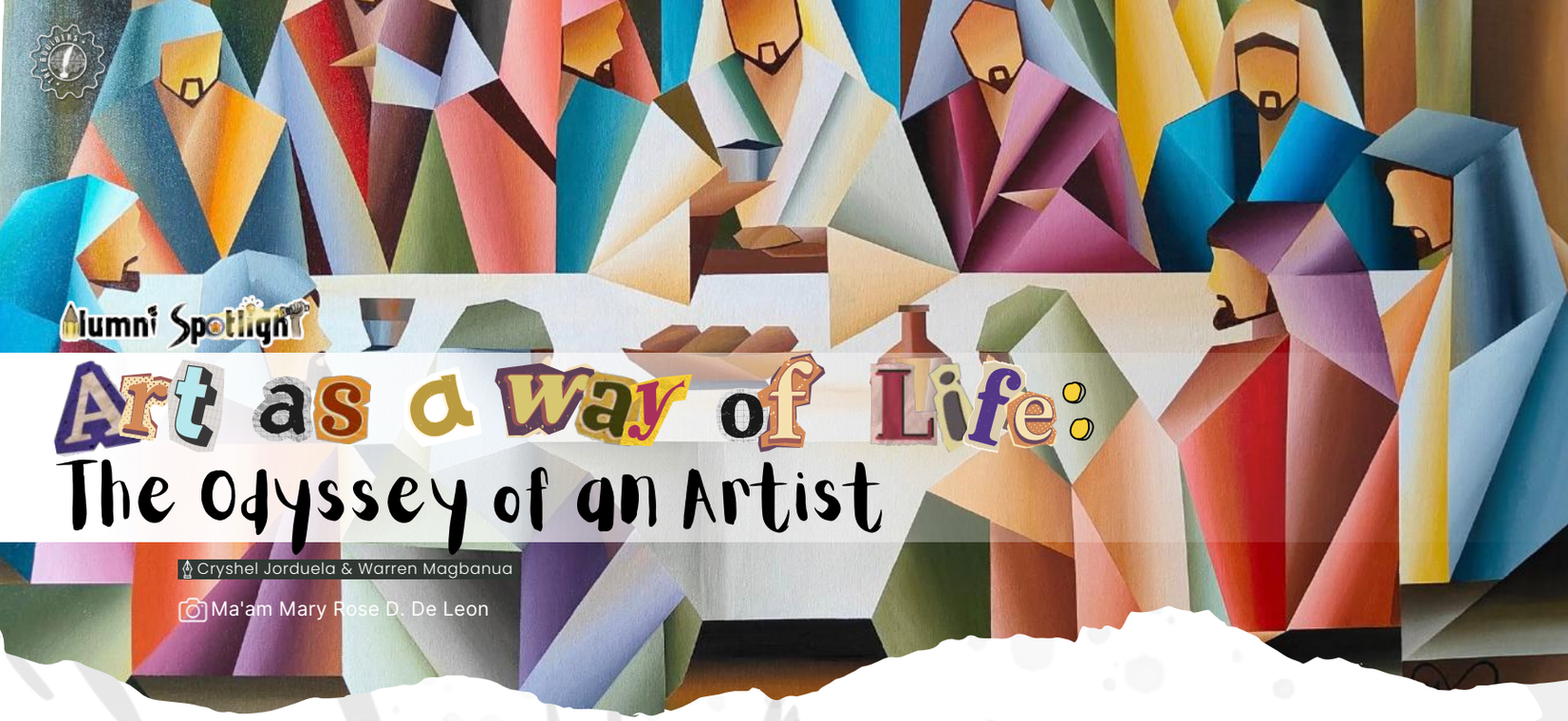
“Mayroong mga bagay na hindi ko inasahan ay mabibili o maipapagawa ko, pero dahil sa suporta ng pamilya ko at sa pasensiya na inilaan ko sa pagtitinda ng bato, nagawa ko lahat. Kaya sa mga business owners, magtiyaga at maglaan ng pasensiya,” mensahe na nais iwanan ni Aling Lorena.

Ito ang patunay na sa buhay, may mga panahong ang tao ay nasa ibaba—mahirap—ngunit ito ay hindi hadlang upang mawalan ng pag-asang mangarap ng mataas.

Ang bato ay katulad din ng tao—hindi perpekto. Maaaring ito ay may mga bitak ng kahinaan, may bigat ng problema, at may gaspang ng nakaraan. Ngunit sa bawat pagsubok, ito ay tumitibay. At gaya ng batong ginagawang tahanan o palamuti at iba pa, ang tao rin ay may kakayahang magbigay ng halaga sa mundo—kung siya’y mahubog ng karanasan na puno ng pag-asa at paniniwala.



> “Sinasabi nila sa’kin noon, ang dami ko daw anak, paano ko daw bubuhayin. Pero ngayon, nakikita naman kung gaano ka-successful ang pagod ko."



Alumni Spotlight

Art as a Way of Life: The Odyssey of an Artist

Cryshel Jorduela & Warren Magbanua
Ma'am Mary Rose D. De Leon

February marks the celebration of National Arts Month, a time to honor creativity and the artists who bring life to their craft. In this spirit, The Boulders shines its Alumni Spotlight on an exceptional artist whose journey embodies passion, perseverance, and the power of artistic expression.

"Painting is just another way of keeping a diary." — Pablo Picasso

As Picasso said, painting is another way of keeping a diary. A talented artist from Gabaldon, whose hands bring every artwork to life, has proven this through her artistic journey.

Growing up in Bugnan, Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija, this artist always had an eye for art. Even as a child, she found joy in sketching on the ground using sticks before transitioning to crayons and coloring materials in school. "Bata pa lang ako, I loved drawing," she recalls. "Naging mas hilig ko ang arts dahil sa mga pangkulay na pinapadala ng teacher namin."

Ma'am Mary Rose Dupra De Leon is the artist behind extraordinary artworks, each filled with stories waiting to be unveiled. She graduated from Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology Gabaldon Campus with a Bachelor of Elementary Education degree. Although she pursued a career in education, her true passion has always been in the world of art.

Sketching a Dream

"Bloom where you are planted." — Mary Engelbreit

This serves as a reminder that wherever life takes individuals, they should bloom, as it will lead them to their desires.

Despite Ma'am Mary Rose's innate talent, pursuing a formal education in the arts was not an option due to financial constraints. She had her sights set on studying architecture, but with tuition fees beyond her family's means at the time, she enrolled in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program at NEUST Gabaldon. "Hindi talaga Educ[ation] ang gusto kong course," she admits, "pero mas malapit at mas mababa ang tuition sa NEUST."

"Nakatulong naman sa akin 'yung teaching, nagagamit ko ngayon, lalo na may mga foreigner at overseas clients ako na hindi nagta-Tagalog, so malaking tulong din." This demonstrates that life sometimes leads individuals down paths that may not align with their deepest desires, but it does not mean those paths cannot lead them to their dreams.

Choosing a Style and Medium

"Art is not a thing; it is a way." — Elbert Hubbard

Indeed, art is not just a thing—it is about the way the artist creates it, how artworks convey the real story behind their formalistic aspects.
"In my art style naman, tinatawag itong cubism," she says. "Acrylic medium [ang ginagamit ko] dahil mild lang ang amoy niya and mas affordable ang materials." She shared her artistic style, which gives life to her artworks.

"I usually paint about family, abundance, mother and child, but now I focus on biblical stories. Iyan ang subjects ko sa artworks ko ngayon. Gusto ko kasi sa pamamagitan ng sining maipakita ko rin sa ibang tao ang [mga] story sa Bible," she shared. "Hindi ko rin alam paano ko naipipinta 'yung nasa isip ko, pero one thing is for sure, it is God's gift for me." She believes that her innate talent in art is a gift from God.

"May mga hinahangaan akong artists, like Vicente Manansala and Oscar Zalameda." Aside from having talent, she also draws inspiration from renowned artists who have influenced her journey.

Choosing a Style and Medium

"Creativity takes courage." – Henri Matisse

Pursuing one's dreams requires courage. As an artist, Ma'am Mary Rose has faced both challenges and triumphs. One of her struggles was the lack of resources due to financial difficulties.

Despite this, she never doubted her decision to pursue art.

She shared that she initially sold her artworks for only 50 pesos. Back in 2012, while still a student, she would draw projects using just a pencil. By 2023, she started selling her artworks for 6,000 pesos. "Now, in 2025, mas malalaking project[s] na ang dumarating, like ang isang painting ko hindi na bumababa sa 5 digits ang price hanggang sa meron na nga[ng] 6 digits isang painting," she shared. She also mentioned being invited as a judge for art competitions.

Her journey—from drawing on the ground as a child to painting her dreams on a larger canvas—exemplifies how perseverance and dedication can lead to success.

Signature Stroke: Imparting Wisdom for Future Artists

"Every artist was first an amateur." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

Every great career begins with being an amateur. It all starts with a dream, and with determination and action, that dream turns into reality.





"Huwag kayong titigil sa pangarap n'yo. Kapag may pangarap ka, hindi pwedeng wala kang gagawin. Hindi pwedeng maghihintay ka lang. Ikaw ang gagawa ng paraan to reach your dreams," she said. "Si Lord ang ultimate source of everything, kaya anumang bagay na meron ka, lagi kang maging mapagpasalamat sa Diyos."

Ma'am Mary Rose has found her place in the world of art, serving as a reminder that nothing can be achieved without God's guidance. Through her creativity and passion, she creates a colorful story behind every artwork—one that comes straight from the heart. Those interested in seeing more of her creations or learning about her process can visit her Facebook page, Mary Joe Arts.

"Huwag kayong titigil sa pangarap n'yo. Kapag may pangarap ka, hindi pwedeng wala kang gagawin. Hindi pwedeng maghihintay ka lang. Ikaw ang gagawa ng paraan to reach your dreams,"

FEATURE

Real-life Darnas:
Empowering Women to be their Own Heroes

Jem Bendiola & Quennie Torio

Not all heroes wear capes; some wear chalk-stained blouses, stand at the frontlines of learning, and shape the future with every lesson they teach. Beyond the walls of the classroom, they are also warriors of change—breaking barriers, uplifting others, and standing firm in the face of adversity. With wisdom as their shield and passion as their weapon, they prove that heroism is not about superpowers but about the courage to inspire, empower, and make a difference.

As part of women's month celebration, the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology – Gender and Development Center (NEUST-GAD) recognized women from various departments and campuses with the theme "Babae sa Lahat ng Sektor, Aangat ang Bukas sa Bagong Pilipinas," held on March 21, 2025 at the Mini Convention Center, Sumacab Campus.

At NEUST Gabaldon Campus, two extraordinary educators, Dr. Miranella D. Tiangco, recognized as one of the Empowered Women of 2025, and Ma'am Angelina G. Mallari, hailed as one of the Pillars of Women in Education, stand as beacons of strength and inspiration.

Like Darna, who is considered as one of the fictional women heroes in the Philippines—known for her bravery, resiliency, and empowerment, they faced daily challenges—not in epic battles, but in early mornings, endless lessons, and the responsibility of shaping young minds. Yet, their heroism extends beyond the classroom. At home, they are pillars of love and sacrifice, balancing their roles as educators, mothers, daughters, and mentors. This ability to nurture, lead, and uplift both in school and at home proves that they are true heroes—not just to their students, but to their families and communities as well.

Darna as Narda: Unveiling the Story behind Heroism

Every hero has an origin story—a moment that shapes their purpose, tests their strength, and defines their path. Just like Narda—alter ego of Darna, Dr. Tiangco and Ma'am Mallari have hidden stories behind being the real-life Darnas. They may not wear capes, but their journey as educators proves that true heroism lies in resilience, passion, and the lives they touch every day.

For Dr. Miranella Tiangco, known as Ma'am Maya, an Associate Professor V and the Chair of the NEUST Gabaldon Campus' Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS), the journey to becoming an educator was far from easy. She once dreamed of a different future, but life had other plans.

As a young nursing student, she faced one of the biggest challenges of her life—teenage pregnancy. The world might have expected her to give up, but she refused to let her circumstances define her. Through the untiring support of her family, she found the strength to continue. "I stopped studying for two and a half years because I had my child. But my family never gave up on me—kinulit nila ako," she recalled with a smile.

There was a time she questioned her path. "Inisip ko na teacher na nga nanay at ate ko, magti-teacher pa ba ako?", she was uncertain, unsure of where she truly belonged. But in her search for answers, she turned to faith. "Back then, I didn't really know where I was headed—but I prayed. Ituturo sa'yo ni Lord—either at the beginning or the moment you graduate—kung ano talaga ang para sa'yo."

For Ma'am Tiangco, teaching is more than just a career—it is a calling. "Teaching is not really a profession but a vocation; it is more into service."

On the other hand, Ma'am Angelina Mallari, former Principal of the NEUST Gabaldon Campus' Laboratory High School (LHS), always knew that teaching was her path. For her, it was never just a profession but a lifelong calling that took root in her heart at a young age. "To become a teacher is my childhood dream, and my father also encouraged me to be one," she shared, recalling the inspiration that led her to the field of education.

Even after retiring, her passion for education remains firm. "I aspire to become a teacher because I believe in the transformative power of education and want to inspire and empower young minds to reach their full potential, fostering a love for learning and equipping them with the skills they need to succeed," she expressed passionately.

Through decades of dedication, she became more than an educator. She was a mentor, a guide, and a force of inspiration. Though she has stepped away from the classroom, her influence lingers in the countless students she has taught, the lives she has shaped, and the dreams she has ignited. For Ma'am Mallari, teaching was never just about lessons; it is about leaving a legacy, one student at a time.

Darna's Greatest Mission: Conquering Classroom Battlefield

Every hero faces battles that shape who they are. For teachers, the classroom is where they fight daily challenges—adapting to change, guiding students, and overcoming obstacles. With patience and dedication as their greatest weapons, they continue to stand strong, shaping minds and making a difference, one lesson at a time. Just like Darna who also serves as a teacher to us—teacher that teaches and empowers every woman to be the heroes for themselves—who proves that a woman is not just a woman; they are limitless.

Ma'am Tiangco's challenges extend far beyond lesson plans and lectures. Adapting to technology during the pandemic was difficult, but an even greater battle lay in understanding and guiding students through their personal struggles. "The problem is the students themselves dahil we also need to consider their mental health, because not every student has the same mentality," she explains. Each generation brings new attitudes, new battles, and new perspectives, making it a constant challenge for educators to bridge the gap and truly reach them.

"As a teacher, you're not just an educator—you are a guidance counselor, a mother, a sister... you are everything," Ma'am Tiangco shares. Beyond delivering lessons, she shoulders the weight of her students' unspoken struggles, their silent battles fought beyond the classroom walls. To truly make a difference, a teacher must be more than an instructor—they must be a lifeline, a guiding hand, a safe place. They must be their everything. And despite the challenges, Ma'am Tiangco believes that real educators rise above them by giving their all, shaping not just minds, but hearts and futures. "Be their everything," she says.

On the other hand, just like Darna, Ma'am Mallari knows this battle well. Throughout her journey as an educator, she faced challenges that tested her patience, adaptability, and resilience. The rapid evolution of technology in education became one of her biggest hurdles. "Staying up-to-date with learning technologies is a challenge," she admitted. But instead of letting it hold her back, she chose to face it head-on.

"I attended trainings and seminars to adapt to new methods," she shared, proving that a great teacher never stops learning.

But the real battlefield was inside the classroom, where every student was different, each carrying their own struggles. Managing student behavior was never easy, but she discovered the key to discipline—not through authority, but through connection. "You have to create a classroom environment that is both engaging and conducive to learning," she emphasized. When students feel seen and valued, they listen, they grow, they thrive.

More than discipline, she understood that learning itself is not one-size-fits-all. "You have to identify the diverse learning styles of your students," she explained. Like a hero who adapts to every challenge, she made sure each student found their own path to success.

Even after stepping away from the classroom, Ma'am Mallari's mission continues. For her, teaching was never just about lessons—it was about transformation. It was about making an impact so deep that long after the bell rings, her students carry with them the knowledge, the values, and the confidence she helped nurture.

Like Darna, Ma'am Tiangco and Ma'am Mallari faced challenges that tested their strength, patience, and dedication. But instead of backing down, they rose above, turning obstacles into opportunities to inspire. Their greatest victory is not in the battles they fought but in the lives they changed—proving that true heroes do not just wear capes; sometimes, they stand in front of a classroom.

Darna's Magic Stone: The Future They Have Built

The mark of a true hero is not just in the battles they fight, but in the lives they transform. The stories of Dr. Miranella Tiangco and Ma'am Angelina Mallari prove that heroism is not about capes or superpowers—it is about resilience, compassion, and the unwavering commitment to uplift others.

If Darna has a magic stone that she is using as her superpower, Ma'am Tiangco and Ma'am Mallari also have magic stone that serves as their treasure—the future they have built for all the students and the positive influence they have shared to all the people around them, not just simply as a person but rather as women.

Through every challenge they have faced, from personal hardships to the ever-evolving demands of education, they have remained steadfast. Their influence extends beyond the classroom, shaping not only students but also the future of the communities they serve. Like real-life Darnas, they have built a legacy of strength, empowerment, and inspiration—proving that the future is indeed brighter because of the women who dare to lead, teach, and uplift others.

As they continue their journey, their story serves as a reminder: true heroes are not defined by what they wear, but by the impact they leave behind. The future they have built truly serves as their superpowers—proving that women are limitless.



Dr. Ma. Luisa Pacada



MLS Photography

Milestones Have No Age: SEAC Class '75 Marches again after 50 Years

Emily Agumbay

"Because some dreams are too meaningful to celebrate only once."

Every dream that comes true has a big impact on one's life. It deserves to be celebrated not only once because a person's entire life changes because of it.

Fifty years is a long time. It is long enough to build families, rise in careers, fail, heal, and grow old. It is long enough to forget the faces from high school — or remember them only as the laughter behind someone in a hallway, the quiet seatmate in a classroom, or the friend who once promised never to lose touch.

And yet, on April 25, 2025, at the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) Gabaldon Campus, once known as Sabani Estate Agricultural College (SEAC), the Class of 1975 came home as they gathered again through the Golden Jubilee Graduation Ceremony.

The program shows that milestones have no age. It was not just an event; it was a turning point that deserves lasting recognition.

Processional: A Return to Where It All Began

"Life is a series of once in a blue moon moments, so cherish every single one."

The event was more than nostalgia. It was a rare, almost impossible kind of reunion — not just of classmates, but of selves.

Beneath the smiles and celebration was a quiet ache: for those who did not make it back and for those they had outgrown along the way. Some friends had been taken by time. Some drifted away. Some remained only in photographs, scribbled in notes, and faded in memories. And yet, somehow, their absence made the moment even more sacred — a silent tribute to lives once intertwined.

Dr. Rhodora Jugo, NEUST President and the Jubilee's Commencement Speaker, touched every heart with her message: "It is a sacred reconnection with the past, a tribute to your journey, your roots, and the soil that nurtured your earliest aspirations," she said. "A homecoming not just to a place, but to a time when everything seemed possible."

Fifty years of celebrating high school graduation might be rare to all people; yet, these people were there to celebrate — it was rare, yet, they were there.

Keynote Speech: A March to Remember

"A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination, and hard work."

Behind the success of every person who joined this event was sweat, determination, and hard work. But having this event — celebrating their milestone fifty years ago — was like magic that could happen to a person.

The event reminded them not only of all the happy moments they shared fifty years ago but also of all the struggles and triumphs they encountered that enabled them to attend this once-in-a-lifetime event.

Dr. John Dumayas, Associate Professor V, representing Campus Director Dr. Franklin Dumayas, reminded the audience that revisiting the past was not an act of nostalgia but a celebration of the spirit that carried them through the years. "We turned back the clock not just to reminisce but to relive the important moments in your life — a moment of triumph, a moment of transition, a moment that set the stage for all that you have become," he said.

They marched again, this time not as teenagers brimming with dreams, but as adults carrying decades of life between them. Their caps and gowns fit differently now — not just on their shoulders, but in their meaning. This was not just a reenactment of graduation; it was a return to a version of themselves they thought they had left behind.

Roll Call: A Legacy to Remember

"Your greatness is not what you have, but what you give."

In every journey, people leave a legacy that everyone remembers about them. People may recognize what they achieve today, but it is what they leave behind that will endure in their hearts and memories forever.

Republic of the Philippines' Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Undersecretary and Class '75 Golden Jubilee President Dr. Teodoro Gatchalian challenged the crowd to rethink how success is measured: "Our true worth is not what we have but what others remember of us — our kindness, our contributions, our values." His words left a resonant message: success is not written in accolades but etched in the lives shaped along the way.

The event was filled not just with people but with echoes — of old school chants, of youthful laughters, of stories told a thousand times but never quite the same. Names were called again, and diplomas were handed out, not because they were needed, but because they were earned — not by tests or assignments, but by years lived well.

Some cried. Some simply stood in silence, holding their diploma once more, as if holding a piece of time that had waited for them to come back.

After all, some goodbyes are not forever. Some graduations, as it turns out, are too meaningful to happen only once.



Bridging Borders: The Transformative Power of Teaching

FEATURE

Jerome Cuaresma & Cryshel Jorduela

"Teachers must embrace global perspectives to prepare students for an increasingly interconnected world."
— unknown

Teaching extends far beyond the four walls of a classroom — it continues wherever learning happens. Interconnectedness plays a vital role in shaping knowledge and experience because teaching and learning processes occur not just in one classroom only — in reality, the entire world serves as the classroom. The learning process becomes a continuous and dynamic process that will enrich the understanding and broaden the horizons through diverse perspectives and interactions.

As part of the Faculty Exchange and Lecture Program initiated by the international collaboration of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST), Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto (UMP) in Indonesia, and Dong Nai Technology University (DNTU) in Vietnam, four faculty members from NEUST Gabaldon Campus joined the program.

Dr. Franklin T. Dumayas, Director of NEUST Gabaldon Campus, Dr. Jaypee R. Del Rosario, Chair of the Teacher Education Program of NEUST Gabaldon Campus, and Mr. Jeffrey G. Dichoso, O
Instructor from NEUST Gabaldon Campus - College of Agriculture, participated in a faculty exchange and lecture program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto (UMP) in Indonesia. While Dr. Rosalie A. Pineda, NEUST Gabaldon Campus Focal Person for Internationalization, and Mr. Jessie T. Gonzales, an Instructor from NEUST San Isidro Campus - College of Education, participated at Dong Nai Technology University (DNTU) in Vietnam.

This international endeavor aligns with the vision of NEUST Global and is made possible under the leadership of the NEUST University President, Dr. Rhodora R. Jugo. It happened last April 10-18, 2025, at DNTU — Vietnam, and April 21-25, 2025, at UMP — Indonesia.

Their teaching journey proves that being a teacher does not focus on academic aspects only, and learning does not end within one classroom — teaching and learning should possess interconnectedness with global perspectives that enable them to help their students to not just be responsible students but also responsible citizens of their community.

