



**Philippine American Guardian Association, Inc.**

*"More than 100 years of empowering children through education"*

**Philippine American Guardian Association, Inc. (PAGA)**

**Report**

**Period: July 2023 – October 2023**

A recent study published in August 2023 by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies paints the picture of generational poverty:

***"Poverty has long been a pervasive and intractable challenge in the Philippines, and education remains one of the most critical casualties of this social malady. The Philippine Statistics Authority has reported that approximately 16.7 million Filipinos live below the poverty line, with many of them struggling to make ends meet daily. Consequently, education becomes an unaffordable luxury for many families, especially those living in the most impoverished communities. The inability to send their children to school forces them to work instead, perpetuating the cycle of poverty for generations."***

This defines our world and that of our beneficiaries. Together, we have embarked on a journey of empowerment through education so they may build a better life and break the cycle of generational poverty.

Although we had hopes that the post-pandemic situation would bring better economic opportunities for the parents of our beneficiaries, we were let down by a very challenging economic landscape that has threatened their subsistence. Most of the parents are below minimum wage earners and this has forced them to live like nomads, having to move every time they need to look for a cheaper place to rent. They live on loans or help from relatives. Nothing sustainable to hang onto. The silver lining for them is the kindness of all the donors who have helped keep their children in school.

**Celebrating the journey of empowerment, one beneficiary at a time.**

We will begin our report where we ended our last one. We said we were expecting graduates this year and, indeed, we have them. Four of our beneficiaries completed their college degrees; seven are moving up to freshman college after Senior High; two are getting into Senior High and finally, one is growing up from elementary and gearing up for High School. It is quite a heartwarming experience seeing our beneficiaries move up, especially since we have been with them since they were in elementary. We share this pride with our kind and generous donors.

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Ready to take on the world with confidence and armed with their education.



The journey continues for them but a step closer to a better life



**We would also like to share a story that celebrates human kindness:**

There was this young boy and his sister who would walk the streets in the afternoon and when cars stopped at a red light, they would go to each one and offer their leighs of "sampaguita," a fragrant small white flower for P 20. pesos or USD .35 cents. The money they earned they would bring home to their parents so they could buy more food. The home was under a bridge in the slums of Manila. This was and still is a common scene in the Philippines. Sometimes their mother would be able to get a temporary job sewing rags, and their father would work as an informal construction worker who only gets hired per project and with wages below the minimum.



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The kids would sell cloth rags along the road together with their leighs. The Father learned about our organization and being an Amerasian, he went to the office, and his children were accepted into the program. Soon, his family was being given food and the kids, school supplies because they were able to go to school finally. Today, both kids have graduated and are now working. From the streets to school, and today, from work to home they can call their own. The boy is now 30 years old and is a member of the staff of our organization.



### Education beyond the classroom

*"The Covid-19 pandemic was cited as the principal cause of the decline of the mental health of Filipinos especially the millennials and Gen Z. Although the recent easing of restrictions and the resumption of face-to-face classes and activities have helped decrease this number, many health professionals still say that the lingering effects on mental health are still a cause for worry. Many studies still point to the fact that "today's youth have poorer mental well-being than in the last few decades."*

The mental well-being of our beneficiaries is a primary concern. Our licensed social workers keep in touch with them regularly to find out how they are and offer counselling if necessary. So far, the points of depression of our beneficiaries are rooted in putting food on the table and affording school projects, and field trips, especially for those in senior college. And they're being biracial especially those of African-American fathers.

To help them cope with their situation, aside from the financial support, we started a Mental Health series called "Love Yourself" as part of our psycho-social component of the program. We conducted monthly workshops that integrated creative tools. We had sessions with the beneficiaries acting out their stress points through short skits, and dance therapy to exhale their feelings, and they watched inspiring films. After each session, we processed the activity with them. Every session had a topic that would give them tools on how to prevent or deal with stress that could lead to depression. We had topics like:

- Stress Management  
Defining stress and its "anatomy" and simple, fun ways to manage this.
- "Say Your Name"  
We discussed why it was important to be proud of themselves as a shield against bullying or mean remarks.
- Positive Thinking  
We asked the parents to join this workshop. They had a chance to have a conversation about what they liked about each other. And each one shared this with the group.