The Path Unfolds

"The best journeys answer questions that, in the beginning, you didn't even think to ask." **— Jeff Johnson**

In life, the path one walks is often uncertain, but every step unfolds a new possibility. Sometimes, all the things that one has and experiences in the present were never in their thoughts in the past — it was not in their interest or expectations, but life leads them there because it is the best plan for them. And as a teacher — who always shares everything with all students — this plan might be for them too.

Dr. Dumayas admitted that being involved in this international endeavor is not what he expected before when he was a student: "There were no internationalization endeavors or activities there...kaya hindi ko nakita 'yung sarili ko, involving in this kind of endeavor," he said.

Similarly, Dr. Del Rosario admitted that participating in this kind of endeavor was not on his mind before: "When I was a student at our university, I never thought I would one day go abroad and become an exchange faculty member. Back then, I focused on finishing my studies and planning my career," he said.

Also, Dr. Pineda has a similar goal, which is to finish her studies, and being an exchange faculty member has never come into her mind before. "My focus back then was on soaking up everything I could, getting that degree, and figuring out my next steps. The thought of coming back in a teaching capacity, especially as part of an exchange program, wasn't really on my radar. But life has a funny way of surprising you, and looking back, all those experiences as a student here definitely laid the groundwork for this opportunity."

Likewise, Mr. Dichoso did not expect to become an exchange faculty because he did not even know before that he will pursue the profession of being an educator. “No, because I myself didn't know that I am going to pursue the profession of being an educator in Higher Education Institution.” he stated.

This proves that sometimes life takes people to places they never imagined, but it will make a huge impact on them. Especially as teachers, their influence is a part of that grand design for students too. Teaching does not only occur within one classroom because learning happens globally.

Bridging Borders through Education

"Education is all a matter of building bridges." **— Ralph Ellison**

The exchange of knowledge in these modern times is not only enclosed within one country, but it happens globally — using education as a way to exchange knowledge and cultures.

During the exchange faculty journey of NEUST GC's faculty members, they bring their learnings from NEUST to UMP and DNTU in exchange for the knowledge that they can learn from them.

Dr. Dumayas said that it is not the subject matter that he brought to UMP, but the qualities of a teacher that NEUST helped him to become. “It's not about the subject matter, but it's all about the qualities that my university helped me to become a teacher. To become patient, I became patient. I became more understanding of the situations of my students," he stated.

In exchange for this, Dr. Dumayas said that in UMP, they prioritize the character development of students before anything else. "At an early age, Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4, they expose their learners there to music and arts, as well as physical education. As one of the interviews conducted, sabi nga nila, at an early age, they focus on behavior and attitude development of their students. Kaya magagalang 'yung mga bata," Dr. Dumayas said as he described how the educational system here should adapt to this way of teaching. "Ganoon din naman sa atin dito, pero, mas parang ‘yun ‘yung natutunan ko, that we really need to give emphasis on character development of our pupils at an early age. Kasi, ‘pag pinalaki natin sila na maayos, maganda ang mga gawi, they will become better citizens someday," he added.

Meanwhile, Dr. Del Rosario also said that NEUST has given him the ability to be flexible and understanding towards students. But aside from that, the university also helped him to become resourceful, which he used to adapt to a new teaching environment.



"I also learned to be resourceful, especially when working with limited materials or support. These lessons helped me when I became an exchange faculty member, and I quickly adapted to a new environment and different teaching styles." Although there are differences in the environment, the learnings he acquired from NEUST guide him to adapt in new environments.

Moreover, Dr. Pineda has carried along on her journey the importance of student-centered learning and critical thinking that she learned from NEUST. "My time teaching here at our university before heading out as an exchange faculty really instilled in me the importance of student-centered learning and fostering critical thinking. That was something I definitely carried with me," she stated.

"Then, from my experience teaching at DNTU, which is a very promising university, by the way, I learned so much, especially about different pedagogical approaches, the impact of cultural context on learning, and new technologies in education." Dr. Pineda learned the importance of cultural context as a foundation of learning and also the benefits that new technologies can give to education.

Also, Mr. Dichoso has brought what he learned as a college instructor which are being patient, kind, and persistent — knowing that every student has different intelligence level. "Key lessons I have learned in our university as college instructor are being patient, kind and persistent on teaching because not all students are the same in terms of intelligence. This was also applicable during my stay in the faculty-exchamge program. Humility is always the key and being teachable at all times." he said.

"The teaching methods of [our] university and UMP is [are] almost the same but we just differ in terms of facilities because they have a lot of special facilities that was been [were being] utilized by their faculties [faculty members] and instructors to teach more efficiently." He stated that in terms of teaching methods, both universities are similar, the facilities are the only difference that they have.

This shows that this faculty exchange program can be a way of learning from each other and improving both universities at the same time. There are differences in teaching approaches, but those differences have similar goals, which are to improve education.

Similarities Outweigh Differences

"The similarities among different kinds of audiences far outweigh the differences." **– Darwin Ortiz**

The cultures and beliefs in the environment of these universities are different. However, similarities in teachings outweigh their differences.

Dr. Dumayas said, "When it comes to technology, both universities provide the necessary equipment and learning materials — they both provide quality learning materials. May nakita nga lang ako doon; they have this micro-teaching lab." NEUST and UMP, although there are minor differences, both share the same quality of education for their students.

Dr. Del Rosario also has similar sentiments regarding the quality of education of both universities. He stated, "In my experience, I found no significant differences between teaching at our university and UMP. Both institutions share a strong commitment to academic excellence and student development."

Meanwhile, Dr. Pineda finds differences in the teaching approach of NEUST and DNTU. "As for the differences in teaching, here at our university, there's a real strong emphasis on structured lesson delivery starting with preliminary activities, motivation, review, and then the lesson proper (as you can observe in the lesson plan), presenting ideas and concepts in a pure lecture/discussion." She stated that NEUST has a strong emphasis on structured lesson delivery, unlike DNTU, which focuses on mastery of the subject matter. "At DNTU, I noticed it was more learner-focused, which focuses heavily on mastery of the subject matter through a series of drills and exercises and lesson integration to real-life situations (inductive approach to teaching.)"

However, although there are differences in both universities, Dr. Pineda believes that neither of these universities is better or worse because they are shaped by differences in culture and local needs. "Neither is better or worse, just different, and it highlights how education can be shaped by culture and local needs. It's really nice to see those variations firsthand," she stated.

Mr. Dichoso said that "In terms of knowledge and diligence and persistency to pursue quality education we are at par with them (the global educational institutions) we just lack additional facilities and equipment to be comparable to them." He shared similar observation with Dr. Dumayas and Dr. Del Rosario — seeing similarities in the quality of education and minor differences in facilities.

Education across the globe really has different approaches. However, their goal will forever be the same — improving students' learning.

Faculty Going Global

"Global education is not about geography—it is about perspective, understanding, and connection." – unknown

Teachers are also students. Before they transfer knowledge to students, they study everything that they will teach. And this faculty exchange program helps them to become global thinkers.

Dr. Dumayas said, "Actually, it really helped us a lot as teachers, as faculty of this campus, to involve ourselves in these internationalization endeavors because we learn from those universities. We learn their culture. We learn their methodologies. We also have this grasp on their learning cultures and the like. So, 'yun, napakalaking tulong." He expressed that this program allows the faculty of NEUST to expand the scope of their teachings into global perspectives.

Meanwhile, Dr. Del Rosario said, "This exposure can help raise academic standards, improve research, and develop globally competitive graduates. If more faculty and students participate in such programs, it could create a ripple effect, strengthening our curriculum, encouraging innovation, and boosting NEUST's reputation on the international stage." He believes that this program can give NEUST an opportunity to become more globally competitive to better improve its quality of education.

Also, Dr. Pineda stated that her experience as an exchange faculty proves that NEUST is progressing and continuously embracing a global perspective in teaching. "My experience as an exchange faculty member is tangible proof of how NEUST is making its mark on the global stage. Seeing our university actively participate in these kinds of exchanges, fostering connections, and allowing faculty to share and gain knowledge internationally speaks volumes. It shows that NEUST isn't just an inward-looking institution; it's embracing a global perspective," she stated.

This faculty exchange program truly has a transformative power that could impact not only the quality of education in NEUST but also the lives of students. It will also allow the students to become global thinkers and take education in a global perspective — making the mantra "NEUST global" a reality.



Dr. Franklin Dumayas & Faculty of Foreign Language – Dong Nai Technology University (DNTU)

Collaborative Spirits:
Many Services, One Voice; Together for Tomorrow

FEATURE

Jem Bendiola & Carah Leanne Dacumos

Every government agency significantly contributes to the community's development. They serve with their skills, abilities, and, of course, their hearts—not for themselves, but for the greater good of the society.

The annual celebration of the Philippine Civil Service Anniversary is more than just a recognition of public service; it is a moment for government agencies to come together and strengthen their fellowship. This year, the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology Gabaldon Campus (NEUST GC) hosted the 124th anniversary celebration, themed "Transforming Public Service in the Next Decade: Honing Agile and Future-Ready Servant-Heroes." From September 18-20, 2024, government agencies and citizens gathered at the NEUST GC Open Gymnasium and other town venues for the Civil Service Anniversary Sports Fest 2024. The event featured various competitions, including Mr. and Ms. CSC, Basketball, Volleyball, Mobile Legends, Word Factory, Amazing Race, Chess, Scrabble, Badminton, Quiz Bee, Basagang Palayok, Batuhang Bola, Human Tug-of-War, Market Basket, and Speed Typing Contest.

This event provides Gabaldon's public workers not only the opportunity to relax from their hectic jobs but also to unify and reinforce their relationships as a team that contributes to the town's growth.

BCSC: A Celebration that Unites Gabaldon's Servants

Municipal Mayor of Gabaldon, Atty. Jobby P. Emata, brought together the government agencies of Gabaldon to celebrate civil service—fostering teamwork and cooperation. Participating agencies included Bagong Sikat Integrated School (BSIS),Bagting National High School (BNHS), SDO-Annex Gabaldon DepEd Elementary, F. Buencamino Sr. Integrated School (FBSIS), Gabaldon Vocational Agriculture High School (GVAHS), Local Government Unit (LGU), Ligaya National High School (LNHS), as well as national agencies such as the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Philippine National Police (PNP), Rural Health Unit (RHU), and this year's host agency, NEUST Gabaldon Campus. By sharing ideas and resources, these agencies enhance their ability to serve the community effectively. This event has strengthened relationships among public servants and has created a supportive environment for collaboration in Gabaldon.

According to Mayor Emata, "The continuous collaboration among different agencies is a mechanism we use to ensure interagency coordination and cooperation. By joining forces, we can provide the best possible public service to the community of Gabaldon. The exchange and mutual utilization of each agency's expertise and resources, combined with those of other agencies, will offer our people appropriate and more productive programs and projects." He emphasized the importance of maintaining connections with other agencies to provide quality public service to Gabaldoñeos.

An Experience that Fosters Growth

As the saying goes, "Experience is the best teacher," guiding one toward growth and learning. We live in a world where we never stop learning and discovering through our experiences. One of the players from DepEd, Mr. Ramonchito Flores, stated, "Sa mga ganitong mga event, nagkakaroon ng chance na makalaro ang ibang public servants sa mga different agency, na hindi mo naman nakakasama kasi iba ang kanilang field of work, pero 'pag nakasama mo sila sa ganitong events, nagkakaroon ng chemistry ang bawat isa."

He expressed gratitude, saying, "May respetuhan ang bawat civil servant na mga manlalaro," highlighting the discipline of Gabaldon's civil servants. He mentioned that this kind of event allows them to take a break from work and enjoy themselves. He extends his gratitude to the officials who led such events for the public servants of Gabaldon.

Furthermore, according to Ma'am Maricon Dacumos, a DepEd elementary teacher, the celebration helps reduce feelings of isolation and stress among public servants. She said, "This gathering creates a more supportive and collaborative work environment. Building positive relationships across different agencies enhances personal well-being and boosts job performance." Ma'am Dacumos emphasized that through various initiatives and activities, the goal is to inspire individuals to positively impact their communities.



Nash Respicio

Additionally, Mr. Darius Bautista from LGU shared his experience, stating, "I had a great experience and learned valuable lessons from the CSC celebration. As a referee, I exercised and learned the essence of fair judgment and honesty—significant qualities for a public servant serving our community. As a player, I enjoyed every game and nurtured the value of teamwork and building trust with my teammates." Indeed, these events contribute significantly to their personal lives as individuals and as professionals.

Impact on the Community

"It is important that this tradition continues as it serves as a platform for different public servants from various agencies to showcase their skills, talents, and values," Atty. Mayor Jobby said. He also mentioned that this kind of event serves as a stress reliever and coping mechanism for civil servants who perform significant and difficult tasks every day to serve the people of Gabaldon. "This kind of event enables them to release tension, enhance camaraderie, and practice the values they need to be well-rounded employees of the government," he added.

This event has become memorable for the participants and has truly helped them. The annual celebration began in 2014 and continues each year during the third week of September, serving as a dedicated time to honor and appreciate the hard work and dedication of civil servants in the community. As Sir Alvin Enrico stated, "The university's involvement was marked by a series of impactful activities and initiatives aligned with the values of integrity, excellence, and dedicated service to the community." He emphasized the university's role in promoting community values, reflecting integrity and excellence while inspiring others to strengthen public service.

Shared Expertise, Shared Success: The Role of Collaboration in Advancing Public Services

In an age of rising complexity and demand, the combined expertise of individuals and organizations grows more powerful. It underscores the vital role of collaboration in enhancing public services by transforming how professionals, agencies, and communities work together to achieve common goals.

This is how Atty. Mayor Jobby highlights shared expertise as shared success. "Different innovations will definitely arise from these collaborations. As has been happening in the past and present, DepEd partners with LGU; LGU partners with different agencies for programs for farmers, students, first aid and rescue, mental and health services, and the like." He added that no agency has a monopoly on knowledge, expertise, skills, and resources. Because of this continuous interdepartmental cooperation and collaboration, we optimize our strengths. Through collaboration with different agencies, they develop various projects that contribute to the community. Mayor Jobby added, "We exchange best practices and help each other in activities such as Project SMILE, partnerships for the added value of crops, scholarships, festivals, and the education of youth and out-of-school youth, among many similar undertakings."

It demonstrates how collaboration across sectors—education, healthcare, transportation, and social welfare—leads to more efficient, inventive, and meaningful solutions. By pooling expertise, talents, and resources, public service providers can better address societal concerns, improve service delivery, and provide long-term benefits for the communities they serve.

> The continuous collaboration among different agencies is a mechanism we use to ensure interagency coordination and cooperation.



Nash Respicio & Jaygee Alvez

Bato, Bato, PICS



Hindi Laging Patas

Ruth Quiere

Simula umaga hanggang takip-silim, tatambad sa iyo sa harap ng convenience store ang marungis at pagod na lalaki. Isang "pulubi" sabi nga. Nakatutuwang may ngiting tila ginto sa kan'yang labi, ngunit sa likod nito'y kirot ng buhay na hindi kailanman naging patas. Siya'y paalala na hindi lahat ay may pantay na laban.









Nakiki-angkas sa Kapalaran

Nestlyn Rivera

Umaga pa lang, abala na sina Roger Barogo, na limang taon nang kumukuha ng basura, at Eugene Cornada, na labing pitong taon na sa ganitong hanapbuhay, sa pangongolekta ng basura sa Pamilihan ng Bayan ng Gabaldon. Ayon sa kanila, araw-araw nila itong ginagawa upang mabawasan ang basura at mapanatili ang kalinisan sa pamilihan.

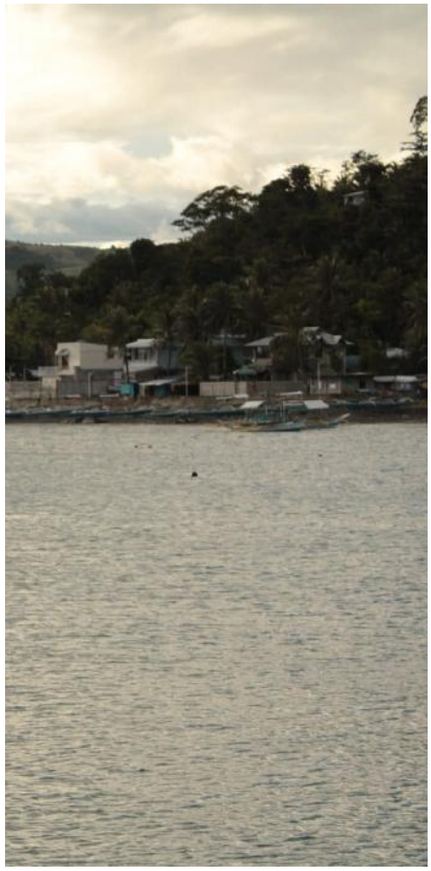
Sa Karagatan ng Walang Kasiguraduhan

Kendrick Alejo

Bawat alon ay hamon, bawat huli ay biyaya. Ganyan din ang buhay—puno ng pag-aalinlangan, pero may gantimpala sa tiyaga.









Nag-aaral pero Walang Kasiguraduhan

Geoffrey Alvez

Sabi nila, “Edukasyon ang susi tungo sa tagumpay.” Ngunit sa lipunang ang oportunidad ay ‘di pantay, diskriminasyo’y walang humpay, posible nga ba ang tagumpay? Sa kabila ng ilang dekadang pagpapagal, may kasiguraduhan nga ba ang pinuhunan nating pag-aaral?



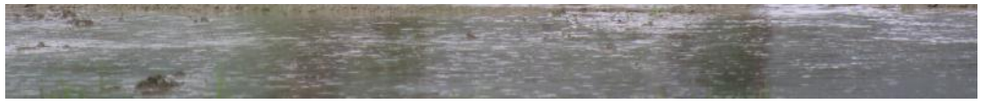


"Umaasa sa Panahon"

Loren Pangilinan







Kagaya ng buhay na lulan ang walang kasiguraduhan, ang mga magsasaka ng Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija ay sumusugal ding magpunla ng kanilang kabuhayan sa kabila ng matinding kalaban— ang panahon.

Taya ng Palad

Swerte kung laging panalo. Malas kung mas madalas ay talo. Pero, ang siyang nakatatak na sa akin, sa larong bato-bato-pick, hindi pwedeng dalawa ang manalo o kaya ay parehas na talo.

Talo ang bato sa papel. Talo ang papel sa gunting. Talo ang gunting sa bato. Ito ang konseptong alam ng nakararami. Pero, ano ba ang basehan ng pagkatalo at pagkapanalo sa larong ito?

Talo bang maituturing ang bato sa papel kung ito ay nagpapakita ng lakas, katatagan, at pagtitiis sa pagsakop ng dilim?

Talo bang masasabi ang papel sa gunting kung ito ay yumayakap, umaangkop, at sumasakop sa matatalim na sitwasyong maaaring magdulot ng sakit at hinagpis?

O kaya, talo rin ba ang gunting sa bato kung handa itong gamitin ang natitirang talim, tulis, at talas maputol lamang ang bigat ng mga pangamba?

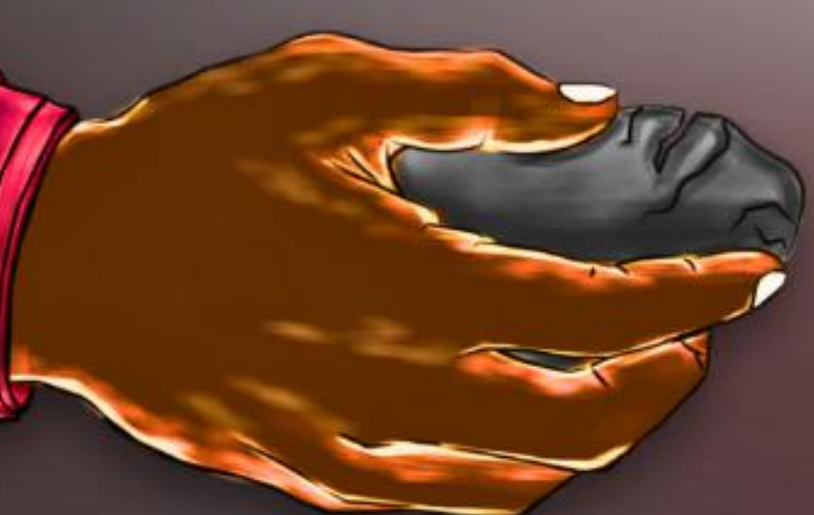
Siguro ay para sa iba talo pa rin sila. Na, kahit matatag ang bato ay maaari pa rin itong madurog sa pagsakop ng papel. Na, kahit umaangkop sa bawat hugis ang papel ay pwede pa rin itong mapunit laban sa gunting. Na, kahit matalas ang gunting, maaari pa rin itong maging mapurol kung bato ang katapat.

Pero, ang mga tahimik at maliliit na laban, hindi ba at may katumbas rin na pagkapanalo? Panalong hindi laban sa iba, kung hindi panalong laban sa sarili.

Sa larong bato-bato-pick, ang nakikita lang ng nakararami ay ang laban ng dalawang taya. Ang bato, papel, at gunting laban sa isa't isa.

Pero, siguro, panahon na rin para bigyan ng pansin ang sarili nilang mga laban. Na sila mismo, gaya natin, ay sinusubok ang katatagan. Na sa bawat laro, gaya nila, ay nakataya rin sa ating mga palad ang panalo at pagkatalo.

Ikaw, kaya mo bang maging taya gaya nila?





Mula sa panulat at dibuho ni Nhicole Santos

Bato-bato sa langit, tamaan ka sana.



Ideyal ang ama bilang tagapagtustos—ang tao na ating maaasahan—ang haligi ng tahanan. Ngunit bakit hindi ko ito makita sa sarili kong tahanan? Ang tanging nakikita ko ay katumbas ng mga salita na hindi ko inasam bitawan kahit kanino; kahit sa iyo.

Ang tapang mo—salitang pang-uri na hindi ko magamit bilang pamuri. Kung ang tatanggap nito ay ang tulad mong kampante sa buhay na ina ang naghihirap sa loob at labas ng bahay, hindi ka nararapat purihin. Gayunpaman, ang tapang mo. Sa kadahilanang kaya mo maglustay ng pera na hindi ikaw ang kumikita.

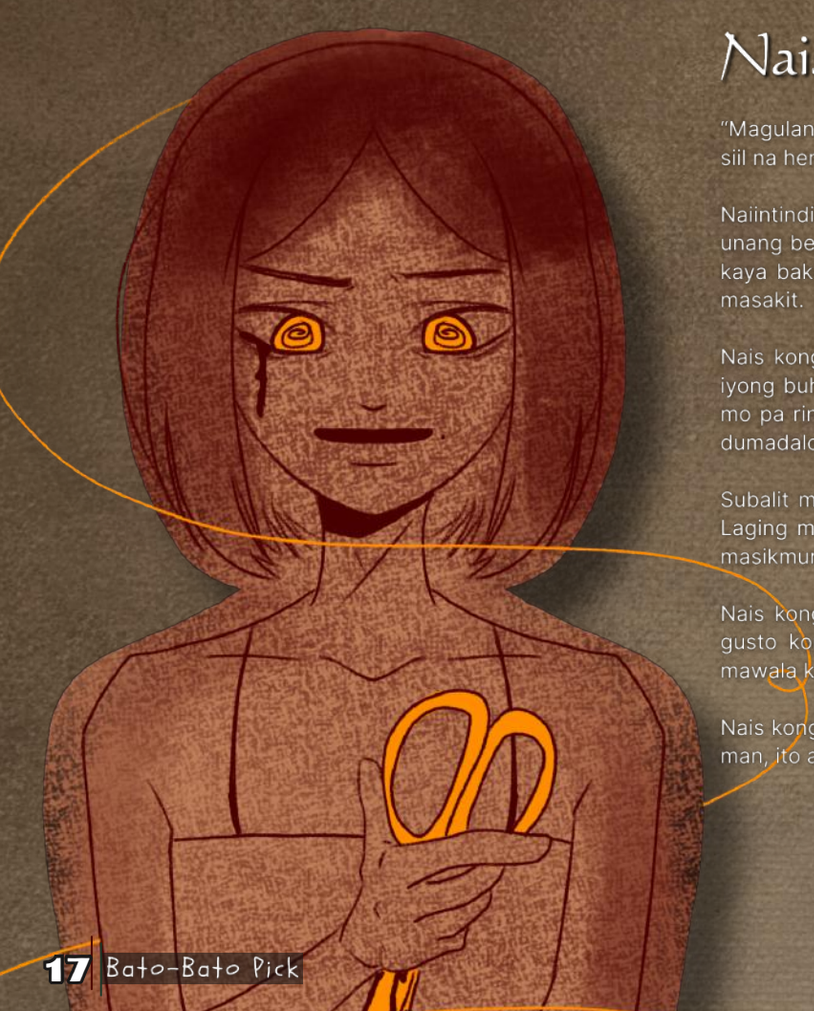
Ang gaspang mo—ugali mo'y hindi matukoy. Sa araw na hindi kinakaya ng ina, ikaw pa ang may lakas ng loob magreklamo sa kaniya. Madalas, ganiyan ka—galit, sangil, at pabigat. Minsan, ika'y sobrang bait na tila ba nagbubukas ng pagasa na ika'y magbabago pa. Pero alam ko ang totoo, dala ng dekadang pamumuhay sa loob ng iisang espasyo.

Ang tigas mo—hindi sa pisik, ngunit sa puso. Sa tuwing ika'y lumalakad palayo sa iyong mga responsibilidad, naitatanong mo ba sa iyong sarili kung ika'y matatawag pa na isang ama? Hindi ka isang bato, kaya't kausapin mo naman kami—ako.

Kung ika'y may natitira pang kalamlaman, sana—kahit alam kong huli na—pakiramdaman mo ang paghihirap, hagulgol, at serbisyo namin para sa iyo.

Huwag mong isemento ang iyong puso sa kasalukuyan na hindi ka karapat-dapat tawagin na isang ama. Dahil ganito man ang poot ko sayo, nais ko pa rin magkaroon ng tao na tatawagin kong "ama".

Nais ng iyong pagod na anak.



"Magulang mo pa rin siya." Katagang hilig ng mga Pilipino—mariing sinusumpa ng siil na henerasyon.

Naiintindihan ko kung ika'y nagkulang. Tao ka rin, hindi lingid sa pagkakamali—unang beses mong nabubuhay sa inaapakan. Ngunit ito rin ang unang buhay ko, kaya bakit sinasaktan mo ako? Hindi man pisikal—ang masakit ay mananatiling masakit.

Nais kong mawala ka. Gupitin ang koneksyong namamagitan sa'tin—pati na rin iyong buhay—saad ko pa kahit sa isip lamang. Pero ano na nga ulit? "Magulang mo pa rin siya." Ah. Oo nga pala. Wala akong karapatan sapagkat dugo mo ang dumadaloy sa aking mga ugat.

Subalit masisi ba ako kung hindi ko na kaya gampanan ang pagiging anak mo? Laging mali, walang alam, at iniinda ang iyong mga asal at kilos na hindi ko na masikmura. Kung iba ang nasa posisyon ko, masisisi pa ba ako?

Nais kong lumisan ka, ngunit panalangin man ay hindi ko magawa. Hindi dahil gusto kong mabuhay ka, kundi dahil alam kong hindi kaya ng aking ina ang mawala ka—kahit na alam kong ikagagaan ng pamumuhay ng bawat isa.

Nais kong mawala ka—putulin ang oras ng iyong buhay—at kung pagsisisihan ko man, ito ay pagdurusang sarili ko lamang ang makaaalam.

Mula sa panulat ni Lane Saavedra
Dibuho ni Lyan Balingit

Ano ba ang Papel ko sa Buhay Ninyo?

Mula sa panulat ni Kwini Toryo

"Ikaw na lang ang pag-asa namin," mga katagang madalas sambitin ng mga taong mahal ko.

Wala na bang iba? Ako na lang talaga?

Sinimulan ko ang laban ko para sa inyo. Matibay ako noon, parang bagong biling papel. Makinis, buo, at handang sulatan ng kahit anong pangangailangan. Hinugot ko ang lahat ng kaya ko — oras, lakas, pangarap — para mapunan ang kulang ninyo.

Tinanggap ko ang lahat, maganda man o masakit, na inyong isinusulat sa akin. Kahit hindi ninyo napapansin, dugo at pawis ko na ang nagmistulang tinta.

Ngunit habang lumilipas ang mga araw, unti-unti akong nauubos. Pinupunit ako ng pagod, hinuhugot ako ng panahon, at nilulukot ako ng mga hinanakit na hindi ko na masabi.

Paubos na pala ako.

Tulad ng papel, hindi na maibabalik ang mga pahinang nawala — mga panahong isinakripisyo ko, mga pangarap na isinantabi para lang matupad ang sa inyo. At ngayon, habang ako'y nalalapit sa aking hangganan, tanong ko lang: paano naman ako?

Sa kagustuhan kong maibigay ang lahat sa inyo, wala nang natitira sa akin. Lukot na lukot na ang puso ko, tuyot na ang kaluluwa ko. Kung dumating ang araw na hindi na ako kasing tibay ng dati, kung hindi na ako ang papel na kayang sulatan ng lahat, mahalin niyo pa rin sana ako.

Ako rin ay isang papel na madaling tangayin ng hangin. Pero bago ako tuluyang mapunit, nais ko lang maramdaman na may halaga pa rin ako.

Sana kahit sandali, maisulat naman ninyo ang pagmamahal sa akin, hindi lang puro hiling at sariling hangarin.

Sa Dulo ng Tagpi-Tagping Papel

Mula sa panulat ni Kwini Toryo

Tapos na.

Akala ko, kapag naubos na ang bawat piraso ng papel na meron ako, ay mauubos na rin ako.

Hindi pala.

Nangamba ako noon na baka kapag wala na akong maibigay, kapag hindi ko na kayang tanggapin ang lahat ng isinusulat nila sa akin, maglalaho na rin ang pagmamahal nila. Parang papel na nasusunog at naglalaho sa apoy.

Hindi pala.

Tulad ng papel, ako'y tinangay ng hangin, sinunog ng apoy, at napunit. Ilang bahagi ng sarili ko — oras, pangarap, pagkatao — ang isinakripisyo ko. Ngunit sa kabila ng lahat, may bunga ang pagtitiis.

Naibigay ko ang pangangailangan ng aking pamilya. Nasa harap ko na ngayon ang mga bagay na minsan lang naming pinangarap.

Sa haba ng paglalakbay, madalas maramdamang paubos na ang bawat pahina ko. Akala ko, hindi ko na maibabalik ang mga pirasong nalagas mula sa akin.

Ngunit sa tuwing nakikita ko ang kanilang mga ngiti, naririnig ang halakhak ng mga taong matagal ko nang ipinaglalaban, tila ba sila ang pandikit na muling bumuo sa akin. Isa-isa nilang pinulot ang mga piraso ko at pinagtagpi.

Akala ko, ako lang ang lumalaban. Pero hindi pala. Nandiyan sila. At sa gitna ng lahat, naramdaman kong hindi ako nag-iisa.

Binuo nila ako.

At kahit ako'y gusot, lukot, at tagpi-tagpi sa paningin ng iba, wala na iyon sa akin. Sapagkat nakamit ko na ang mithiin ko — ang mithiin ng aking pamilya.

Balang araw, ang bawat tagpi sa buhay kong ito ay magiging patunay ng katatagan ko. Na sa kabila ng lahat, pinaglaban ko.

At sa huli, ako'y nagtagumpay.

Siguro, dumating na ang araw na para naman sa sarili ko.

Ako naman.

Dahil natapos ko na ang dulo ng aking paghihirap.

Tapos na.

Tatlo, sa ngayon?

Mula sa panulat ni Lane Saavedra

Paano kung ako ay may bahay—maayos, matibay, at puno ng kulay—subalit ang mga nakapaloob ay magulo, marupok, at kulay abo? Tatlo tayo dito, mamumuhay hanggang dulo.

Tatlo. Ang bilang upang matawag na isang ganap na pamilya.

Tatlo. Ang bilang ng mga miyembro na dapat nagmamahalan.

Tatlo. Ang bilang ng mga araw, linggo, buwan, at taon na hindi na tayo kumain nang sama-sama.

Lubos kong iniisip kung paano ninyo nagagawang talikuran ang malinaw na problema. Nang mapagtanto na kahit anong papansin, kung kayo naman ay kawangis ng bato—bingi, bulag, at pirmi—walang magagawa ang pagsigaw dito.

Dalawa. Ang bilang ng mga matang lumuluha.

Dalawa. Ang bilang ng mga salitang hindi ninyo masabi sa isa't isa.

Alam kong hindi na maaayos ang kasalukuyan ngunit ako ay isang anak—anak ninyo—na mayroong karapatan sa buong pamilya. Gayunpaman, alam ko ang aking papel na mula sa inyong mga labi sa aki'y dumampi "Pag ika'y nakatapos ng kolehiyo, oras na upang kami ay maglayo." Ako ay magtatapos ng kolehiyo upang hindi maging pabigat sa gumuguhong tahanan na ito.

Isa. Ang bilang ng miyembro ng aking kinabukasan.

At sa oras na ang manipis na hibla ng katuwiran ay maputol gamit ang gunting ng kalayaan, alam kong ang tatlo ay tuluyan nang maglalaho.

Kaya, paano kung ako ay may bahay—maayos, matibay, at puno ng kulay—ngunit wala na ang tahanan ko?

Dibuho ni Lyan Balingit



DELULU

by Dorothy Lapid

let my eyes show what your emotions truly are,
let my thoughts over flow and devour all verisi- militude
and grieves,
because warm fuzzies start with a sadiest throes
and living have always a part of heart sores.



SUS

by Sandara Pascua

My heart now pounds with every glimpse,
in chilling truth my soul immerses,
secret unfolds like dim eclipse,
in silent fear my heart disperses.



RIZZ

by Vea Panganiban

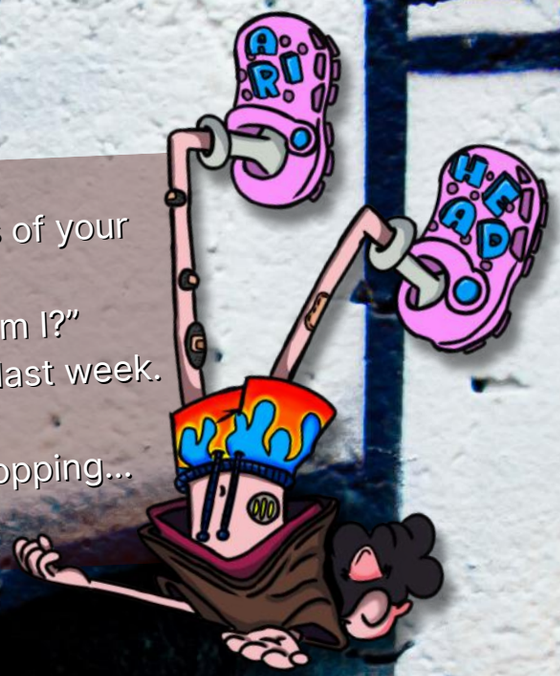
Walks in like headlines—all caps and clear, Words hit
smooth,
like charm with punctuation. “Bro’s got rizz,” they
whisper, tight,
But no one knows what built that light.
No script, no bluff—just how he lives.
The mood, the move, the mark? Signed by Rizz.

Art by Lhenard Alpuerto

AIRHEAD

by Quennie Torio

The wind blows around, Slipping straight through the corners of your mind.
You sit still, staring at nothing, Then whisper, "Wait... where am I?"
You laugh—alone— Cuz you just got your friend's joke from last week.
You're present, technically, But mentally? On vacation.
You look put-together, But your thoughts are out grocery shopping... without a list.



LOW-KEY

by Đave Elas



They say the sky is clear—yet my throat learns the weight of fog, while painted mouths toss shimmer into the air—and never ask, who's starving?
I dine on silver-laced finery—and wonder, why does it never fill me? the physicks hum their cures in tones too sweet to trust, the boots keep marching—and I ask, why is there blood in their tread? Something coils beneath the anthem, humming truths we dare not name.

GHOSTED

by Carah Đacumos

You slipped away without a sound,
Like morning fog that won't be found.
No final word, no closing thread
Just echoes of the things unsaid.



Art by Lhenard Alpuerto

PALAKOL

Mula sa panulat ni Jerome Gustesmo

Bawat hampas siguradong laman ay lagas
Sa tigas at talas ng talim kong matikas;
Kahit pa Kamagong, Molave man, o Yakal,
O anumang kahoy na 'singtigas ng bakal.

Silang lahat ay magsisidapa't luluhod —
Walang punong matapang ang tindig at tayog,
Kapag talim ko ang humatol at sumugod,
Mula sa balat hanggang sa pinakaubod.

Ngunit kaya ko mang putuli't pahigain
ang punong abot at lampas langit ang tindig,
Hindi ang bato na solido at matigas,
Kahit anong talim ko at lakas ng hampas.

Talas kong taglay siguradong mayuyupi,
Sa tigas ng batong may konkretong baluti.
Walang silbi ang talim kong 'singtigas ng bakal
Sa bagay na 'di disenyo ng aking buhay.



Ðibuho ni Justine Abalos

MASO

Mula sa panulat ni Jerome Cuaresma

Walang matigas at konkreto na bato,
'Pag humagupit ang bakal kong kamao.
Kahit tigasing pader ay maaabo,
Sa bigat ng suntok na'king ibabato.

Parang gong ang lagabag ng aking hampas,
Habang unti-unti ko ng pinupulbos
Ang batong nagkukunyari lang matigas,
Pero hindi ubra sa'king mga banat.

Huwag lang kahoy ang sa aki'y itatapat,
Dahil wala lang kwenta ang aking tigas
Kapag sa kunat nito ako sumabak,
Kahit na mala-Pacquiao ang aking sapak.

Kaya ko man na bumitak at dumurog
Ng bato na sagad sa buto ang tigas,
Ngunit 'di itumba ang punong makunat,
Malakas man ang aking pukpok at hampas.



Đibuho ni Justine Abalos

SIKLO ng Kahirapan

Ang buhay ay parang laro: Minsan panalo, minsan talo,
Sa bilis ng panahon, hindi ka na makakapagplano,
Ni hindi mo alam kung sino ang kalaban,
Susugal ka nalang at aasa sa kapalaran.

MUSMOS

Biktima nang ipinanganak sa mundo bago pa makilala ito,
Bunga ng pagkakamali ang tawag nila sayo.
Noong nabuo ka, ang puso'y kaylakas ng dabog,
Sa paglaki'y tatawaging Batang Hamog.



Simbahan

BANTAY BA

Humakbang ng A



ULTRA SOUND

Umamin

BUNTIS

Mahal ko s'ya kaya sabik sa unang tikim,
Naging madalas ang karanasan naming palihim.
Sabi n'ya, daing ko sa gabi ang paborito n'yang himig,
Tawag ng laman lang pala, akala ko'y pag-ibig.



Sumunod



Simbahan

WALANG FAMILY PLANNING

Balik sa pagiging Buntis

ESPESYAL NA LUGAR:
Simbahan: Ligtas na lugar, nasa manlalaro kung kaylan ito aalis sa lugar. Hindi ka maaaring makulong dito, kung sakaling aabutan ka ng iyong kalaro.
MRT: Matutuloy lang ang byahe kung ikaw ay may ibabayad na 2 Bentahe.
Subway: isang daanan sa ilalim ng lupa, papasok sa isang lagusan at lalabas sa kabila.
Umamin: Sumagot sa ano mangkatanungan ng kalaro. +1 Bentahe kung makakasagot.
Sumunod: Gawin ang kautusa ng kalaro. +1 Bentahe kung magagawa.



RAPE

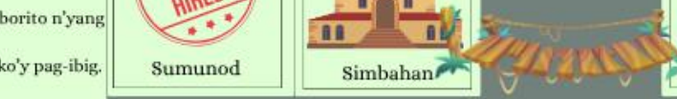
Parusa: +1 Disbentahe



MRT3



Simbahan





1

REBELDE

Halos hindi na umuuwi ng bahay,
Sa dahilang pamilya ang unang kaaway.
Gumagawa ng mali nang walang kaba,
Para maibsan ang sakit na nadarama.

Parusa: Humakabang ng Sampung beses pabalik



TAMBAY



BLACKMAIL

Sumunod



BROKEN FAMILY

Magtungo sa byahe ng eropanong papel

1

CHILD ABUSE

Sa mundong lahat ay gustong maging makapangyarihan,
May mga taong hindi ito kayang makamit.
Kaya para makawala sa katotohanan,
Mga musmos at munti ang kapalit.

Parusa: +1 Disbentahe

PRESS CON.

Umamin



BATANG HAMOG

Kung ang matatanda'y takot sa agos ng mundo,
Sa lahat ng mali nila'y ikaw ang sasapo.
Makulit at pasaway na bata ang tawag nila sayo,
Masisisi ka ba nila kung sa sarili paa mo nalang ikaw tumatayo.



1 SAMPAGUITA

Parusa: Humakbang ng Dalawa



2 CHILD LABOUR

Parusa: +1 Disbentahe



4 MALIGAYANG KAARAWAN

Pabuya: +1 Bentahe



STUDY FIRST

Pabuya: Humakbang ng Apat

1 KABATAAN

Hindi lahat ng Kabataan ay pag-asa ng bayan,
Kung minsan sila ang sisira rito.
Ang iba'y inaalagaan, at iba'y tinatapakan,
Ikaw ang bahala kung sino ka rito.



Parusa: Gamitin ang Subway

GABAY:

Para maputol ang siklo ng kahirapan, kaylangan mong lagyan ng tigtatatlong Bentahe ang bawat pangunahing istasyon at magtungo sa simbahan. Ngunit kung limang Disbentahe naman ang iyong nakuha, maaari kang makulong kung ikaw ay aabutan ng kalaro mong nasa likuran, siya ang hahatol kung ikukulong ka ba o hindi. Subalit kung ikaw ang nasa likuran, ikaw ay makukulong. Isang termino muna bago ka makabalik sa laro, at sa iyong pagbabalik, babalik sa 0 ang iyong Disbentahe. Sa ikalawang kulong, dalawang termino, sa ikatlong kulong tatlong termino, at sa ika-apat ay panghabang-buhay na kulong, sa madaling salita—hindi ka na kasali sa laro.

KATUMBAS NG MGA NUMERO SA LARO:

1- Irolyo ang Dice ng isang beses: kung 1-3 ang lumabas, ligtas ka sa parusa, ngunit kung 4-6 naman, kaylangan mong tumuloy sa parusa.
2- Irolyo ang Dice ng dalawang beses: kung may lumabas na 1-3, ligtas ka sa parusa, kung hindi naman, kaylangan mong tumuloy sa parusa.
3- Irolyo ang Dice ng isang beses: kung 1-4 ang lumabas, ligtas ka sa parusa,ngunit kung 5-6 naman, kaylangan mong tumuloy sa parusa.
4- Irolyo ang Dice ng isang beses: kung 4-6 ang lumabas tanggapin ang pabuya, kung hindi naman ay huwag.
5- Irolyo ang Dice ng isang beses: kung lumabas ay 1, tanggapin ang pabuya, ngunit kung hindi naman, tanggapin ang parusa.

2 MAGNANAKAW

Parusa: +1 Disbentahe



Simbahan



PAGTATAPOS

Pabuya: +2 Bentahe

3 RESPONSIBILIDAD

Sa kaliwa't kanang tanong, hindi ko alam ang sagot,
Sa sampung gagawin, wala pa akong tapos.
Paano pa kikilos ang katawang pagod,
Paano ko pa bubuhayin ang sariling kong kapos?

Parusa: Umamin at Sumunod



MRT3



PAGSUSUMIKAP

Pabuya: +1 Bentahe

PAROL

Umpisa ng mga nakulong

1 LULONG

Aligaga at hindi mapakali noong nakatikim,
Tila mahikang ipinapasa sa dilim.
Noong una'y gusto mo lang subukan,
Ngayo'y anibersaryo mo na sa kulungan.

Parusa: +1 Disbentahe

KULUNGAN



BAHA

inom ng 3 basong tubig

buya: +1 Bentahe



5 SUGAL

Pabuya: +2 Bentahe
Parusa: +1 Disbentahe



Simbahan



INTEROGASYON

Umamin

Mula sa panulat ni Lhenard Alpuerto

Bulong sa Hangin

Mula sa panulat ni Nhicole Santos

Sabi nila, malaya raw ang hangin. May kakayahan daw itong maglakbay sa iba't ibang dako. Kaya raw nitong tawirin ang pinakamalawak na dagat. Akyatin maging ang pinakamatataas na bundok, at puntahan kahit pa masisikip na sulok. Iyon ang sabi nila. Iyon ang pinaniwalaan ko.

Sa katagalan ay napagtanto ko. Hindi naman pala lubos ang laya ng hangin. Angkop lamang ang konseptong "malaya" na tanggapin ang mga bulong na hindi maibulalas nang malakas. Malaya ang hangin na ilipad ang bawat binibigkas ng ating labi. Ngunit, sa kabilang banda ay nakakadena rito ang bawat hinanaing ng lahat ng may buhay. Nakagapos ang mga salitang hindi maiutal nang malakas. Nakapalupot ang samu't saring damdamin.

Sa bawat pagbigkas ng mga letra ay siyang pagtanggap ng hangin. Sa bawat paglabas ng mga salita sa bibig ay ang pagyakap nito. Ang mga bulong mula sa iba't ibang buhay-hanggang saan kaya kayang ilipad? Hanggang kailan kaya kayang hawakan? Mapasaan pa man, batid kong ang hanging minsang pinagbulungan ng agam-agam, ay siya ring hanging maghahatid ng simoy ng kapanatagan.