There are more sessions lined -up including Meditation, visual art therapy, and sports. We are inviting volunteers to share their expertise to sustain this Mental Health component. This keeps us on track with our mission to build the intellectual ability, personality, and productive skills of our beneficiaries and be with them on their journey to becoming meaningful, respected, and actively participating members of society.

### **Having fun while learning how to chase away the blues**



### **Parents join in the fun**

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**Acting out a stressful situation at school**



**Learning the "anatomy" of stress**



**Exhaling to the beat**





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**Learning to love themselves more and sending love to everyone.**

#### **Upcoming new initiatives:**

##### **Upskilling: So no one is left behind**

Making our beneficiaries competitive in this 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution or the age of AI.

Learning beyond the classroom includes Upskilling so that our beneficiaries can find their niche in this age of AI. We will be enrolling them in Computer Literacy classes in the first quarter of 2024. They will also be given training in Leadership and Communication skills. We are in the process of reaching out to corporations that will give them an internship opportunity so they may have hands-on training and learn the language of the world of work.

##### **Youth for Sustainability or S.O.S. Simple. Organic. Sustainable.**

*The youth are a powerful beat in the world today. A beat that when picked up by others, can bring about positive change; amplify kindness; renew our sense of humanity; and even heal the planet, one youth at a time, one beat amplified.*

The project aims to harness the giving energy of the youth today and channel it into action aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

Sustainability is what may keep Hope alive to fuel united action toward a life everyone deserves, so no one is left behind.

It begins with volunteer experts mentoring our beneficiaries in all aspects of sustainability. The goal is to make them ambassadors who will reach out to the youth of their community and share their knowledge. Together, they will look for an issue in their community that they can resolve. They will identify simple, organic or homegrown projects aligned with any of the UN Sustainable Development Goals that they can sustain.

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These can be from simple campaigns about waste management that lead to livelihood; art workshops to give the youth a better appreciation of themselves, or to provide them tools to advocate for equality or other issues.

The projects identified by the youth teams will be mentored by volunteer experts to constantly guide the implementation and ensure continuous improvement.

Our beneficiaries will start this and will cause a ripple effect, with other youth joining in the beat to give back to their community in the spirit of sustainability.

### **Continuing Support**

#### **Education**

Our support also includes basic school supplies, for their uniforms, shoes, fees for tuition, and other school projects.

#### **Health Care**

We provide preventive healthcare seminars like WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) and conduct medical missions in partnership with the local government units and other non-government organizations to help meet the primary health concerns of our beneficiaries and their families. Financial assistance for special medical needs is provided. And referrals are provided for medical consultation and treatment.

#### **Annual Regular Activities**

Our beneficiaries have an interesting heritage and annual activities to revisit are rolled out. They participate in Memorial Day, Independence Day celebrations, and Flag Day, to get in touch with their roots to strengthen and build "pride of place."

### **Support Services**

#### **Coaching**

Our licensed social workers are in constant contact with the beneficiaries, coaching them during times of difficulty with their studies, and personal challenges.

#### **Home Visitation**

We visit the children every quarter just to chill with them and see how they are at home. This allows us to strengthen the sense of community and partnership.

#### **Emergency Assistance**

Emergency assistance is provided, especially during natural calamities, and medical crises like the recent pandemic.

#### **Reconnecting Families**

In most cases, the American father is no longer in the Philippines. Filipino-Amerasian children are abandoned and never had the chance to seek the missing parent. This is a complicated process, often involving internet searches, coordination with other agencies, and/or fieldwork. There is also a chance that even if we can reconnect them with their fathers, this does not guarantee a happy ending. And this is why we make sure they can carve a good life here.

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### Recognizing our Graduates



Barangay Captain and our Board member congratulate our graduate of B.S. Criminology



Wishing our new Freshman all the best on his new journey