Dibuho ni Cheryl Nicolas



GRIEF HAS ITS VOICE

by Loren Pangilinan

Twelve midnight and I'm still full awake,
As if sleeping is too much to take.
The past comes knocking— soft but sure,
It finds the cracks I can't secure.

There's this gentle voice that says my name,
It calls me back to guilt and shame.
Each day, I smile, I laugh, I do my part,
But chains still cling beneath my heart.

This prison built from hurt and noise,
It speaks with my familiar voice.
Though, it doesn't shout. It doesn't burn.
It waits for its turn. And it knows I'll turn.

Grief has my voice, and speaks in me—
A quiet kind of misery.
I am the cage, I am the key;
And still, I can't set myself free.

Art by Justine Abalos

Unlocking Communication Potential: The NEUST GC Speech Lab

Emily Agumbay & Osias Emeterio

In a bid to further elevate students' communication and public speaking skills, the NEUST Gabaldon Campus (GC) proudly introduces the Speech Laboratory,an initiative by Campus Director Dr. Franklin Dumayas. The focus of this project is particularly those taking English subjects, with the aim of enhancing their public speaking and communication skills.

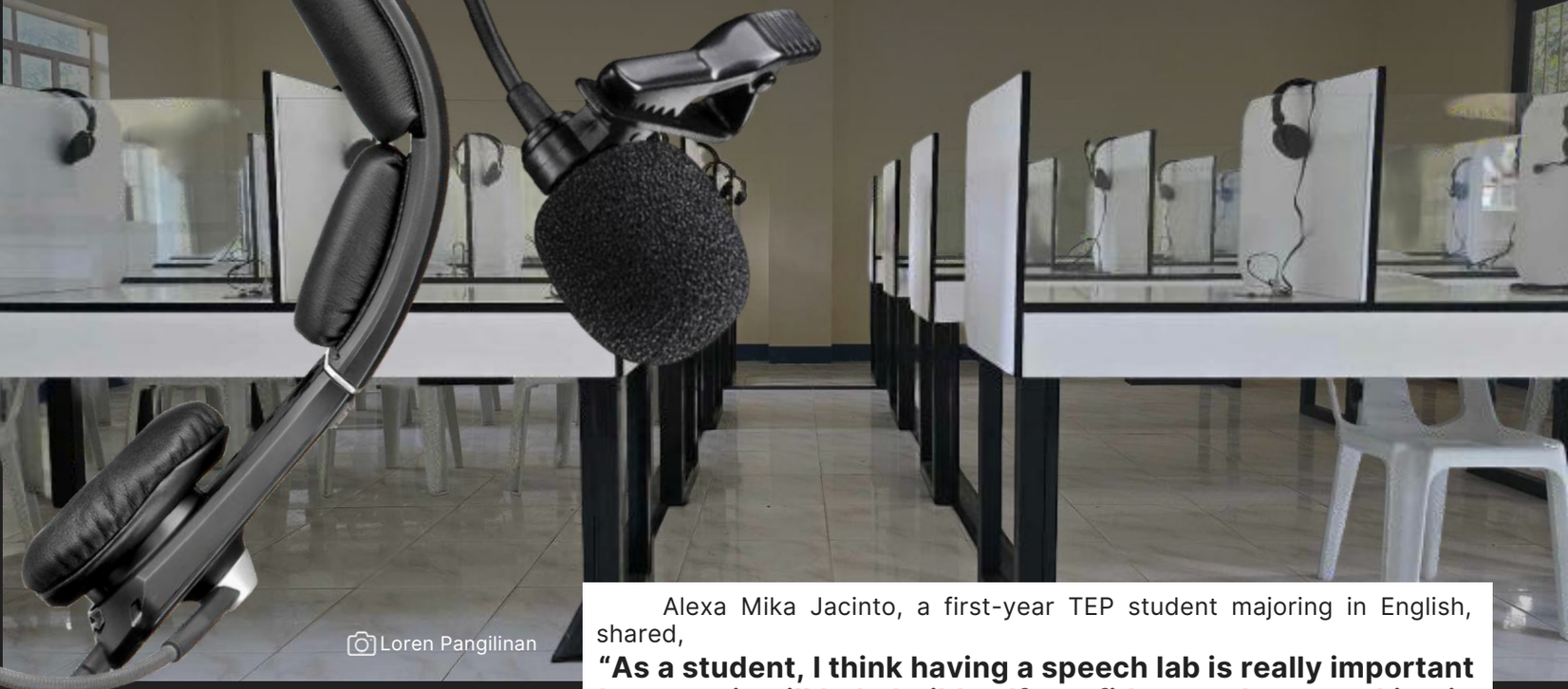
A Vision for Effective Communication

The proposal for the project was presented in October 2024, with funding secured by December of the same year. The project had a budget allocation of ₱2,000,000, reflecting the importance of this modern initiative for the academic community. In January 2025, the bidding process was finalized, and the installation of cubicles began immediately.

"S'yempre, mag-be-benefit 'yung mga estudyante doon, mas gagaling sila in terms of public speaking. Mag-be-benefit din ang lahat, hindi lang ang mga nasa College of Education, kundi pati lahat ng nasa Gabaldon Campus,"

said Mr. Jaypee Del Rosario, Teacher Education Program (TEP) Chair, when asked about the anticipated impact of the speech laboratory.





Loren Pangilinan

A speech laboratory helps students improve their speaking and listening skills through different activities, including pronunciation drills, public speaking, listening exercises, role-playing, broadcasting, and other oral activities that enhance speaking skills. Students can also use special software and recording tools to practice and evaluate their speech. Debates and discussions will help them think critically and express their ideas clearly. Through these activities, speech labs help students become more confident and effective communicators.

Challenges Faced

The biggest challenge encountered throughout the project was the long proposal process and the complex planning required to establish a modern and highly effective laboratory. A space had to be designed to accommodate the different needs of various students, providing them with a complete platform to enhance their public speaking skills.

Student's Perspective on the Speech Laboratory

When asked about the importance of the Speech Laboratory, students highlighted its potential to build confidence and improve speaking abilities.

Alexa Mika Jacinto, a first-year TEP student majoring in English, shared,

"As a student, I think having a speech lab is really important because it will help build self-confidence when speaking in front of others. It gives students a chance to practice and improve their speaking skills in a supportive environment. For teachers, a speech lab means they can get a better sense of each student's individual needs and give them more personalized feedback."

"The idea of having a speech lab in our department opens up an opportunity for us learners to practice our speaking skills. As a language student who sometimes struggles with pronunciation, especially in public speaking, I think it's terrific that we finally have our own space dedicated to practicing and improving our oral communication skills," said Jestony Diaz, a second-year TEP student majoring in English.

Erica Panahon, a third-year TEP student majoring in English, echoed the same sentiment,

"For me, it is good to have a speech lab here in our department to practice speaking, and it will also help students boost their self-confidence in terms of speaking, especially in English. This laboratory will be a great help for students, especially future educators, as it will help them speak confidently in front of large audiences, socialize with different people, and enhance their teaching skills."

Looking Ahead: A Future of Enhanced Communication

The NEUST GC Speech Laboratory is not only an upgrade in facilities but also an investment in the future of the students. With a facility specifically designed to hone students' public speaking and communication skills, students will have the opportunity to grow not only academically but also as individuals. This project reflects the university's dedication to enhancing student skills and creating an environment where all students can grow to be globally competent.



Dupinga Mini-Hydro: From River's Flow to Flickers of Progress

Quennie Torio

The Dupinga Mini-Hydro Project could provide a sizable amount of electricity, helping to meet the community's power needs and significantly reduce frequent power outages. The Dupinga River's powerful current is essential to the project's success, as it will provide the energy needed for the mini-hydropower system to produce electricity.

A private company, in coordination with the Department of Energy (DOE), conducted initial studies. After a thorough assessment, they found that several rivers in the area—especially the Dupinga River—are feasible and suitable sources for a mini-hydro power plant.

With the collaboration of private sectors and national government agencies like the DOE, as well as stakeholders involved in renewable energy development, they sought permission to carry out research and feasibility studies. This led to the successful planning and eventual development of the Dupinga Mini-Hydro Project, located on Sitio Dupinga, Ligaya, Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija, which aims to benefit not just the local area but also contribute to the growing need for clean and sustainable energy.

Flow: The River Moves, Hope Begins

The Dupinga River is known as a tourist destination in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija. Surrounded by mountains, the river has long been visited for its calm and quiet surroundings.

Beyond its role as a tourist destination, the Dupinga River has been identified as a valuable source of renewable energy, holding great potential to address the community's pressing power shortage.

Now, the Dupinga River is a symbol of progress and sustainability, in addition to being a source of peace and beauty. It will not only continue to bring people closer to nature but also help light homes, schools, and businesses through the electricity it can produce.



Flicker on: A Spark Once Feared to Disturb Nature's Balance

Despite the promising benefits this project brings, there are still lingering fears and concerns, especially among residents living near the area. While the idea of improved electricity and economic progress is welcomed, people naturally worry about the possible risks that may come with the development. Residents understandably worry about potential risks, such as earthquakes causing severe flooding or the project damaging the natural beauty of the mountains.

However, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), through its Bureau of Equipment (BOE) and in coordination with the DPWH Nueva Ecija 2nd District Engineering Office (DEO), has made sure that the Dupinga Mini-Hydro Project is safely designed. Its mechanisms are strategically placed away from residential areas to minimize the risk of flooding, supported by the implementation of a dredging project. The companies involved have also assured the public that the infrastructure is durable and built to withstand natural disasters, including earthquakes and heavy rainfall.

Flicker Off: Darkness Fades as Lights Begin to Stabilize

The Dupinga Mini-Hydro Project will change residents' lives by providing a stable and reliable source of electricity. This is especially helpful for businesses that use machines, allowing them to operate more efficiently and grow, leading to more jobs and income for the community.

The project also reduces the need for costly equipment like transformers to power schools and buildings. Acting like a small power plant, the mini-hydro will give residents better access to electricity for their daily lives, making work, study, and other activities easier and more convenient.

Progress: A Community Powered by Nature

The Dupinga Mini-Hydro Project, though still under construction, already stands as a strong symbol of progress made possible through the power of nature. Even in its early stages, it reflects the community's commitment to sustainable solutions and long-term growth.

By connecting to the natural energy of the Dupinga River, the project shows that we can move forward without harming the environment. It is a true example of sustainable development, where nature and progress work hand in hand. As the Dupinga River flows, the lights in our lives will never flicker. This project marks the beginning of a brighter, more sustainable future for Gabaldon.

"This project means development," stated the Municipal Mayor of Gabaldon, Atty. Jobby P. Emata.

"This is a constant reminder that you can achieve development without sacrificing what you have," he added.

SAVOR THE FLAVOR:

NEUST GC UNVEILS ITS BRAND-NEW FOOD HAVEN

Jem Bendiola & Cryshel Jorduela

HUNGRY FOR CHANGE? YOUR CRAVINGS JUST GOT AN UPGRADE!

NEUST Gabaldon Campus is serving up something fresh—a vibrant, all-new food court designed to delight your taste buds and fuel your day! With four diverse stalls, this ₱5.1M culinary hub will dish out meals, snacks, and drinks—making campus life tastier than ever. Through the Trust Fund Income Generating Project, the groundbreaking began on January 30, 2025, led by JCA Construction, and the project is now ready to serve.

DATI, 'PAG GUTOM, TIIS MUNA. NGAYON, SOLVED NA!

Great news, students! The long-awaited Food Court —clean, safe, and comfortable place for everyone to enjoy meals. No more eating in the rain or worrying about food safety! The new area will have strong roofs, hygienic food stalls, and secure spaces for both students and vendors.

Dr. Franklin T. Dumayas, NEUST GC Director, stated,

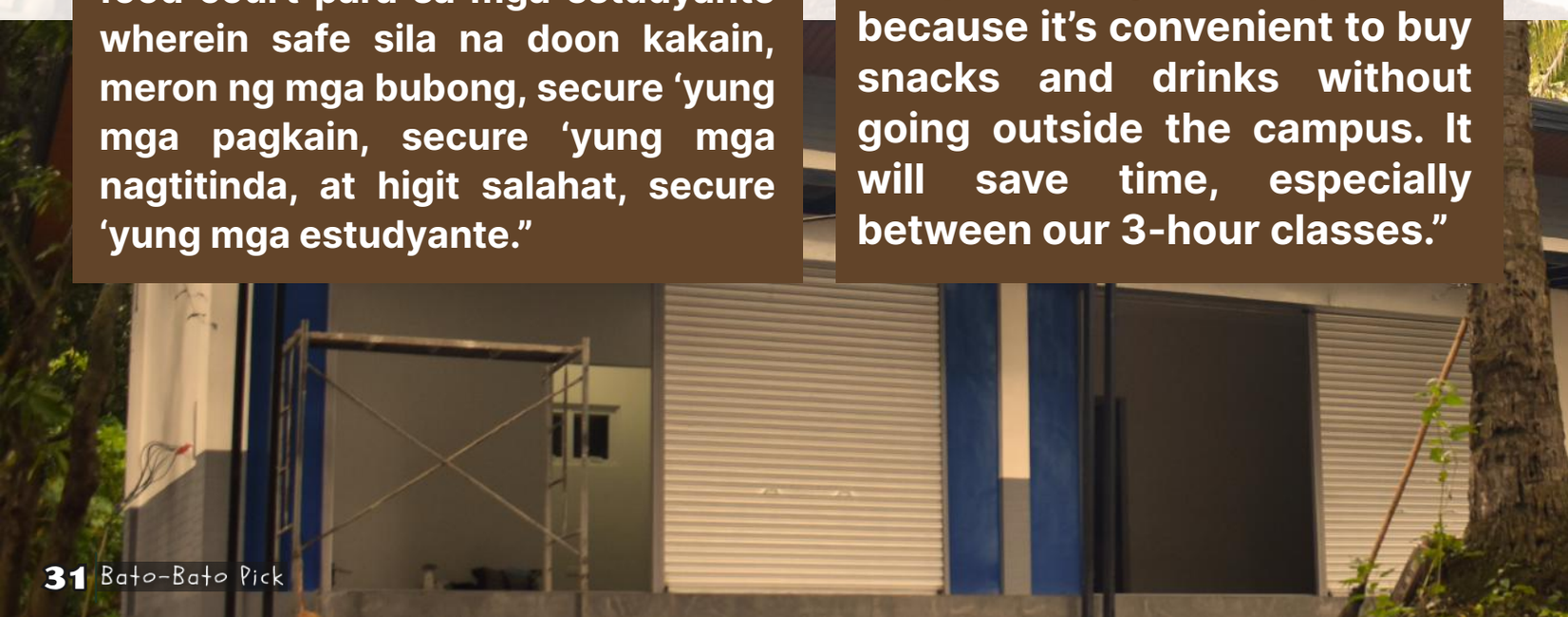
"Ngayon pa lang tayo nagkaroon ng food court para sa mga estudyante wherein safe sila na doon kakain, meron ng mga bubong, secure 'yung mga pagkain, secure 'yung mga nagtitinda, at higit salahat, secure 'yung mga estudyante."

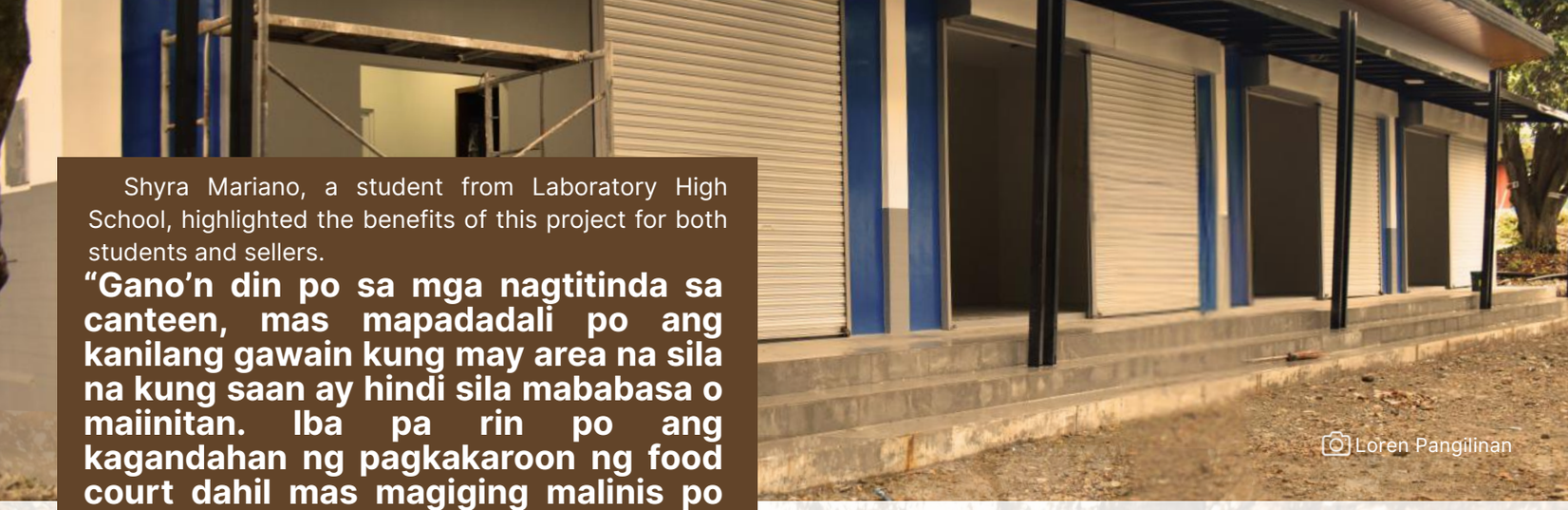
His statement highlights the significant improvements the food court will bring to the campus. With the addition of proper roofing, hygienic food preparation, and secure spaces for both food vendors and students, the food court will ensure that everyone has a safe and pleasant dining experience, free from concerns about the environment and food safety. This development is set to elevate the overall student experience on campus by creating a space where they can gather, eat, and relax in comfort.

SULIT O BUDOL? ANONG SAY MO?

Jeniviv Angelo, a student from the Teacher Education Program, expressed her appreciation for the project, highlighting its significant contribution to studentry.

"Having a canteen in our campus is a great help for us because it's convenient to buy snacks and drinks without going outside the campus. It will save time, especially between our 3-hour classes."





Loren Pangilinan

Shyra Mariano, a student from Laboratory High School, highlighted the benefits of this project for both students and sellers.

“Gano’n din po sa mga nagtitinda sa canteen, mas mapadadali po ang kanilang gawain kung may area na sila na kung saan ay hindi sila mababasa o maiinitan. Iba pa rin po ang kagandahan ng pagkakaroon ng food court dahil mas magiging malinis po ang mga pagkain kung ito po ay hindi nae-expose sa open area.”

Mjay Driza, a student from Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, expressed her excitement towards the new project.

“Nagulat kami nung una kasi nabago ‘yung location ng canteen. Tapos nakita namin na may tinatayo na bagong establishment malapit sa dating location ng canteen. Natuwa kami kasi dati canteen-canteen lang, pero ngayon cafeteria na.”

Jennalyn Valdez, a student from Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management, voiced her appreciation for the project’s benefits,

“Malaking tulong ‘yung pinapagawa nilang canteen lalo na malawak ang paaralan — mawawala ‘yung hassle sa pagbaba at pagtaas sa tuwing kailangan bumili ng pagkain lalo na kapag maulan o mainit at isa pa, makaka-save pa ng time kasi mas malapit na ang tindahan.”

Similarly, Von Alemjan Sesuca, a student from College of Agriculture, also shared his experiences with the campus canteen’s previous condition, noting the significant improvement of our campus,

“Nakakatuwa lang na magkakaroon ng improvement ang facility natin. Ilang beses din akong nakaramdam ng pagkadismaya sa canteen nung nakaraan, dahil sa sama ng panahon. Lalo na kapag umuulan, maputik at nakakabasa ng katawan kaya kailangan sumiksik para masilungan.”

These statements from students across various departments underscore the benefits of this project for the student body.

SULIT PROJECT PARA SULIT LIFE

This new achievement of NEUST GC highlights the progress and success not only in academics but also in infrastructure, significantly enhancing the students’ learning environment.

Dr. Dumayas expressed his gratitude towards the administration for providing the opportunity to experience such a project.

“Ito ‘yung pangarap natin na magkaroon simula’t-simula pa, at nagpapasalamat tayo sa ating administrasyon dahil ngayon ay nagkaroon ng katuparan ‘yung pangarap natin na ‘yon.”

He also reminded all students to value and respect the projects being implemented on the campus,

“Sana ay pahalagahan ng mga estudyante ‘yung ating mga itinatayong proyekto dito sa ating campus. I-respeto at i-galang ‘yung mga infrastructure at panatilihing malinis ‘yung mga lugar na ‘yon.”

This progress at NEUST GC represents not only the improvement of infrastructure but also the enhancement of the learning environment for all students. It contributes to the overall well-being of students, encompassing both academic and personal aspects.

This project will provide the students a more comfortable place to eat — a fresh hangout spot that brings students closer together.

SO, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
LET’S FEEL THE MOMENT AND TASTE THE MEALS.
TIKMAN NA NATIN!

DAMAGING UNDAMAGED ROADS

Ariel Villareal & Alea Dagumboy

"Roads are the veins of our cities; if they are clogged, the lifeblood of the community cannot flow."

– **Dan Burden**, Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Advocate

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Advocate In the Philippines, a puzzling and frustrating trend persists: the reconstruction of perfectly functional roads. While visibly intact and usable, many roads are suddenly tagged as deteriorating and subject to repair. This practice, though common in developing countries, is rarely seen in first-world nations—especially when such projects coincide with critical times, like the start of the academic year. The frustration grows when truly damaged roads are overlooked. The question is glaring: why are we fixing roads that are not broken? According to research from the University of California, only 30% of urban road repairs are based on actual road conditions. The remaining 70% are likely driven by politics or misaligned priorities. This is what experts refer to as "pork-barrel construction"—where infrastructure projects are used to curry favor with constituents or contractors, often before elections.

A World Bank report further supports this, citing a lack of proper technical evaluation in infrastructure planning across many developing nations, leading to gross inefficiencies in public spending. Beyond the waste, these projects have real consequences. A 2023 INRIX study revealed that unnecessary roadwork can increase traffic congestion by 26% in already busy areas. The ripple effect?

Rather than addressing crumbling roads or building urgent infrastructure—like health centers, evacuation sites, or classrooms—resources are funneled into redundant construction that offers no substantial benefit to the public.

Students arriving late to school, workers losing precious hours of productivity, and motorists burning more fuel in traffic. Local businesses are affected too, as customer flow and working hours dwindle.

In short, these repairs—not needed in the first place—amplify urban economic strain. But more than a traffic headache, this issue reflects a deeper flaw: the misuse of public funds. Rather than addressing crumbling roads or building urgent infrastructure—like health centers, evacuation sites, or classrooms—resources are funneled into redundant construction that offers no substantial benefit to the public.

Consider this. The Subic-Clark road, built by the Americans in the early 1900s, still stands firm over a century later.

It has survived typhoons and even the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo—proof that quality infrastructure is possible. Clearly, the problem is not a lack of resources, but the misuse and misdirection of them. To address this, three key actions are critical: Prioritize repairs based on real road conditions, as recommended by the World Bank. Schedule construction during off-peak hours to reduce traffic disruption. Implement proper traffic management —with signage, planning, and the presence of enforcers —as outlined in the Department of Transportation's 2022 report on infrastructure traffic management. As election season draws near, vigilance becomes more important. We must ask hard questions



: Are these projects truly necessary? Or are they simply vote-bait disguised as development? The Filipino people deserve better—infrastructure that is logical, sustainable, and truly people-centered. It's time to shift from performative projects to purposeful progress. Let demand transparency, push for accountability, and ensure that our roads—and our future—are not paved with wasted intentions.



TICKET TO A SHOW:
FROM FAME TO GOVERNANCE?

Vea Panganiban

In recent years, Philippine politics has begun to resemble a circus—a stage where charisma often outweighs competence, and popularity overshadows policy. What should be a contest of platforms and principles has instead become a celebrity-fueled popularity game. As election season approaches, more and more actors, influencers, and public personalities are filing their Certificates of Candidacy, prompting a critical question: are we still electing leaders, or simply According to research by the Asian Institute of Management and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Our votes are not tickets to a show—they are investments in the future. They are not applause but accountability. Let us vote not for who entertains us, but for who can lead us with integrity, vision, and heart. The stage is set. The cameras are rolling. But this time, let us make sure we are not voting for actors—we are voting for leaders.

Foundation, 70 out of 100 congressional district representatives belong to political families. As Dean Ronald Mendoza of Ateneo de Manila University succinctly puts it, "the fatter the dynasty, the poorer the community."

casting stars? In a time marked by economic instability, rising taxes, and persistent issues in healthcare and education, we must ask: can fame alone fix what is broken? Or are we putting our country at risk by turning leadership into a role to be performed rather than a responsibility to be upheld?

A 2022 study by the Pew Research Center revealed a troubling tendency among voters to prioritize familiarity over qualifications. This creates fertile ground for unqualified celebrity candidates to gain traction—thanks to high visibility and social media clout—even without a background in public service.

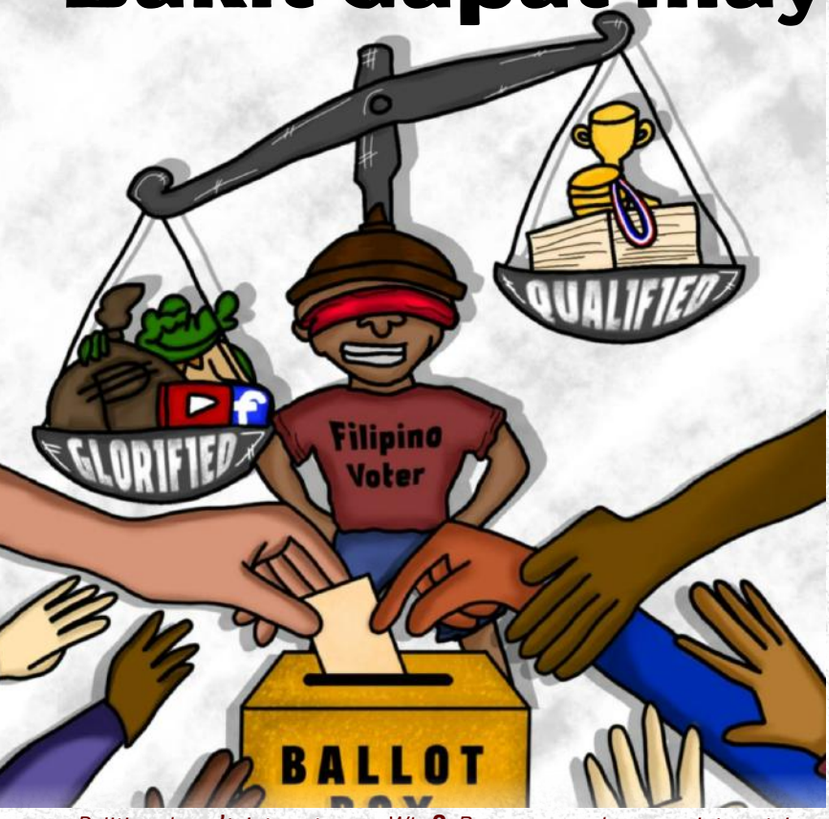
In the Philippine context, this has translated into victories at the polls for candidates whose main credentials are screen time, not service. The danger is real. Politics should not be an audition. And yet, that is exactly what it has become. Worse, this trend unfolds alongside a long-standing issue: politics as family business. For decades, the same surnames have dominated public office, reinforcing dynasties that thrive on control rather than change.

The connection between entrenched dynasties and underdevelopment is no longer just anecdotal—it is documented. But there is hope, and it begins with an informed electorate. To break this cycle, voters must go beyond name recall. Scrutinizing candidates' educational, professional, and ethical backgrounds is a vital step toward better governance.

The late Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago, a model of brilliance and integrity, often reminded the public that leadership is not about showmanship—it is about substance. Today, many candidates list their credentials on government websites and platforms like LinkedIn, making it easier than ever to evaluate who truly deserves your vote. Credible news sources can also shed light on candidates' track records, stances, and even pending cases.

Let this be clear. Fame will not fix failing systems. Electing unqualified individuals leads to poor governance, mismanagement of public resources, and stagnant development. If we continue to treat elections as entertainment, we risk being stuck in the same cycle for another 20 years. Thankfully, we now have the tools to do better. Search engines, social media, online news outlets—these are at our fingertips. The information is there. All we need is the will to look. So, will we allow ourselves to be dazzled by the spotlight and misled by charisma? Or will we step into our role as informed, responsible citizens? Our votes are not tickets to a show —they are investments in the future. They are not applause but accountability. Let us vote not for who entertains us, but for who can lead us with integrity, vision, and heart. The stage is set. The cameras are rolling. But this time, let us make sure we are not voting for actors—we are voting for leaders.

Mga Leksyon ng Eleksyon: Bakit dapat may pakialam ka



Politics doesn't interest you. Why? Because you have no interest in changing the world that suits you so well.

-*Edith Presbury, Enola Holmes* **(2020) /** *Netflix*

"Pagbabago at pag-unlad!" Iyan ang laging sigaw ng mga Pilipino. Sino nga ba naman ang hindi gusto nang maginhawa at panatag na buhay? Ngayong paparating na naman ang eleksyon, pareho pa rin ang ating mga sigaw at hinaing. Kaya sabi ng karamihan, "Wala rin namang magbabago, kahit sino ang nakaupo, ganoon pa rin." Marahil ito ay dulot nang kawalang pag-asa. Dahil sa kabila ng maraming eleksyong naganap ay wala ring naging pagbabago. May punto, totoo nga naman, hindi nga lang naman nakasalalay sa pulitiko ang pag-unlad. Ito ay nakasalalay sa bawat isa sa atin. Hindi lang iisa ang may hawak ng kapalaran ng isang bansa. "Ano ba ang mga nagawa ng mga pulitiko na 'yan?" Siguro ang mas magandang tanong ay, "Ano na ba ang mga ginawa natin buhat nang nagkaroon nang malayang pagboto sa ating bansa?"

Ayon kay Prof. Xiao Chua ng De La Salle University, noong panahon ng pananakop ng mga Kastila, ang gobyerno natin ay Monarkiya. Ibig sabihin, walang eleksyon. Isang pamilya lamang ang namumuno at ito ay pinapasa sa kanyang mga anak, kung sino ang panganay, siyang magmamana ng kapangyarihan. Hanggang sa makamit na ng Pilipinas ang kalayaan noong Hunyo 12, 1898, at magkaroon ng halalan. Marami na ang naging presidente ng bansa, iba't ibang kulay, na siya sanang magiging tulay sa kaunlaran ngunit tila niyurakan pa ang ating kinabukasan. Tuwing may bagong namumuno, umaasa ang bawat isa na may pagbabago. Ang eleksyon at pulitika ay hindi dapat larawan ng kawalan ng pag-asa. Tayong mga Pilipino ay hindi natututo, kaya sa paningin ng karamihan ay wala naman silang mapapala kung makikialam sila sa eleksyon o ano mang usaping pulitikal. Naghahalal tayo ng mga opisyal sa gobyerno na tanging kasikatan ang bitbit imbes na integridad at malasakit. Tuwing eleksyon ay sinasayang natin ang pagkakataon na makapagluklok ng taong babaliktad sa hugis ng pulitikang tatsulok. Hindi man lang natin inaaral ang mga kwalipikasyon at track record ng kandidato, porque sikat, kursonada na natin agad.

Tulad na lamang noong nagdaang pandemya, ipinakita nito ang tunay na kulay ng mga taong nasa tuktok. Umasa ang karamihan na mababago ng eleksyon ang porma ng ating gobyerno ngunit tila nagkaroon ng parada ng bulag at bingi sa bansa at naghalal pa rin tayo ng mga taong wala naman ibang inisip kung hindi mga pansariling interes. Mga taong lasing sa kapangyarihan na hindi man lang kayang unahin ang mamamayan. Gusto natin ng pagbabago ngunit hindi naman tayo natututo.

Ayon sa senatorial preference survey na isinagawa ng The Boulders, ang pang-mag-aaral na publikasyon ng NEUST Gabaldon Campus, 55.9% ang sumagot na sa social media nila nakukuha ang mga impormasyon sa mga kandidato. Mas babad na kasi ang karamihan sa mga tao ngayon sa social media kumpara sa traditional media tulad ng telebisyon, radyo, at dyaryo, kaya may tiyansang fake news ang karamihan sa mga impormasyon. Ngunit ang pinakamasakit sa lahat ay ang kawalan ng kamalayan at interes tungkol sa sasapit na eleksyon.

Tipong halos magmakaawa ka para lang makakuha ng sagot (response). Hindi ito ang inaasahan na mga tagpo sa pagsasagawa ng survey. Nakalulungkot isiping tayo mismo, na naghahangad ng pagbabago, ay walang pakialam sa lipunang ating ginagalawan at mamanahin ng mga susunod na henerasyon. Napansin din ito ni Dr. Luisito Dela Cruz, Department of Social Sciences Chairman ng San Beda University, tila tuwing halalan lang may pakialam ang ilang Pinoy sa mga nangyayari sa paligid at gobyerno, bagay na hindi dapat nangyayari dahil hindi aniya natatapos sa pagboto ang responsibilidad ng isang botante, sa isang panayam ng ABS-CBN News, sinabi niya "We only engage whenever elections are coming pero after election, what happens?

Election is just one aspects of political engagement or political participation, okay bumoto ka pero hindi doon natatapos 'yon". Paano tayo bubuo ng lipunang maayos kung wala tayong pakialam sa socio-political na sitwasyon ng ating bansa? Puro na lang ba salita ang ating, 'di umano, ay pagmamahal sa ating bayan? Tila binali na natin ang kasabihan ni Gat Jose Rizal na, "Ang kabataan ay pag-asa ng bayan." Pag-asa nga ba? O problema pa?

Ang pagiging socio-politically aware ay hindi isang opsyon lamang. Sa sitwasyon ng ating bansa ngayon, isa na itong pangangailangan. Walang magmamana ng resulta nang hindi tamang pagboto kun'di tayong mga mamamayan. Sa tuwing titingin tayo sa mga kandidato, lagi nating tingnan kung nasaan ba ang mga mamamayan sa ekwasyon. Ang bawat boto natin ay makapangyarihan, matagal na nakibaka ang ating mga bayani para lamang makamit ang karapatang ito, kaya marapat lang na bigyan natin ng hustisya ang laban na iyon sa pamamagitan ng paggamit nito sa tama. Maaaring ikaw, wala kang pakialam sa mga isyu ng lipunan dahil hindi ka apektado at kumportable ang pamumuhay mo, ngunit lagi nating iisipin, paano naman ang iba? Ang mga nasa laylayan? Paano na ang bulok na sistema? Paano mababago ang sistema kung patuloy lang tayong magiging pipi, bulag, at bingi sa mga bagay na dapat may pakialam tayo?

Ang buhay ng bawat Pilipino ang nakasalalay rito, hindi buhay "mo" lang. Boboto tayo para sa ating lahat, hindi lang dahil sa kursonada natin ang isang kandidato.

Totoo na hindi nakasalalay sa pulitiko ang indibidwal na pag-unlad ng isang tao, ngunit importanteng maintindihan natin na nakasalalay dito ang kinabukasan ng pangkalahatan. Kung trapo pa rin ang mananalo, hindi talaga uunlad ang bansang ito. Kung asa'n man tayo ngayon ay kagagawan din natin ito. Matuto sana tayong magbasa at manood ng mga lehitimong balita upang maging "informed" sa mga nangyayari sa ating lipunan. Gamitin nang mahusay ang internet upang kumalap ng mga impormasyon tungkol sa kandidatong ating iboboto. Huwag nating isipin na hindi patas ang mga mamamahayag (journalists), dahil trabaho nila ang magbigay ng kritisismo. Kakampi ng bayan at mamamayan ang mga mamamahayag, sila ang tagabalanse sa ating lipunan. Kung walang mananabla sa gobyerno, sino ang magmumulat sa kanila? Ngayong darating na eleksyon, nawa ay magkaisa ang mga Pilipino at manindigan sa tama. Huwag tayong mawalan ng pag-asa, isipin natin ang kapakanan ng nakararami, dahil ang bansang watak-watak, ang kinabukasan ang mawawasak. Ang mga problema ng ating lipunan ay masosolusyunan at gagaan kung marami tayong magpapasan.

NEUST Student Publications convene at First General Assembly


Geoffrey Alvez

Jem Bendiola

"SYNERGY: Uniting Voices, Shaping Visions" — The First General Assembly of all student publications of NEUST, Editorial Year 2024-2025, brought together 13 NEUST-accredited student publications, including the 27 members of The Boulders — the Official Student Publication of NEUST Gabaldon Campus — on October 30, 2024, at Nieto Hall, Sumacab Campus.

The 13 publications that attended the assembly included The Blaze - the Official Student Publication of NEUST; Anihan from San Isidro Campus; The Boulders from Gabaldon Campus; De Calibre from the College of Criminology; Papyrus from the College of Architecture; The Polaris from the Peñaranda Off-Campus; The Pixel from the College of Information and Communications Technology; The Gear from the College of Industrial Technology; The Core from the Laboratory High School - General Tinio Campus; The Wheel from the College of Education; Nexus from Santo Domingo Campus; The Pulse from Talavera Off-Campus; and The Highground Gazette from Caranglan Off-Campus, together with their respective editorial boards, staff members, and advisers.

Dr. Feliciana Jacoba, Vice President for Academic Affairs, gave her welcome remarks, highlighting the relevance of the event's theme in today's time, stating, "In unity there is strength." She expressed her hope that the event would continue fostering the good intentions of developing the minds, hearts, and character of student journalists, concluding with a reminder of their role: "As writers, you are expected to serve as role models of truth, integrity, compassion, respect, and understanding to your fellow students."

Meanwhile, Dr. Ma. Lourdes Quijano, Dean of the Office of Student Affairs and Services, warmly greeted and thanked all esteemed guests, publication advisers, and campus journalists. She emphasized that the assembly was not just a gathering but a powerful beginning: "We are gathered, united by a shared commitment to creative expression, truth, and the power of impactful change."

Dr. Rhodora Jugo, University President, underscored in her inspirational message the importance of unifying to fulfill the goals and roles of a student journalist. "We're here to recognize not only the challenges you faced but also the vast opportunities that open up when you unite your voices and ideas... When these differences come together, you can create something far greater than what any of you could achieve alone."

"Each voice matters and each idea counts. Create an environment where all students feel welcome to contribute. Remember, your diverse perspectives are your greatest strength; embrace the challenges, seize the opportunities, and celebrate what synergy brings to your student community," she added, concluding her message by urging student journalists to unite their voices, shape visions, and lead the way to a brighter future for everyone.

"I want to assure you that you are more than just a byline; you are gatherers of truth, rivers of narrative, and defenders of Press Freedom," said Dr. Alfredo Esteban Jr., Head of the Publication Office, during the Presentation of Student Publications.

Additionally, in her response message, May Ann Badajos, Editor-in-Chief of The Blaze, underscored the purpose and connection of student journalists to their work: "We are here because, deep down, we know this is more than just writing. It's about sharing pieces of ourselves, pieces of our community, and giving voice to those who feel unheard... Being a student journalist is not just a role given to us; it's a responsibility, a promise to ourselves and to this University."

A fruitful training workshop featured sessions led by sought-after and award-winning journalism practitioners: Prof. Ben Domingo on Developmental Reporting and Sports Reporting, Dr. Regidor Gaboy on Photojournalism, and Mr. Russel Jhon Guibani on Layout and Design.

"Ang pinakamagandang attitude ng journalist ay skepticism, we have to doubt and by doubting, we are forced to look for truth... maninisid kayo, hanapin ang katotohanan," Prof. Domingo stated in his lecture on Developmental Reporting, encouraging writers to find and voice out the truth. "Let the community surface in your stories," he added, highlighting that, through journalists, the voiceless may be heard.

"In photojournalism, kailangan dapat ng tamang timing and precision when taking a picture dahil layunin ng photojournalism na ipakita ang istorya sa pamamagitan ng litrato," Dr. Gaboy remarked, teaching techniques and strategies on how to capture pictures at the right moment to convey the story and emotions.

"We enjoyed learning about improving our craft, such as using grids for guidelines and selecting the right colors and arrangements. Overall, he was a great teacher."

Dave Herson Elas, one of The Boulders' Layout Artists, shared. He described Mr. Guibani's lecture on Layout and Design as an engaging discussion because he related his topic to his practical experiences with The Blaze being the publication's Head Layout Artist.

Meanwhile, 12 members of The Boulders received numerous recognitions for best outputs in several categories:

In Photojournalism:
- 1st place - John Geoffrey Alvez
- 3rd place - Nash Respicio
- 4th place - Justine Gacutan

In Design and Layout:
- 4th place - Anton Jay Adobe

In Arts and Graphics:
- 4th place - Nhicole Santos
- 5th place - Jhon Dela Cruz

In Sports Reporting (Filipino):
- 2nd place - Edgar Domingo and Carla Jane Gaspar
- 4th place - Anna Marie Moralde

In Developmental Column:
- 1st place - Ariel Joseph Villarreal

In Developmental Editorial:
- 2nd place - Jerome Cuaresma
- 3rd place - Emily Agumbay

The assembly highlighted the unity of voices of campus journalists from different publications as they came together to serve and shape one vision.

NEUST GC engages in academic exchange with DNTU Vietnam



Lyan Balingit

The Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology Gabaldon Campus (NEUST GC) welcomed faculty and students from Dong Nai Technology University (DNTU), Vietnam, on March 7, 2025, under the Student and Faculty Mobility Program, in line with NEUST's vision of becoming a globally competitive university.

The delegation included Ha Thi Yen Nhi, a lecturer in DNTU's English Program, along with four English Language students: Nguyen Thi Ngoc Anh, Truong Nguyen Yen Nhu, Nguyen Anh Thu, and Le Hoang Yen Nhi. Accompanied and assisted by Dr. Analiza B. Tanghal, College of Education (COED) Internationalization Coordinator, they also paid a courtesy visit to Dr. Franklin T. Dumayas, NEUST GC Director. The visit aimed to strengthen academic collaboration and cultural exchange between the two institutions.

NEUST GC faculty and staff guided the Vietnamese delegation in touring campus facilities, including Eco Park, Coffee Production, the Food Innovation Center, and the Pasalubong Center, where they explored technological innovations and sampled locally produced delicacies. The visit provided an immersive experience that fostered knowledge sharing and cultural appreciation.

The program runs until March 16, 2025, with Dr. Rosalie A. Pineda serving as the Faculty Exchange representative of NEUST GC, alongside COED Dean Dr. Jo Neil T. Peria and COED Internationalization Coordinator Dr. Tanghal. This initiative is expected to enhance international partnerships and academic sustainability between NEUST and DNTU.

NEUST remains committed to fostering global collaborations that promote academic excellence and cultural understanding.



Mandy Corpuz

CMBT-BSHM elevates hospitality training with new industrial equipment

Quennie Torio

NEUST Gabaldon Campus (GC) – College of Management and Business Technology (CMBT) has strengthened its Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) program with the arrival of a commercial oven and an industrial chiller in February 2025.

Recognizing the need for modern kitchen equipment, CMBT-BSHM Chair Dr. Ralph Christopher Ramos initiated the request to ensure standardized, industry-aligned training. His initiative was supported by NEUST GC Director Dr. Franklin Dumayas, further reinforcing the university's commitment to advancing hospitality education.

Meanwhile, culinary and laboratory instructors Dr. Kenneth Bano and Ms. Jocel Sapon are instrumental in equipping BSHM students with the skills necessary to uphold industry-standard culinary practices. They ensure that students not only master the fundamentals of cooking and baking but also excel in producing exceptional, high-quality culinary creations.

"We are very thankful to NEUST for funding the equipment for the HM Department," said Dr. Bano. "With this support, we can follow standard procedures and enhance the quality of our culinary training." He also emphasized the department's dedication to maintaining professional standards and preparing students for real-world hospitality demands.

These new pieces of equipment allow BSHM students to gain practical experience in operating professional kitchen tools, helping them develop proficiency and refine their culinary techniques. Angelo Salazar, a 2nd-year BSHM student, shared his experience, stating, "Marami po kaming natutunan, lalo na po ang paggamit ng iba't ibang equipment sa pagluluto, na talaga namang magagamit namin in the future."

With these advancements, NEUST GC continues to elevate its BSHM program, ensuring students receive top-quality training that aligns with industry standards and prepares them for successful careers in the hospitality industry.

NEUST Production Office launches Comprehensive Training



Jean Lumagas & Vea Panganiban

NEUST commenced its Comprehensive Training for Production Office Personnel at the NEUST Gabaldon Campus' USG Function Hall on March 20, 2025.

This initiative aims to enhance operational efficiency and support sustainability in production processes—an essential step toward ensuring the long-term success of the university's production-related endeavors.

Dr. Aileen Elegado, Gabaldon Campus Production Office In-Charge, facilitated and coordinated the arrangements for the planning officers at the Gabaldon Campus, where the event was held. The training brought together university officials and personnel dedicated to enhancing NEUST's production processes and identifying new income-generating projects.

Gabaldon Campus Director Dr. Franklin Dumayas opened the training with a warm welcome, emphasizing the importance of expert insights in streamlining production operations. He highlighted the significance of the training in empowering NEUST's production teams.

Ms. Rhea Lyn La Penia, Production Office Director, outlined the training's purpose, underscoring its core objective of improving operational efficiency and fostering sustainable initiatives. She emphasized that the seminar would play a crucial role in enhancing participants' knowledge and supporting efficient production efforts across the university. "This seminar empowers us and will significantly benefit our production initiatives," she remarked.

Meanwhile, Dr. Kenneth Armas, Director of the Planning and Development Office, discussed the critical functions of the Production Office. His presentation focused on strategies for securing external funding to support commercialization projects, stressing the importance of strong and well-organized production operations. He also introduced NEUST's Global Plan, which aims to promote entrepreneurial development and institutional growth. "Research must lead to either extension or commercialization," he stated, acknowledging the challenges while emphasizing the need for collaboration across teams.

Dr. Armas further highlighted the necessity of continuous improvement in production processes. "While commercialization remains a challenge for universities, it is crucial for institutional growth," he noted, stressing the importance of strategic fiscal management in achieving long-term success.

The discussion on funding strategies was complemented by insights from Mr. Niño Alvarez and Mr. Joseph Tantoco from the Local and International Accreditation Unit. They focused on ISO compliance and the critical role of documentation and record-keeping. Mr. Alvarez emphasized, "Maintaining proper documentation ensures quality, operational improvement, and compliance with customer requirements."

Meanwhile, Mr. Tantoco discussed the importance of the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) Cycle, reiterating that ISO implementation is a continuous process of refinement and learning.

The first day concluded with an inspirational message from Dr. Jean Guillasper, Vice President for Research, Extension, and Training (VPRET). She reinforced the importance of strategic initiatives in fostering innovation and sustainability, reminding participants that collaboration is key to driving progress within the university.

Financials and Hands-On Learning on Day 2

The second day of the training focused on practical skills and real-world applications. After a quick recap of Day 1 by Ms. La Penia, participants prepared for the day's main session: financial reporting for projects.

Ms. Kathleen Ritz Naldoza, the university's Accountant and In-Charge of Income-Generating Projects (IGPs), led the session on preparing financial reports. She provided a breakdown of the essentials of creating clear and accurate financial statements, emphasizing the importance of well-organized and transparent financial records for accountability in production-related projects.

Participants worked on preparing a mock financial statement for a hypothetical university project and had the opportunity to present their work. Ms. Naldoza provided feedback on their outputs, guiding them in refining their financial reporting skills.

The two-day training concluded with participants gaining essential skills to enhance NEUST's production processes. The workshop provided valuable insights and practical tools to improve efficiency and sustainability. Equipped with these new competencies, production teams are now better prepared to implement effective strategies, contributing to the university's ongoing efforts to optimize its operations.

Bautista, Domingo recognized as NEUST Gabaldon Outstanding Alumni



The Boulders

The Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) honored Ms. Kimberly G. Bautista, MPA, and Dr. Rogelio L. Domingo Jr. as the Outstanding Alumni Awardees of NEUST Gabaldon Campus (GC), among 18 awardees recognized across various colleges and campuses, during its 127th Founding Anniversary and 27th Charter Week Celebration at the NEUST Sumacab Campus Mini Convention Center on March 29, 2025.

Leading the event were Dr. Rhodora R. Jugo, University President; Dr. Feliciana P. Jacoba, Vice President for Academic Affairs; Atty. Bembol DL. Castillo, Vice President for Administration, Business, and Finance; Dr. Jean N. Guillasper, Vice President for Research, Extension, and Training; and Dr. Filip Carlo P. Bolisay, Director of the Alumni Affairs Office. They were joined by department heads, deans, faculty, and staff from various campuses and colleges, as well as the awardees' families and guests.

Ms. Bautista, a 2006 graduate of NEUST GC, was recognized for her leadership in technical education and skills development. As a Senior TESD Specialist and Acting Supervising TESD Specialist at TESDA Women's Center, she played a pivotal role in securing the APACC Platinum Level Award, a first in the Philippines. Her contributions include research on blended learning, development of gender-sensitive learning materials, and initiatives such as TWC Café Juana and the Wooden Spoon Innovation Hub, which earned international recognition from UNESCO-UNEVOC. She has also received multiple awards, including the TESDA Model Employee of the Year (2019) and the Research Achievement Award (2024).

Dr. Domingo, a 2005 graduate of NEUST GC, was honored in the Basic Education category for his leadership and innovations in the field. Currently serving as an Education Program Supervisor at DepEd Nueva Ecija, he has pursued extensive academic and professional development, earning a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management and an Honoris Causa in Humanities. His expertise in Technical-Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) education is supported by multiple certifications, and his research has influenced policy development in career advocacy and TVL programs. He has also contributed to DepEd TV and Tele-Turuan, producing instructional materials for nationwide use. His accolades include the Global Master Teacher Award, Global Researcher Award, and Outstanding Head Teacher Award.

Both awardees exemplify NEUST's commitment to academic excellence, research, and community service, making them deserving recipients of this year's Outstanding Alumni Award.



Josh Ivan Estanes

NEUST USG champions Mental Health through "I MATTER 2025"

Vea Panganiban

The Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology University Student Government (NEUST USG) successfully held the symposium "I MATTER 2025: Fluttering in All Colors Outside the Cocoon" on April 14, 2025, at the NEUST Mini Convention Center, Sumacab Campus, bringing together students and Local Student Government officers from the university's various colleges and campuses for a Mental Health Protection and Social Awareness Program aimed at promoting mental well-being and awareness.

Dr. Ma. Lourdes R. Quijano, Dean of the Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS), opened the program with welcome remarks, expressing her support for the event's goal of promoting mental health and inclusivity. Mr. Dan Richard S. Dela Cruz, NEUST Student Regent, then presented the Statement of Purpose, followed by University President Dr. Rhodora R. Jugo, who delivered an inspirational message encouraging students to value mental health and personal growth. Dr. Maria Serena Encarnacion I. Diokno delivered the keynote lecture, sharing insights on "The Bumpy Road to Social Awareness."

In the afternoon session, Ms. Jiezel B. Alcantara, Head of OSAS Research, Extension, and Training, delivered a message, while Carmi Dominique Maullon and Joshua Eric Villafuerte facilitated "Flourishing Thoughts: Positive Psychology Affirmation Exercises."

The symposium also included mental health support discussions. Ms. Mary Claire D. Calura, Head of the Guidance and Counseling Office, introduced "GCO Telemental Health Support for NEUSTians," followed by Mary Angelie S. Cabacungan, who presented "The Power of Laughs: An Introduction to Laughter Therapy," exploring laughter as a tool for emotional healing.

Dr. Clarinda A. Reyes, Chairperson of the Psychology Department, discussed the importance of "Tara Usap Tayo, CASama Mo Ako. Psych Aid," which aims to provide psychological support and create a safe space for open mental health conversations.
One of the attendees, Gabriel Sofian Alvez, shared his takeaway from the seminar: "A takeaway that I've learned po sa iMatter Seminar is to be optimistic throughout your journey even though may mga hadlang na haharapin," Alvez stated. "It made me reflect on my perspective on certain things na kahit na mahirap siya at duguan 'yung proseso, I have to think positively," he added.

USG Secretary on Culture, Literary, and Arts Development, Mark Angelo S. Tolentino, concluded the event by thanking everyone for their participation despite the heat and highlighting the seminar's importance in reminding attendees that they are not alone and that their thoughts and feelings matter. "As the event concludes, we hope that everyone learned a lot and sparks connections with other people," Tolentino added.

"I MATTER" brought NEUST students, faculty, and staff together, encouraging meaningful discussions on mental health and equipping them with tools to strengthen their emotional well-being. It also supported the university's mission to develop skilled and responsible graduates and its vision of building a better society through education, care, and community involvement.

Career Orientation Program equips NEUST GC LHS students for the future



NEUST GC LHS Confed

Jerome Cuaresma

The NEUST Gabaldon Campus (GC) Laboratory High School (LHS) students from Grades 9 to Grade 12 attended the Career Orientation Program at the campus' Open Gymnasium on May 9, 2025.

Dr. Rasha Amira Khalil, LHS Principal, delivered an inspirational message explaining how the program helps students choose their career path. "Take the time to reflect on what you truly want to do in the next 10 to 20 years. This program is highly relevant in helping individuals choose the right career path. It serves as a valuable guide in shaping their ambitions and achieving their life goals," she expressed.

Meanwhile, Ms. Karen Jan Aquino, Psychological Testing Office Head, discussed the Career Preference, helping students assess their personalities and align them with suitable career options, while Ms. Mary Claire Calura, Guidance and Counseling Head, talked about the Smart Career Workplan, guiding students in setting clear goals and planning actionable steps toward their chosen careers.

"The purpose of the Career Orientation Program for high school students is to guide and prepare them for future educational and career choices by helping them explore their interests, strengths, and potential career paths," stated Assoc. Prof. Mailyn Macasieb, NEUST GC Guidance Coordinator, sharing how the program supports students in identifying their career choices and interests.

The Career Orientation Program aided the students in choosing their career paths and helped them envision what they wanted to become in the years to come.



Mga lider-estudyante, nagtapatan sa university-wide Miting de Avance ng NEUST

Cryshel Jorduela

Bilang bahagi ng University-wide Elections ng Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST), ginanap ang Tapatan 2025: Miting de Avance ng mga kumakandidatong lider-estudyante noong ika-25 ng Abril 2025 sa Rico Fajardo Hall, University Hostel, NEUST Sumacab Campus, na inorganisa ng NEUST Office of Student Publications sa pangunguna ni Dr. Alfredo Esteban Jr., sa pakikipagtulungan ng mga opisyal nitong publikasyong The Blaze (NEUST Main Campus), Anihan (San Isidro Campus) sa ilalim ng patnubay ni Assoc. Prof. Jennifer Flores, at The Boulders (Gabaldon Campus) sa ilalim ng patnubay ni Mr. John Louie Galang.

Sa panimula ng programa, nagbigay ng pagbati si Dr. Ma. Lourdes Quijano, Dean ng Office of Student Affairs and Services. Binigyang-diin din niya ang mahalagang tungkuling gagampanan ng mga lider-estudyante. “Sana patuloy tayo na maging ehemplo sa ating mga kapwa mag-aaral, kung saan kayo ang magiging lider-lingkod ng mga estudyante [dahil] magmumula sa inyo ang mamumuno sa ating USG," wika niya.

Narito ang listahan ng mga kandidato bilang mga lider-estudyante:

Astig-Alive Party:
- Presidente: John Sebastian Mangilin
- Bise-Presidente: Angel Chene Arianne Alde
- Mga Senador:
- James Zabala (Atate Campus)
- Rose Ann Segundo (Fort Magsaysay Campus)
- Lauren Adelaide Suba (General Tinio St. Campus)
- Frenszel Nunez (San Isidro Campus)
- Sheyn Airish Joy Ramos (Sumacab Campus)
- Vic Velasquez (Northern Campuses)
- John Carlo Bascones (Southern Campuses)

SAMASA Party:
- Presidente: Jester Manalo
- Bise-Presidente: Rencel John Delmo
- Mga Senador:
- Milton Jay Trinidad (Fort Magsaysay Campus)
- Mark Philip Sandig (Gabaldon Campus)
- Ryan Vincent Delos Reyes (San Isidro Campus)
- Paula Gyllyan Ocang (Sumacab Campus)
- Renalyn Victoria (Northern Campuses)

Independent:
- Senador: Mary Ann Gavina (Gabaldon Campus)

Sa pahayag ni Jester Manalo, kandidato bilang presidente sa ilalim ng SAMASA Party, kaniyang inilahad, “We need a University Student Government that is purpose-driven, responsible, empowering, pro-active, and above all, my fellow NEUSTians, isang USG na makikinig sa pinagdadaanan at kuwento ng bawat mag-aaral...Kaya naman kami ang SAMASA Party—isang lideratong may paninindigan na ikaw ang sentro ng paninilbihan.”

Samantala, sa pahayag naman ni John Sebastian Mangilin, kandidato bilang presidente sa ilalim ng Astig-Alive Party, kaniyang inilahad, “Ang aming paninilbihan ay hindi lamang para sa mga estudyante—kundi para sa lahat ng sektor ng ating pamantasan. Hindi lamang namin tinitingnan ang local at university student government, kundi pati na rin ang kabuuang komunidad ng NEUST.”

Binigyang-linaw naman ni Mary Ann Gavina, Independent Senator mula sa Gabaldon Campus, ang dahilan ng kaniyang pagsagot ng abstain sa ilang mahahalagang isyu ng unibersidad at maging ng bansa. Wika niya, “Iyon pong pagsagot ng 'abstain' bilang mambabatas ay nakikita ko pong may epekto... Ipinakita ko lamang po doon na iyong pagrespeto sa kanilang mga sinabi sa akin sa kabila ng 'abstain' kong sagot ay nagpapakita ng paggalang... Alam ko pong hiwalay ang church at state, pero lahat po nagsisimula sa isang panalangin bago po tayo magpatuloy."

Sa pagtatapos ng programa, nagbigay ng mensahe si Dr. Racquel Pula, Head ng Office of Student Organizations, Activities, and Development, “Ngayong araw, muli nating napatunayan na buhay na buhay ang diwa ng demokrasya at liderato sa ating unibersidad. Nakita natin ang dedikasyon, galing, at puso ng bawat kandidato.”

Pinangunahan din ni Dr. Alfredo Esteban Jr., Head ng Office of Student Publications at Adviser ng The Blaze, ang panata ng kasunduan sa eleksyon para sa mga kandidato.

Nagbigay rin ng mensahe si Alliah Valdez, Chair ng SG COMELEC: “This moment is a celebration of our shared commitment for leadership, transparency, and student empowerment...The real victory lies not just in the result, but in how we uphold the integrity of this process."

Sina May Ann Badajos, Editor-in-Chief ng The Blaze; Kristina Gregorio, Editor-in-Chief ng Anihan; Anna Marie Moralde, Editor-in-Chief ng The Boulders; at Arriane Villasana, Literary Editor ng The Blaze, ang nagsilbing panel ng Tapatan 2025. Sila ang nagpahayag ng mga katanungan para sa mga kandidato bilang mga lider-estudyante.

Ang tapatang ito ay bahagi ng preparasyon para sa nalalapit na halalan na gaganapin mula ika-28 hanggang 30 ng Abril 2025. Layunin nitong ipakilala ang mga kandidato, ang kanilang mga plataporma, at ang kanilang kakayahan bago ang araw ng halalan.





NEUST, PPI, HSF train campus journos in MIL



Kendrick Alejo & Geoffrey Alvez

Jerome Cuaresma & Warren Magbanua

Student journalists from various institutions across Nueva Ecija came together for the two-day Scholastic Outreach Program on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) held on April 22–23, 2025, at the Mini Convention Center, NEUST Sumacab Campus. The Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) hosted the seminar in partnership with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) and the Philippine Press Institute (PPI).

Representatives from the following official student publications in Nueva Ecija participated in the program: The Blaze from NEUST Sumacab Campus, Anihan from NEUST San Isidro Campus, The Boulders from NEUST Gabaldon Campus, De Calibre from NEUST College of Criminology, Papyrus from NEUST College of Architecture, The Wheel from NEUST College of Education, Genrè from Wesleyan University-Philippines, I-Core from Core Gateway College, Inc., and The Shepherdess from Gapan City College.

Dr. Rachel Khan from the College of Media and Communication – UP Diliman opened the program with the session, “AI: Bane or Boon?” She mentioned in her lecture that although AI can be used in writing articles, it still needs a human when it comes to punctuation. "Even in AI transcriptions, it hasn't mastered the grammar, it hasn't mastered punctuation. So, it listens, it just types out the text. But you never know when the sentence is beginning and ending, you still kind of need to have a human to put the punctuations in,” she stated.

After the first session, Ms. Ronalyn Olea from the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines discussed “Good Digital Hygiene and Cybersecurity Habits,” where she talked about cybersecurity. She emphasized, “Dapat tayong mag-two factor authentication, hindi lamang sa ating social media, kundi sa iba pa nating accounts.”

Meanwhile, in the afternoon session, Ms. Joyce Peñares, PPI Training Director and Manila Standard Managing Editor, discussed fact-checking in her presentation titled “We Can All Be Fact-Checkers,” where she highlighted the importance of verifying the sources of our information as individuals and especially as campus journalists. “We should verify our sources. Saan ba nanggaling ‘yung information?”

Wrapping up Day 1, Dr. Jes Aznar from the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (FOCAP) talked about the role of photographs in today’s journalism with the topic “Pictures Never Lie?” He mentioned that technology is not the enemy, but rather those who use technology to deceive the audience. “Hindi ‘yung technology ‘yung kalaban, kahit AI hindi natin siya kalaban. Ang kalaban natin ay ‘yung gumagamit ng technology para lokohin ‘yung audience.”

Ms. Tess Bacalla, Editor-in-Chief of Asia Democracy Chronicles, started Day 2 with her session, “Elections and Narratives: Who Cares? (An Asian Perspective).” She urged the youth to reclaim truthful storytelling: “Ang challenge to everyone of us, we need to reclaim, bawiin natin, our shared narratives in the name of democracy.”

Capping off the sessions, Ms. Julie Nealega, Head of Archives at The Probe, and content creator Mathilda Airlines, also known as Queen Mathilda, talked about content creation and fighting disinformation in “From Legacy to Lit: How Journos and Content Creators Work Together to Fight Disinformation and Reach New Audiences.”

Queen Mathilda encouraged participants to stand as truth-tellers in a digital age full of disinformation: “It’s our collective responsibility as citizens [of our country] to do our very best para ma-unify tayo instead na ma-divide tayong lahat.”

The two-day seminar served as a platform to strengthen MIL among student journalists and equip them with the tools to combat misinformation and disinformation—an advocacy jointly championed by NEUST, PPI, and HSF in pursuit of a more informed and responsible press.



NEUST GC conducts LALTC 2025



Dave Elas

Sandara Pascua

NEUST Gabaldon Campus (GC) conducted the third Local Annual Leadership Training Course themed "Creating Meaningful Connections" on May 2-3, 2025, at the campus' open gymnasium.

The Gabaldon Campus - Local Student Government (GC-LSG), under the leadership of Governor Royette A. Pilapil, led this two-day event with the guidance of the Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS) head, Dr. Miranella D. Tiangco, and was approved by the NEUST GC Director, Dr. Franklin T. Dumayas.

Dr. Tiangco stated her welcoming remarks by reminding the student leaders that leadership is not only about leading the student body, "Leadership is about understanding, listening deeply, building trust, and inspiring through authenticity."

The third LALTC celebration was empowered by the selected speakers who shared their valuable insights. The Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) Engr. Feliciana P. Jacoba emphasized the role of a leader, stating, "A leader must know how to follow, and leaders never quit just because they are tired." Meanwhile, the University Student Government (USG) President Mr. Dan Richard S. Dela Cruz highlights the significance of compassionate leadership, noting that "a leader must know when to listen and when to speak up."

The event was participated by various confederation officers from College of Management and Business Technology - Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (CMBT-BSHM), College of Information and Communications Technology - Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (CICT-BSIT), College of Agriculture (CoAgri), Laboratory High School (LHS), and Teacher Education Program (TEP). Moreover, participants from different clubs and organizations from Eco-Innovators Club, Lexicon Society Club, LHS Math Club, Multimedia and Excellence Technology Advocates (META), NEUST Society of Animal Science, The Boulders, and Young Agriculturist Club (YAC) also participated in the said event.

Ms. Vanessa Estacio from the Blue Team shared her realization during the event, stating, "You don't have to be one of the student leaders to lead and support others." Echoing this sentiment, Mr. Josh Ivan Estanes of the Green Team reflected on his experience, saying that the LALTC is "empowering leaders through unity, service, and self-discovery." Likewise, Mr. Renz Delos Santos from the Orange Team emphasized the value of both leading and following, saying, "We must know how to follow and lead—to know that in every step, our team has our back."

The two-day training course not only honed leadership skills but also strengthened bonds among future leaders across the campus.

To acknowledge the efforts of the participants in different activities, awards were given:

Major Awards

- Overall Champion – Pink Team
- 1st Place – Orange Team
- 2nd Place – Blue Team

Group Awards

- Best in Yell – Red Team
- Most Punctual – Blue Team
- Most Creative Flag – Green Team
- Most Disciplined – Yellow Team

Best in Pajama Attire

- Levi Janeth Frayres (Pink)
- John Michael Rodriguez (Blue)

Mr. & Ms. Socialization Night

- Marian Rose Jintalan (Pink)
- Jomarie Francia (Red)

Best Team Captain

- Mico Angelo Dalacat (Blue)

Best Cheerleader

- Francheska Abie De Guzman (Green)

Best Bookkeeper

- Cherrie Joy Agbayani (Yellow)

Best Flag Bearer

- Jhon Dela Cruz (Green)

Best Escort

- Terence Subido (Red)



ANG BOXING MATCH NG DALAWANG PAYASO

Sa isang isport na nagbigay karangalan at pagkakakilanlan sa bansa, hindi katanggap-tanggap ang ginawang pagyurak ng dalawang indibidwal na nagmistulang mga payaso sa isang tanghalan. Ang sinasabing boxing match nina PNP Chief Nicolas Torre at Acting Mayor Baste Duterte ay nag-ingay at nagpakulo sa publiko, ngunit wala namang pinatunguhan. Sa halip na itaas ang antas ng isports sa Pilipinas, ginamit ito para sa pansariling kasikatan at politika, na nagpakitang ang diwa ng tunay na palakasan ay naging sabungan para sa mga naghahangad ng atensyon.

Ang Amba ng Isang Payaso, Ang Atake ng Isa

Sa ngalan daw ng kawanggawa, buong gilas na naghamon ng boxing si Torre. Siya ang tila isang payaso na buong pagmamalaking nagpapakita ng kanyang "galing." Samantala, si Duterte naman ay nagpaligoy-ligoy, nagbating-ting, at sa huli ay umatras. Siya ang payaso na puro amba pero walang lakas ng loob na tumuloy.

Hindi nagkataon na si Torre, ang dating hepe ng CIDG, ang mismong nagpatupad ng warrant ng ICC laban sa ama ni Baste. Naging pagkakataon sana ni Baste na ipaghiganti ang kanyang ama sa ring, subalit umiral ang pagkaduwag nito. Dito lumabas ang tunay na kulay: ang buong hamon ay hindi para sa isports, kundi puno ng politika, personal na isyu, at paghihiganti.

Isang Mahalagang Aral mula sa Isports

Hindi man natuloy ang laban, nakalikom pa rin ito ng P16 milyong donasyon para sa mga nasalanta ng bagyo. Isipin kung gaano pa kalaki ang naitulong kung nagkaisa ang dalawa at itinuloy nang maayos para sa bayan. Sa halip na magkaisa, puro away at pataasan ng ihi ang inabot.

Ang esensya ng isports ay ang pagtrato ng may respeto sa kabanalan ng paligsahan. Ngunit pinamukha ng dalawang payaso na tila laro-laro lang sa kanila ang lahat, isang bagay na pwedeng bawiin kung gugustuhin. Hindi para sa ngalan ng isports o adbokasiya ang kanilang intensyon, kundi para sa sariling pagmamalaki.

Ang Sirko ay Tapos na

Ang ginawa nina Torre at Duterte ay kabaligtaran nito. Ginawa nilang katatawanan ang boxing. Ginawa nilang tanghalan ng pagyayabang. Ginawa nilang instrumento ng politika ang isang dapat sana'y mapagkawanggawang laban.

Nagsimula ang lahat bilang isang hamon sa boxing, ngunit natapos ito bilang isang sirkong walang saysay. Ang kanilang huling akto ay hindi isang mapagkawanggawang laban, kundi isang walang kabuluhang palabas na nagpababa sa diwa ng isports. Sa huli, ang nagwagi lang ay ang kanilang kamangmangan at kayabangan, habang ang boxing ay nagdusa sa ilalim ng bigat ng kanilang palabas-payaso.

> **“Ang tunay na diwa ng isports—dedikasyon, respeto, pagpupursige, at pagtanggap ng pagkatalo nang may dignidad—ay ipinapakita ng mga atleta, hindi ng mga pulitikong naghahanap ng kasikatan.**

Justine Peromingan, nakamit ang tanso

Lhenard Alpuerto
Ruth Quiere

“Kahit po hindi ko nakuha yung silver, masaya na po ako na may bronze.

Peromingan sa pagkapanalo ng Bronze Medal sa blitz match.



BSIT student Justine Peromingan ng Gabaldon Mighty Eagles men's Chess tinalagang Bronze Medalist ng board 3 matapos matalo ni Victor Joshua Valdoz mula sa College of Criminology Mighty Lion sa blitz match para sa pwesto ng Silver Medal sa U-MEET 2024 na ginanap sa NEUST Library, Sumacab Campus.

Parehong 6.5 ang standing ng dalawang manlalaro mula sa kanilang naging karera sa turneyo.

Ika-apat man sa Group Standing ang kanyang buong kupunan sa kanikanilang Board, nanatili pa ring buo ang kanilang loob para bumawi “First time ko po rito sa U-MEET at kinakaban po ako nang masyado. Kung hindi po ako kinakabahan doon, natalo po sana 'yung kalaban ko ngayon,” saad nang quince años na si Terence Subido.

Isang karangalan naman sa grupo na makatapat at matalo ang CPADM Raging Leviathans, 3-1, sa lead board match ng turneyo, patunay na kaya nilang sumabay at bumawi sa susunod na taon.

“As a captain po, masasabi ko pong worth it po ang laro namin, kase po nasa upper board po kami mula day 1 hanggang day 3... proud po ako doon [kase] ang gagaling po ng kasama ko”

tugon ni Patrick Leoveras, ang kapitan ng kupunan.

Ganunpama’y malaki ang pag-asa ng Gabaldon Mighty Eagles men’s Chess sa mga susunod na taon, dahil sa 3rd year pa lamang si Justine Peromingan at bata pa si Terence Subido.

NEUST GC athletes bag five bronze medals in SCUAA III

Warren Magbanua Ruth Quiere



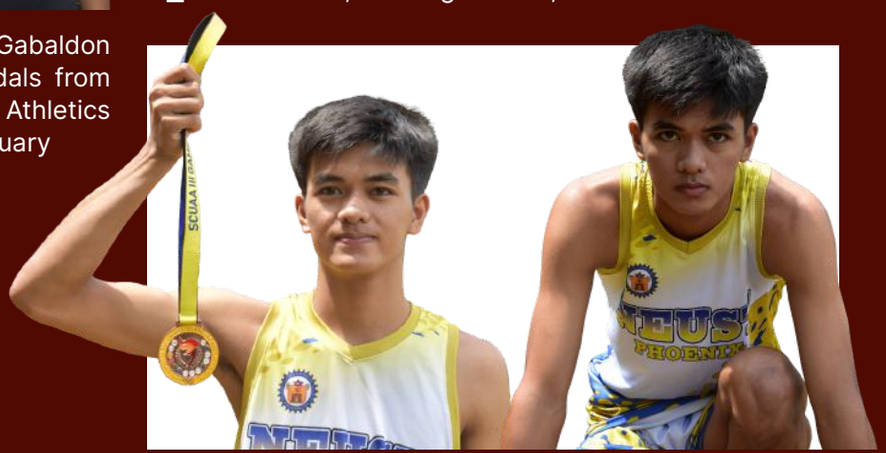
Four athletes brought pride to the NEUST Gabaldon Campus (GC) as they claimed five bronze medals from the 2025 State Colleges and Universities Athletics Association (SCUAA) III Olympics, held from February 24-28, 2025, at Pampanga State Agricultural University (PSAU).

Swimmer Jessa Mae Asug made quite a splash, winning two bronzes in 100 meters and 200 meters Breaststroke category, respectively. Asug will work hard more and set her eyes more more than a bronze medal on the next SCUAA.

> **Mas pag-iigihan ko pa ang pag-e-ensayo upang makamit ang best time [ko] next SCUAA at magkamit ng medalya higit pa sa bronze [medal].**
>
> Asug on winning bronze medals in 100 and 200 meters Breaststroke

Meanwhile, the swimmer duo Kris Lean Cleofas and Rochelle Ebol showed an undeniable teamwork, complimenting each other to win bronze in 4 x 50 meters Freestyle relay category.

> **Para samin naging susi talaga yung magkaroon kami ng teamwork, tiwala sa isat-isa, gabay galing kay Lord, at dahil din sa tulong ng coaches namin at suporta ng teammates [kaya] nagkamit kami ng medalya,**
>
> Ebol said, crediting their win to the trust with each other, Lord's guidance, and their team.



On the field, athlete Rolly Permanez leapt and reached bronze medal in High jump category. Permanez recalled being nervous but eventually relished the experience and his unexpected win made him delighted.

> **"Nung mismong laban napo syempre kabado at the same time po is masaya din namn in-enjoy ko lang po 'yung laro. Tapos po nung naging tatlo nalang po kaming naglalaban is syempre sobrang saya ko po knowing na may maiuuwe nakong medal,"**
> he said.

The SCUAA is an annual regional sports event for state colleges and universities done to showcase and celebrate the student's athleticism, sports' prowess, and sportsmanship.

SPORTS FEATURE

Muling Pagtakbo sa Larangan ng Laro at Buhay

Quennie Torio
The Blaze



“Huwag mag-alala, buhay ay hindi karera.”

Maraming karera ang kailangang pagdaanan sa buhay, ngunit hindi lahat ng laban ay tungkol sa pagiging una. Minsan, sapat na ang pagpili mong bumangon at magpatuloy, kahit ilang ulit kang nadapa.

Ganito ang kuwento ni Kelvin Klerk Gagala, 23 taong gulang, isang estudyante ng Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) sa NEUST Gabaldon Campus. Kilala sa mundo ng laro sa palayaw na “Android,” si Kelvin ay hindi lamang isang Atleta, —siya rin ay isang patunay ng pagpu-pursige at muling pagbangon.

Handa...

Bata pa lamang si Kelvin ay mahilig na siyang makisali sa iba’t ibang palaro. Sa kanyang murang edad, naging natural na bahagi ng kanyang araw ang laro. Nasa ikaapat na baitang siya nang unang sumabak siya sa Volleyball. Nang sumunod na taon, Badminton naman ang kanyang sinubukan. Ngunit ang pinakamalaking pagbabago ng kanyang kwento ay nang siya ay mapasama sa kuponan ng soccer noong siya ay nasa ika-anim na baitang.

Ang Coach niya sa Soccer ang unang nakakita ng bilis at dedikasyon ni Kelvin, dahilan upang hikayatin siyang sumali sa Track and Field.

Doon siya unang isinabak sa track and field, at hindi inaasahan, ang unang sali pa lang niya ay agad nang nagbunga ng tagumpay. Mula sa simpleng pagsubok, nagtuloy-tuloy ang kanyang karera sa pagtakbo hanggang sa makapasok siya sa Central Luzon Regional Athletic Association (CLARAA). Dito na nagsimula ang kwento ng batang mas piniling tumakbo hindi lang sa track kundi sa direksyon ng kanyang pangarap.

Puwesto...

Ngunit tulad sa kahit anong karera, may mga panahong kailangang huminto—hindi dahil sumusuko ka, kundi dahil kailangan mo munang huminga.

Dumating ang pandemya, at tulad ng maraming kabataan, napilitan si Kelvin na huminto sa pag-aaral. Sa pagsasara ng mga paaralan at pagkansela ng mga palaro, kasabay nitong tumigil din ang kanyang karera bilang atleta. Wala nang ensayo. Wala nang kompetisyon. Ang dating masiglang hapon sa oval ay napalitan ng katahimikan at pangungulila sa larong kanyang minahal.

> **“Nag-stop po ako mag-aral noong pandemic, kaya na-stop din po 'yung pagtakbo. Hindi na po ako nakapag-training,”** pagbabalik-tanaw ni Kelvin.

Ngunit kahit ilang hakbang palayo sa muling pagtakbo sa larangan ng athletics, hindi kailanman nawala ang pagnanasa niyang makabalik. Sa puso niya, may tinig na paulit-ulit na nagsasabing:

> **“Hindi pa tapos ang laban.”**

Takbo!

Pagkatapos ng pandemya, sa kanyang pagbabalik sa kolehiyo, muling bumalik ang kanyang sigla. Hindi lamang bilang estudyante kundi muli bilang isang atleta.

Bilang “Android,” isang palayaw na tumutukoy sa kanyang lakas, liksi, at dedikasyon, muli siyang tumakbo. Ngayon ay may mas malalim na dahilan. Hindi na lamang ito para sa medalya, at hindi lang para sa pangalan. Ito ay para sa sarili niyang piniling bumangon mula sa pagkakapatid.

“Na-motivate po akong bumalik sa pagiging student-athlete dahil gusto ko talagang maglaro ulit. Gusto ko ‘yung feeling na nasa track, ‘yung excitement, at ‘yung drive na meron kapag nasa laro ka,”
Sabi ni Kevin.

At sa kanyang pagbabalik, agad na bumungad ang tagumpay.

Sa ginanap na University Meet 2024 noong Nobyembre 4–8 sa NEUST Sumacab Campus, muli niyang pinatunayan ang kanyang husay. Kasama ng Mighty Eagles’ Athletics Team, si Kelvin ay nag-uwi ng Silver Medal sa 4x100m Relay Men at Classical Relay Men, at Bronze Medal sa 1,500m Men. Bahagi ito ng kabuuang 22 medalya (8 Gold, 7 Silver, at 7 Bronze) na naiuwi ng kanilang koponan, isang matibay na patunay ng kanilang sipag, pagkakaisa at determinasyon.

Pero higit sa lahat, ang pinakamalakas na tinig na nagtutulak sa kanya ay ang pananampalataya.

“Lagi kong iniisip [na] dapat positive sa bawat laban ng buhay. Alam ko na palagi akong ginagabayan ni God,”
dagdag niya.

Ang kanyang paniniwala sa Diyos ang nagsilbing ilaw sa kanyang madilim na pahinga. Sa tuwing siya ay pinanghihinaan ng loob, pinapaalalahanan niya ang sarili na hindi siya nag-iisa. May Diyos na kasama sa bawat hakbang at hinga.

Ang Tunay na Panalo

Hindi madali ang piniling landas ni Kelvin. Ang pagiging student-athlete ay nangangahulugan ng sakripisyo, disiplina, at tiyaga. Ngunit sa bawat patak ng pawis, sa bawat tagpong gusto niyang sumuko, may paalala siyang bitbit na para sa sarili, at para sa iba.

“Tuloy lang ang laban. Sa lahat ng gustong maging student-athlete, lagi lang mag-isip ng positibo. Lagi mong isipin na kaya mo, kahit pa gaano kahirap,”
tugon ni Kelvin.



Sa kanyang pagbabalik, hindi lang niya muling nahanap ang sarili dahil naging inspirasyon din siya sa iba.

Tunay nga, sa larangan ng sports at sa karerang tinatawag nating buhay, ang pinakamahalaga ay hindi kung sino ang nauna.

Ang tunay na panalo ay ang hindi sumuko, ang bumalik, at ang muling tumakbo.



SPORTS FEATURE

KARLTZY: THE FACE OF THE MLBB

Warren Magbanua
KarlTzy, All-Star Magazine, & MPL PH

"ARE YOU NOW THE FACE OF MOBILE LEGENDS: BANG BANG (MLBB)?"

The question hung in the air, a final verdict waiting to be delivered. A wide smile broke across his face as the arena's crowd roar. **"Yes!"** KarlTzy exclaimed, his voice ringing with a mix of triumph and relief.

Karl "KarlTzy" Nepomuceno, the electrifying jungler for Team Liquid PH (TLPH), had just captured the one title that had long eluded him. With a dominant 4-1 victory over Selangor Red Giants OG Esports (SRG.OG) in the MLBB 2025 Mid Season Cup (MSC), he not only added the final piece to his trophy cabinet but also cemented his legacy as the undisputed face of MLBB. This victory was the culmination of a journey filled with highs and lows, a true hero's tale written in the Land of Dawn.



THE PRODIGY

From the moment a 15-year-old KarlTzy set foot on the professional scene, his potential was undeniable. Unfazed by veteran players, he led his debut team to a third-place finish in MPL Season 2, a shocking feat for a newcomer. His incredible performance caught the eye of scouts, earning him the title of prodigy and a spot on the Philippine national team for the inaugural MLBB tournament at the 30th Southeast Asian Games.

In the face of immense pressure, KarlTzy didn't cower. He lived up to the hype, spearheading the team to a gold medal against a formidable Indonesian squad. He had arrived. But as with any young star, questions lingered: Was this just a fluke? Was he lucky to be on a great team, or was this a prime that would soon fade? Would he truly live up to the immense expectations placed upon him?

THE SLUMP AND THE COURAGE TO RETURN

When life gets tough, it's easy to feel like quitting. Even for a prodigy, a slump can be a brutal reality. After a string of losses and early playoff exits, KarlTzy felt the weight of his struggles.

"Sobrang daming times po. Simula nung nag-start ako sa career ko, kahit Season 3 pa lang. Kapag natatalo, ayoko na. Kasi mas madali mag-stream na lang ako ganun," he revealed in a past interview with SPIN.ph.

But what separates a prodigy from a champion is the courage to persevere. KarlTzy didn't let his vulnerable moments define him. Instead, he used them as fuel.

"Pinanghahawakan ko na lang na maraming gustong mapunta dito sa spot ko tapos sinasayang ko lang. Mas lalo akong nagkakaroon ng motivation," KarlTzy said, recognizing his privileged position which many people aspire to achieve. This realization—that he had an opportunity many could only dream of—ignited a new fire within him. It also helped that he had a strong support system.

"Shoutout sa girlfriend ko na laging akong chini-cheer up," he added, a testament to the personal support that anchored him through the turbulence.

THE RISE TO LEGEND: MPL AND M-SERIES GLORY

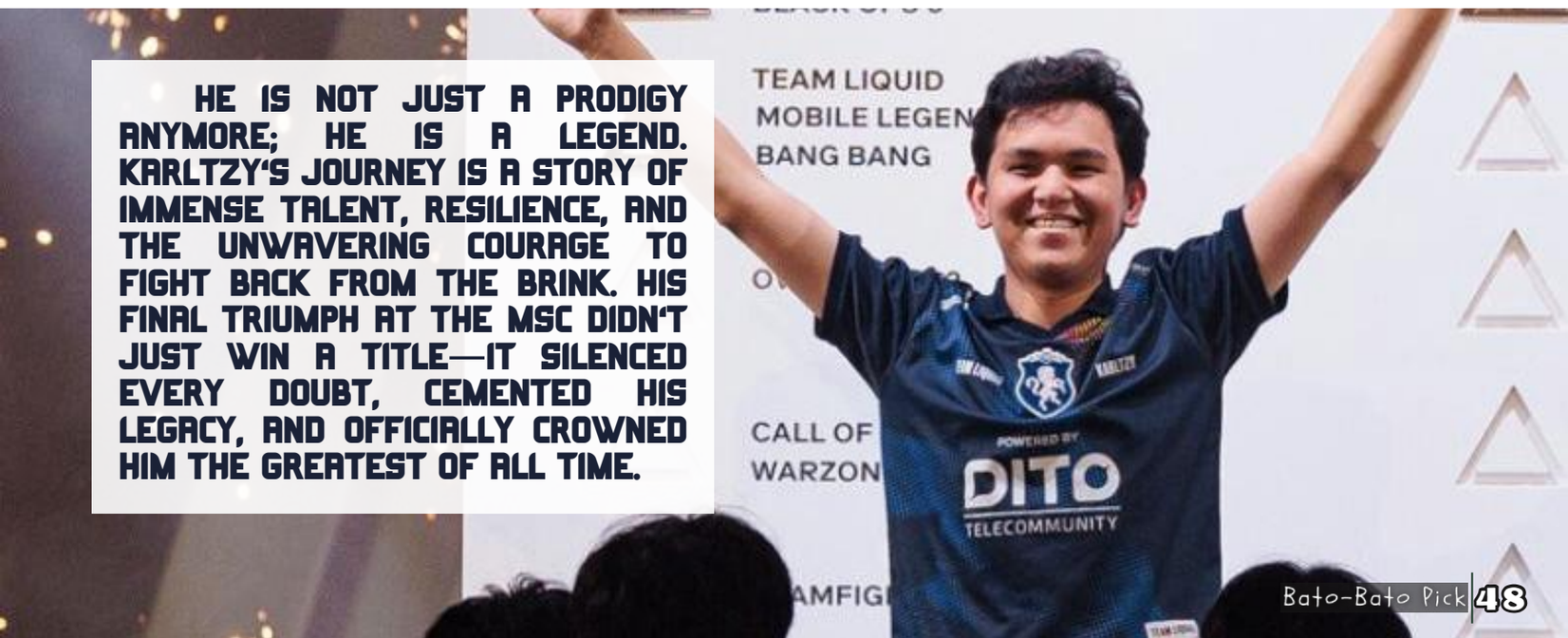
After his move to a new team, KarlTzy's career soared to new heights. He began collecting trophies at a blistering pace, proving his early success was no fluke. He and his team dominated the MPL Philippines scene, securing a coveted championship title. But his greatest moment came on the world stage at the M-series World Championship.

Facing the world's best teams, KarlTzy was an unstoppable force. His clutch plays and masterful jungle control led his squad to a historic victory, making them the first-ever Filipino team to lift the world championship trophy. With this win, he not only achieved his dream but also put the Philippines firmly on the map as an MLBB powerhouse. The prodigy was now a world champion.

THE GOAT IS CROWNED

Years later, with a legacy already secured, KarlTzy still had one goal: to win the Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) Mid Season Cup (MSC). This tournament had been his final white whale, and in 2025, he finally captured it. His dominant performance at the MSC 2025 was a masterclass, culminating in the 4-1 grand finals victory. The trophy that had long eluded him was now in his hands, completing a collection that included a SEA Games gold medal, multiple MPL titles, and an M-series World Championship crown.

HE IS NOT JUST A PRODIGY ANYMORE; HE IS A LEGEND. KARLTZY'S JOURNEY IS A STORY OF IMMENSE TALENT, RESILIENCE, AND THE UNWAVERING COURAGE TO FIGHT BACK FROM THE BRINK. HIS FINAL TRIUMPH AT THE MSC DIDN'T JUST WIN A TITLE—IT SILENCED EVERY DOUBT, CEMENTED HIS LEGACY, AND OFFICIALLY CROWNED HIM THE GREATEST OF ALL TIME.



SPORTS FEATURE

TAKBO, BAYAN!

A TRIBUTE TO A NATION THAT RAN TOGETHER

Emily Agumbay Rappler & One Sports



The sweat-soaked dry-fit shirt in the chilly dawn. The heart beats as the feet pounds. The dog barks or the rooster crows. There was a time when the sound of pounding feet on pavement wasn't just a rhythm, it was a revolution. From Manila to Mindanao, from 3Ks to full marathons, the Philippines witnessed a surge of runners that transformed city streets and dusty barangay roads into race tracks of resilience, unity, and hope.

This was the golden era of Philippine running from the early 2000s to the late 2010s. The love of Filipinos for running is there and still present, regardless of the demographics. Running wasn't just a sport; it was a culture.

MORE THAN A SPORT

The Milo Marathon, established in 1974, became the country's premier long-distance running event. By the 2010s, it saw over 200,000 runners participate annually in regional legs and its grand national finals. For many, it was their first real race and for some, a launchpad for greatness.

Filipino long-distance icon Eduardo "Vertek" Buenavista etched his name in history books when he ran the 2004 Athens Olympics and later set a national record in the marathon (2:18:44) at the 2004 Oita Marathon in Japan. His discipline and sheer grit inspired a generation of provincial runners to dream bigger.

Another torchbearer of the era, Mary Joy Tabal, rose from the streets of Cebu to become a six-time Milo Marathon Queen and the first Filipina to qualify for the Olympics marathon event in Rio 2016. Her journey from training barefoot in the hills of Guba to carrying the Philippine flag on the global stage captured the imagination of aspiring female runners across the country.

RUNNING FOR A REASON

Some run for the health and fitness aspect. Some run for the social aspect. Some run for a specific kind of reasons. But one thing is for certain, running is a transformative experience. It affects a person holistically; physical, mental, emotional, and even spiritual aspect.

In an ANC 24/7 interview, Triathlon Coach and 2025 Tokyo Marathon Finisher Al Gonzales shared his running experience and the reasons to the running boom in the Philippines, saying the huge attention given to running is because running is a unique experience.

"It's a feeling that they have to experience themselves[...] But there's a different feeling of being in a finish line and it all hits you in different places whether it's emotional, physical, mental, and what have you. It is such an overwhelming feeling and it's also very addicting," *Gonzales said.*

"So as much as we can explain to people, they need to experience [running] themselves and they can tell us why there are a lot of people who are into this whole running era and running journey now," *he added.*

WHEN RUNNING BECAME A MOVEMENT

In Metro Manila, Sunday mornings meant road closures and finish lines. Events like the Condura Skyway Marathon, NatGeo Earth Run, and Color Manila turned fun runs into festive movements. They weren't just about speed—they were about community, advocacy, and joy.

Running clubs like Takbo.ph, Pinoy Fitness, and Team Soleus fostered camaraderie both online and off. Social media posts of medal hauls and sweaty selfies inspired thousands more to lace up and join in.

Even the provinces embraced the call: scenic runs in Baguio's Panagbenga Festival, Bacolod's MassKara Night Run, and trail races in Mt. Ugo or Mt. Pulag showcased the beauty of Philippine landscapes, one stride at a time.

FOOTSTEPS THAT ECHO STILL

The COVID-19 pandemic paused many events, and the running scene has since shifted with the rise of virtual runs and other fitness trends. But the heart of that golden era still beats in many; now coaches, teachers, parents, who once ran for medals and now run to inspire.

Today, new faces are rising: Rene Herrera, once a five-time SEA Games gold medalist, now trains the next wave of national athletes. The Philippine Athletics Track and Field Association (PATAFA) continues to push for stronger grassroots development, recognizing that the future of running begins in our smallest communities.

For every young runner who tightens their laces at dawn, the legacy continues. You are the next verse in this unbroken song of sweat, sacrifice, and silent strength.

To the generation who ran not for records but for redemption—to those who ran to be free, to be whole, to be alive—salamat sa takbong alay.



INFOGRAPHICS

LEGASIYA NI PACMAN

Jerome Cuaresma

“Recently inducted in the International Boxing Hall of Fame and having defeated 8 current Hall of Famers... truly one of all time greats of the sports.”

Kapirasong bahagi lamang ito ng pagpapakilala ni Jimmy Lennon kay 8-division World Champion **Manny *‘Pacman’* Pacquiao** sa naganap nitong laban kontra kay WBC Welterweight Champion **Mario 'El Azteca Barrios.**

Bagama’t majority draw ang naging resulta ng 12 rounds na palitan ng power punches, hindi maitatanggi na talagang natatangi ang dagundong ng mundo ng boxing kapag si Pacman na ang tumungtong sa lona, sa kabila ng edad n’ya ngayong 46.

Ngunit paano nga ba naabot ng isang Manny Pacquiao ang taas ng pagkilala na ito sa mundo ng professional boxing?





16 Taong-Gulang

Sa edad na **labing-anim** ay dinaya nito ang kaniyang edad at sinabing siya ay labing-walong taong gulang na upang makakuha ng professional boxing license; bata pa lamang ay talagang *"age is just a number"* na ang motto ni Pacquiao. Hindi pa riyan nagtatapos ang pandaraya nito, dahil sa una niyang propesyunal na laban ay hindi niya naabot ang catchweight ng junior flyweight na 105 pounds kaya naglagay siya ng pampabigat na bato sa bulsa.

January 22, 1995

Sa edad na **labing-anim** at timbang na **98 pounds,** unang sumabak si Pacquiao sa professional boxing. Dinaya man nito ang mga kwalipikasyon para makatapak sa lona, pinatunayan naman niya na siya ay karapat-dapat na sa professional boxing matapos nitong talunin si Edmund Enting Ignacio via 4-round unanimous decision na pabor sa kaniya.



19 Taong-Gulang

December 04, 1998

Sa edad na **labing siyam,** nasungkit ni Pacquiao ang **lineal at WBC flyweight titles,** ang una niyang **world title,** matapos nitong padapain si Chatchai Sasakul ng Thailand gamit ang isang solidong kaliwa sa panga. Sa mga panahong ito ay lingid sa kaalaman ng karamihan na 19-anyos pa lamang si Pacquiao dahil sa pandaraya nito sa kaniyang edad. Ang pagkapanalo niyang ito ay isa sa mga naging dahilan ng unti-unting pag-ugong ng kaniyang pangalan sa mundo ng boxing.



June 23, 2001

Habang nagbabakasyon sa Amerika, naghanap si Pacquiao ng boxing gym para mag-ensayo — dito nagtagpo ang landas nila **Coach Freddie Roach** sa **Wildcard Gym.** Nagustuhan ni Roach ang istilo, lakas, at bilis ni Pacquiao. Nagkataon naman na naghahanap ng replacement para sa makakalaban ni **IBF Junior Featherweight Champion Lehlo Ledwaba;** kahit na dalawang linggo na lamang bago ang laban ay tinanggap ni Pacquiao ang tyansa para masungkit ang world title. Kahit na hindi pa gaanong kilala ang pangalan niya at itinuturing na underdog sa laban, ginulat ni Pacquiao ang lahat ng boxing fans matapos nitong dalawang beses na pabagsakin si Ledwaba sa round 6 gamit ang *pamatay* niyang kaliwa.

Ang isa lamang sanang bakasyon ang siyang naging daan para **maagaw ni Pacquiao ang IBF Junior Featherweight world title** sa mas bihasang si Ledwaba. Ito rin ang naging mitsa ng tuluyang pagdomina ni Pacquiao sa boxing.



November 15, 2003

Sa pangalawang pagkakataon, muling umakyat ng dibisyon si Pacquiao para sa kaniyang ikatlong dibisyon, sa **Featherweight division,** kung saan sinagupa niya ang noon ay lineal champion at **elite-pound-for-pound fighter na si Marco Antonio Barrera.** Kagaya ng mga naunang laban ni Pacquiao, siya na naman ang itinuturing na underdog sa laban. Ngunit muli niyang binali ang mga kritisismo matapos niyang patikimin ng knockdown si Barrera sa ikatlong round pa lamang, at isang knockdown ulit sa round 11 bago ihinto ng kampo ni Barrera ang laban — dahilan upang **makuha ni Pacquiao ang lineal at The Ring Featherweight Title.**



March 19, 2005

Mahigit isang taon lamang makalipas ang pag-akyat ni Pacquiao sa Featherweight division, muli siyang umakyat sa Super Featherweight division laban kay **Erik Morales.** Ngunit sa kasamaang-palad ay **bigo si Pacquiao** na makuha ang kaniyang ika-limang dibisyon matapos ang unanimous decision loss kay Erik Morales.



Jamuary 21, 2006

Nagkaroon ng **rematch** si Pacquiao laban kay Erik Morales sa parehas na dibisyon, kung saan matagumpay niyang nakuha ang **WBC International Title** at ang kaniyang ika-apat na dibisyon sa pamamagitan ng 10th round technical knockout. Sampung buwan pa lamang ang nakalipas, November 18, 2006, sa ikatlong pagkakataon ay nagharap muli ang dalawa sa ibabaw ng lona kung saan **nakatikim ng mas maagang knockout si Morales** sa ikatlong round ng laban.



June 28, 2008

Para sa ika-limang dibisyon, kinaharap ni Pacquiao si **David Diaz** na isang **WBC Lightweight Champion.** Bagama't ikalimang dibisyon na ito ni Pacquiao, hindi pa rin nawala ang lakas at bilis ng suntok nito na siyang **nagpatumba kay Diaz via 9th round technical knockout.**



May 02, 2009

Patuloy na umakyat si Pacquiao sa kaniyang ika-anim na dibisyon upang kaharapin ang noon ay IBO at Ring Light Welterweight Champion na si **Ricky "The Hitman" Hatton** na may kartadang **49-01 at 32 sa kaniyang panalo ay nagmula sa knockout.** Ngunit hindi nasindak si Pacquiao sa kartadang bitbit ni Hatton. Sa ikalawang round pa lamang ay pinatikim na ito ni Pacquiao ng solid na left hook na siyang **nagpaunat rito sa ibabaw ng lona at hindi na tuluyang makabangon pa** — dahilan upang maagang maagaw ni Pacquiao ang **IBO at Ring Light Welterweight Championship Title** kay Hatton.



November 14, 2009

Sa parehas ding taon, umakyat muli si Pacquiao sa Welterweight division kung saan kinaharap niya ang 4-division world champion na si **Miguel Cotto.** Dinomina ni Pacquiao ang buong laban **hanggang ihinto ng referee na si Kenny Bayless ang laban sa 12th round at ibigay kay Pacquiao ang panalo via technical knockout.**



November 13, 2010

Ito ang huling beses na umakyat ng dibisyon si Pacquiao para sa bakanteng WBC Light Middleweight Title at para rin maging nag-iisang 8-division World Champion sa larangan ng combat sports. Nakalaban ni Pacquiao rito ang mas malaking si **Antonio Margarito** — dahilan upang **muling maging underdog si Pacquiao.** Ngunit katulad ng mga nauna niyang laban, **hindi umubra ang height advantage ni Margarito sa lakas at bilis ni Pacquiao.** Nasungkit niya ang **panalo via unanimous decision at nakuha ang kaniyang titulo sa ikawalong dibisyon.**

The Courier Mail, The Times, GMA News, Hector Franco, Bleacher Report, The Ledger, The Spokesman - Review, Philippine Daily Mirror, Los Angeles Times



SPORTS LITERARY

PINTIG NG PAGPAPAHINUHOD

Dave Herson Elas Dibuho ni Doug LaRue

Sa bawat laban, may mga mukhang lumalaban sa ring—at may mga tinig na lumalaban sa katahimikan. Hindi lahat ng digmaan ay nasusukat sa lakas ng kamao; may mga labanang ang sandata'y salita, at ang tagpo'y na sa likod ng mikropono. Doon nagsisimula ang isang uri ng tunggalian na bihirang marinig, sapagkat ang tanong ay hindi kung sino ang nanalo, kung 'di kung sino ang nagsalaysay ng pagkapanalo.

Ako si Ridel Encarnacion, tagapagbalita at tagapagkomento sa larangan ng boksing. Tuwing sasapit ang gabi ng laban, dama ko ang bigat ng bawat titig sa akin—parang ako'y na sa ilalim ng sinag ng spotlight, tanghal na tagapagsalaysay ng kinabukasan. Sa tuwing nakatayo ako sa likod ng mikropono, dama ko ang kakaibang pananagutan sa mga hinaharap kong pagbigkas. Ang katahimikan bago magsimula ang labanan ay nagpapakaba sa dibdib ko, mas mabigat pa kaysa sa inaakalang sigaw ng mga nanonood. Napapalibutan ako ng maliliwanag na ilaw at matitinding palakpakan—isang mundo kung saan ako ang magiging tinig ng laban, subalit ang aking mga salita ay nakatali sa batas ng pagiging patas. Sa mga sandaling iyon, kitang-kita ko ang nag-aalab na tensyon sa pagitan ng katotohanan at tungkulin.

Bilang isang komentador, iginigiit kong banal ang tungkulin kong maghatid ng patas na ulat. Naniniwala akong ang bawat salitang bubuhos ko sa ere ay dapat nagmumula sa tapat na pusong naghahangad ng katotohanan. Araw-araw, pinipilit kong itago ang sariling opinyon at magsilbing daluyan lamang ng impormasyon—nakalulusot ang sariling damdamin sa likod ng tabing. Bawat pintig ng puso ko ay nagpapaalalang may damdamin din ako: takot, galit, pag-asa—mga lihim na karamay ng bawat naglalaban. Sa mundo ng pamamahayag, itinatalaga kaming manatiling mga tagamasid, hindi mga bayani.

Ngunit kung ang etika ng aking propesyon ay sumasalungat sa layunin ng katotohanan, hanggang kailan ako mananatiling nakatali sa katahimikan? Ikinagagalak kong marinig ang katahimikan pagkatapos ng bawat laban na hinihulaan ko, nagbabantay kung kanais-nais na ang kuwento ay nabuo nang buong tapat.

Makaraan ang mga paghahanda sa likod ng eksena, nakapuwesto na ako sa kantong inilaan sa komentaryo. Ginagamit ng isip ko ang mga sandaling ito sa pagsasanay ng mabilisang ulat sa utak. Dumampi sa akin ang simoy ng kaba—parang tampok na ang tagumpay at pagkatalo ay magkakalaro sa iisang orasan. Ilang minuto na lang at sisigaw ang kampana para simulan ang laban; kailangang manatiling alerto ang isip, malamig ang katawan. Bago muling sumalita sa ere, naisip kong huwag nang ibaba pa ang aking sinturon ng pagiging makatarungan.

Nagsimula na ang laban. Tahimik kong sinubaybayan ang palit-palitan ng suntok nina Joaquin Santos at Alejandro Cruz sa gitna ng bilog na ring. May matulis na pagsuntok si Joaquin na dahan-dahang lumulunod sa hangin, at palihim kong binibilang ang bawat tama—dito ko rin naririnig ang labindalawang pagbilang bago ako maniwala sa bigat ng bawat galaw. Sa tabi-tabi'y naglalundag ang apoy ng emosyon: sa sipik ng bawat kamao, nagdudugtong-dugtong sa isipan ko ang musika ng isang digmaan. Nag-aalab sa pag-asa ang mga titig sa paligid, abot-tinig ang palakpakan ng madlang Pilipino. Ako naman, nakatutok sa unahin ang katotohanan ng pangyayari sa ring, pinipiga ang aking bituka para manatiling patas kahit todo ang saya ng madla. Ganito nga dapat ang larong kinagigiliwan ng bayan—bawat round ay may kwento ng tapang, pawis, at luha.

Sa ikaapat na round, lalo pang nag-init ang laban. Ginigingpitan ni Joaquin ang depensa ni Cruz sa isang mabilis na serye ng salpok.

Isang suntok ang tumama sa noo ni Cruz, at naramdaman kong bahagya siyang nanlalabo sa sulyap. Ngunit kaagad namang bumawi si Cruz—tila nagpayapos lamang siya sandali, ngunit muli akong tinutukan ng matalim niyang titig. Pinigil ko ang panggigigil sa dibdib ko: parang kasabwat ako ng kapalaran, nakikisabay sa hula ng pagkapanalo kahit lihim ang pulso ng balanse. Dahil sa bawat pagbuga ng luha at pawis, kasama ko ang pagkalinga ng bawat Pilipinong manonood na naghahangad ng katarungan at kagalakan sa ring.

Inihayag ang ika-walong round at kapansin-pansin ang tensiyon sa hangin. Biglang tumigil ang laro nang mag-ihip si Cruz nang may di-inaasahang sapak—tila nailihis niya ang suntok sa tamang lugar, ngunit nanatiling nakadikit ang kamao ni Joaquin sa kaniyang katawan. Naramdaman kong nanambad ang kabuluhan: may kakaibang patinig sa pag-ihip na tumimo sa aking dibdib. Muli kong tinahimik ang sarili ko: masakit mang umamin, sadyang may mga pahiwatig na hindi dapat malimot. Sa mundong ito, kung may hinala ka, hindi mo ito basta-basta itinatanggi—nag-aalimpuyo ang budhi ko at naglalaban ang balisang karapatan.

Sa paglipas ng oras, mas lalo kong napapansin ang pagod sa mukha nina Joaquin at Cruz. Parehong lubos ang hingal nila—bawat galaw ay may kasamang hapdi at pawis na nagsasalimbayan sa kanilang panghihina. Nagliliyab ang palakpakan at hiyawan sa paligid, abot-tinig ang pagsigaw ng karangalan at pagkakaisa, subalit ako'y nakatutok sa bawat kilos. Habang nag-aalab ang bawat pintig ng aking puso sa pag-asa ng tagumpay ni Joaquin, pinipisil ko ang balintataw ko sa mga pangyayaring hindi ko maintindihan. Alam kong malapit nang wakasan ang sagupaan—ang bawat segundo ay tila ginto sa bigat ng tanong na pumipintik sa isip ko: bukod sa katotohanan ng laban, may iba bang katotohanang nakatago?

Hindi ko ito agad pinanghawakan—ngunit nang masaksihan ko kung paanong tila walang bisa ang isang suntok ni Joaquin sa pisngi ni Cruz, kahit litaw na litaw ang linis at lakas ng bagsak nito, doon nagsimulang maglagas ang mga hibla ng pag-aalinlangan. Sa ilang ulit ng slow-motion playback sa monitor ng teknikal na mesa, malinaw ang pagkakasalubong ng siko ni Cruz sa braso ni Joaquin—isang galaw na hindi mo mababansagang likas, kundi sinadyang harang sa isang dapat sanang tumagos na suntok.

Ngunit higit pa riyan, ang tumaga sa huli kong duda ay ang biglaang kilos ng referee—isang mariing pagpigil, isang tahimik na senyas, bago pa tuluyang umalpas si Cruz patungong sahig. Para bang may ipinakitang pagpapahinuhod sa isang labang dapat sana'y natapos sa sariling bigat. Hindi ito pagkukusa ng pagkakataon; ang pihit ng laban ay waring inaruga at inakay—marahan ngunit matalas—tila isang pintig na sintunado sa kabuuang musika ng sagupaan. At sa pagitan ng pintig ng kamao at pintig ng salaysay, doon ko nalamang ang katahimikan ay may sinasaklolohang panig—isa itong pagkiling na nakatago sa anyo ng kaayusan, pilit tayong inaakay na maniwalang walang mali sa isang tagpong mukhang payapa.

Sa ika-labing-isang round, buong pangamba kong sinaksihan ang huling yugto ng laban. Bawat tibok ng puso ko ay kumakanta ng konsentrasyon. Nagpanibago ang kilos ni Joaquin—tila ba nag-iingat, ngunit patuloy na sumusulyap sa puwersang natitira. Pasigaw ng sigaw ang umpisa ng bawat pagsuntok, samantalang tahimik ang pagtutok ng madla sa kinalabasan. Kasama ko ang dibdib kong nagluluhang naghihintay; posibleng lumimlim na ang liwanag ng katarungan sa dulo ng lagusan. Hinawakan kong mahigpit ang mikropono—parang kahoy na sandata na hindi pinahihina.

Kinalimutan kong huminga nang marinig ko ang anunsiyo ng ring announcer: "Ang itinalagang kampeon ay si Alejandro Cruz ng Mexico!" Kahit gustuhin kong magpahayag, nanlumo ako sa mikropono—parang nabulunan ng katahimikan ang daigdig. Sumabog ang akala kong tapang sa dibdib ko nang matanto kong si Joaquin pala ang tunay na nanalo, ngunit nakapos ako sa gapos ng takot at etika. Na sa tainga ko ang indak ng pagtibok ng puso kong nag-aalab sa galit, ngunit nanatiling nakanganga ang labi—tahimik na bumabalik ang katarungan sa bangibang ulap ng kasinungalingan.

Tumahimik ang mga ilaw at ilang segundo pa'y nanatili akong nakatunganga sa mikropono. Hindi agad umimik ang madla—tila nagtagpi-tagpi ang ingay sa paligid at nagsimulang mag-ulumihanan. Hawak ang mikropono, nasaksihan ko ang pagtalsik ng panibagong hina sa musmos na mukha ni Joaquin. Sanay na ako sa mga dirikit na saliw ng liwanag, ngunit ngayong sumungaw sa dilim ang katiwalian,

Sa likod ng mikropono'y nagdalang mga titig ni Joaquin—tanong ang nakasulat sa mga ito. At sa sandaling iyon, naramdaman kong sumiklab ang tapang sa aking dibdib, subalit nanatili akong nakahawak sa patakarang propesyonal. Dahan-dahang pinisil ko ang mikropono, at iniluwal sa hangin ang ilang salita: mga salitang sisirain ang katahimikan, ngunit maghahayag ng katotohanan. Kapag naiukol sa akin ang pagkakataon, iyon ang sasabihin ko; sapagkat kasama sa tungkulin ang pananahimik. Bawat saglit na pagninilay ko ay nag-iiwan ng hampas—parang hangin sa ulo ng makatarungang larangan.

Bagama't buhat ng umpisa pa lamang ay nanliliham ang tanong sa aking isip—sino sa lahat ang makatatag na magsalaysay sa paglalarong ito nang buo at tapat? Bawat patak ng pawis ni Joaquin ay nag-iiwan sa aking alaala ng sumpang hindi madaling mabura. Nagpapatuloy ako sa paglalarawan, ngunit malinaw na may ibang kuwento ring bumubuo sa paligid. Ninanabik ako na marinig ang tinig ng hustisya; subalit sa gitna ng ingay, nananatili akong nakatalikod sa aking tungkulin. Ano nga ba ang nagkukubli sa pagsapit ng mga titik na hindi pinakikinggan?

Bakit nga ba ako nalikhang daluyan ng kuwento kung mananatili akong nakatali sa isang uri katahimikang nagsisilbing pader sa pagitan ng katotohanan? Ang pangako nito'y hindi dapat balewalain—sapagkat kung ako'y kikilatis, sino nga ba ang magbubunyag sa mga tinig na hindi naririnig? Ang isip ko'y sumasabog sa kasabikan, ngunit para bang minamata ng takot ang bawat titik na nakasalik sa dila. Aking hinahanap ang tamang sagot sa gitna ng katahimikan ng hirap.

Nang opisyal nang kumulog ang kampana sa pagtatapos ng laban, humagulgol ang madla—ngunit para sa akin, may bulong sa hanging nag-aanyaya ng kilos. Sa mga nananahimik ngayon, batid kong may naghihintay na sigaw ng katuwiran. Batid kong sa gunita ng laban, hindi lang isa ang kuwento: may halong hiwaga at maling pinaghalaw na mga eksena ang lumutang. Ngayon na maraming nakasaksi sa katapusan, sa aking pagkadusta lumutang ang pangakong walang mauusig. Katahimikan man ang pumapalibot, patuloy kong tinatanggap na ang tinig ng laban ay kailangan kong baybayin kahit mabigat sa dibdib. Hindi sapat ang maupon sa katahimikan na umakit sa karamihan; kailangan itong salubungin ng tapang at pag-asa.

Nang humupa na ang sigawan sa paligid at muling nagbalik-tahimik ang lugar, naglakad akong may pasaning pagbabago sa dibdib. Hawak pa rin ang mikropono, hinawakan ko ito nang mahigpit—tila ito ang huling sinulid na nagdurugtong sa akin sa isiniwalat na paligsahan. Sa paglisan ko, naisip ko na ang katahimikan ay hindi kaibigan, kung 'di ay isang uri ng hadlang. Na sa akin ang katotohanan, ngunit hindi ko lang alam kung kailan ko ito isisiwalat. Maya't maya pa'y humahaplos sa espasyo ang hangarin kong ituwid ang nagawang sala—tila mga sigaw na nakapaloob sa bawat taludtod ng damdamin.

Sino nga ba ang tutungo sa mali kung hindi ako? Sino ang tatapangin kung walang magtitiwala sa kanila? Ang salita ko ay sagot na nais isigaw, tila inanod sa sariling hangin—nangangarap lang na balang pag-asa ay maglakbay. Aking natutuhan na maraming tinig ang naghihintay na mailuklok sa palad ng sinumang sasalita. Kung hindi ko ako kikilos, sino ang magpapatunay na may humihimig pa ring bukas?

Bilang tagapagbalita, alam kong hindi ko dapat isahula ang nararapat ipahayag. Subalit, sa sandaling iyon, naging matalas ang tunog ng bawat paghinga ko—pawang sigaw ng katuwiran na pinipigil ko pa rin. May bawat indak ng kapalaran na tinatahak, hinahanap ko ang linaw sa gitna ng pagtatanghal. Kahit bago mawala ang huling alingawngaw ng kampana ng ring, ang panawagan sa katarungan ay nananatiling walang hanggan. Marahil ay naglalakad ako sa tamang landas, tinig na kung kailan man itututuring na mapanganib, ay sisibol sa pag-iral.

Ngunit nang muling sumiklab ang tapang sa aking dibdib, napatanong ako sa katahimikang itinuturing kong panganib:

KUNG MANATILI AKONG SA KANIYA, SINO NGA BA ANG MAGBUBUNYAG NG TUNAY NA KUWENTO NG LABAN?





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Bato-Bato Pick

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Volume I | Issue No. 1



Sa paglalaro ng buhay, kahit hindi tiyak ang bawat susunod na galaw, pinipili pa rin nating sumubok at lumaban—dahil ang tunay na lakas ay matatagpuan hindi sa pagkapanalo, kundi sa tapang na sumubok sa gitna ng kawalang-katiyakan.

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