



Pinoy Bulletin

FAAV Bi-annual Publication

From the Upuan

By Cori Harms

Editor: Bernice Bevard
2020 Issue 1, June 2020

Dear Fil-Am Vancouver friends,

It is difficult to begin to describe how all of our lives – professional and personal – have changed in 2020.

The eruption of Taal Volcano in Batangas, Philippines on January 12 spewed ashes across Metro Manila and some parts of Luzon, resulting in school and work suspensions and flight cancellations in the area. Tens of thousands fled the towns, leaving a lot of families homeless. Through your generous support, Fil-Am Vancouver was able to quickly respond and send donations to the affected towns under the leadership of one of our board members.

Since early this year, COVID-19 has affected most businesses, communities and people in one way or another, and Clark County (as well as the rest of the world) has been adopting a “new normal” with social distancing as a safety precaution as employees have been working from home and kids have been distance learning. Because of the pandemic, tax filing has been extended and stimulus checks were issued. A number have lost jobs or have been furloughed. On the bright side, life goes on... there are graduation celebrations, virtual church services and even small weddings!

For Fil-Am Vancouver, our usual community outreach events - Philippine Consulate outreach, board retreat, Independence Day Picnic and the annual “Pasko na Naman” Christmas gala - were cancelled. In spite of all this, your Fil-Am board of directors continues to do its community duty. We continued to gather and meet by Zoom virtual meetings. We made local donations in Clark County as well as donations to a town in Ilocos Sur and a few hospitals in the Philippines.

There are millions of people wondering when the lockdown will be over, asking, “When will we get back to normal?” In response, there are a growing number of people calling for a “new normal”, expressing the hope that we will move on to something much better than what we had before the pandemic took so many lives and drastically disrupted our society and the economy. Let us continue to look forward. Spread kindness. Continue to serve the community where we are called to. It is who we are!

If you would like to be one of our barkadas, please contact FAAV’s welcome wagon committee chair **Vivian Tadeo** at evcntadeo@msn.com or any of our board members. We encourage you to visit our website at www.filamvancouver.org as it is constantly being updated with stories and calendar events.

Also, please consider making a donation to Fil-Am Vancouver to continue supporting the great work that our board and volunteers do for the community. The easiest way to do so is to write a check payable to Fil-Am Vancouver.



Finally, I hope you are staying healthy and positive. Fil-Am Vancouver looks forward to eventually seeing you in person.

Maraming salamat po!

From the upuan... sincerely yours,

Cori Susi Harms, FAAV Board Chair

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- Cori Harms, Chairperson
- Joan Roberts, Vice-Chairperson
- Luis Ordon, Auditor
- Chuck Reidy, Treasurer
- Gretel Ness, Asst. Treasurer
- Rita Schaljo, Co-Secretary
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- Evelyn Manalo, Community Relations
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The Silver Lining in All of This

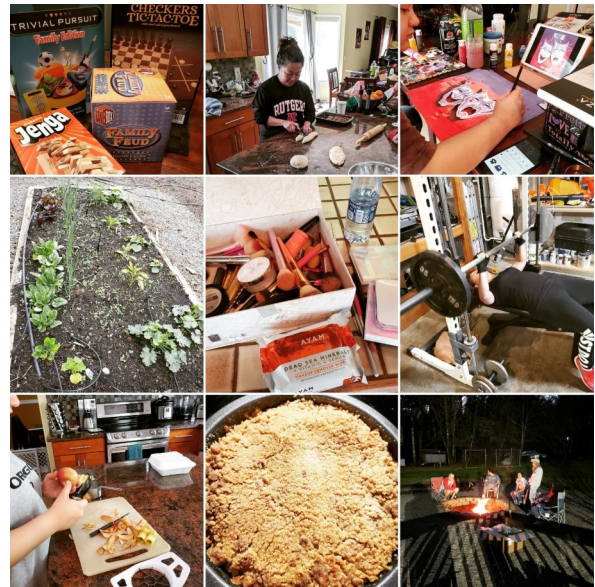
By Gretel Ness

My husband always says that I am too much of a Pollyanna. For those of you not familiar with Pollyanna, it is an old children's book that's even been made into movies about an 11-year-old orphan girl with an unfailingly optimistic outlook in life. To cope with life's ups and downs, Pollyanna would play the "Glad Game", which required the player to think of something to be glad about in any situation no matter how bad.

I truly believe that even in the midst of all the personal and economic devastation caused by this pandemic, there is a silver lining. With Stay at Home orders, suddenly, everyone had a lot of time on their hands, stuck at home with loved ones, forced to take a second look at their priorities, what they valued the most, and what truly mattered to them. Was there really a time when we thought salons and spas were essential? That going to a restaurant was something that we could not live without? Manicures, pedicures, false eyelashes, facials and massages all went by the wayside and we – and our pocketbooks – realized that we could actually live without them. We learned to use nail clippers again and polish our own nails. Lo and behold, we no longer had to only dry around our eyes and avoid our false lashes after a shower. Moms and daughters bonded over weekly facial mask nights, and couples made time for massages for each other again. Suddenly, we were all cooking at home, trying out new recipes, and even eating meals together. Working parents saw firsthand the amount of work stay-at-home parents went through everyday with household chores and the kids, while stay-at-home parents similarly got to see firsthand the amount of work their partners had to do to "bring home the

bacon." Families started talking and listening to each other again. Long forgotten, taken for granted activities of the past like playing board games, watching a movie together, gardening and baking have been revisited and are now part of the new "normal."

I, for one, am thankful for this forced pause on the fast-paced life we've somehow gotten used to all these years. I can only hope that all of the positive things that came out of this devastating pandemic will remain and not be forgotten again. Sometimes, it's not so bad to be a Pollyanna.



Taal Relief Efforts

by Evelyn Manalo

On January 12, 2020, Taal Volcano in the province of Batangas erupted and it affected the properties and livelihood of the Batangueños. Fil-Am Vancouver, WA was one of the first responders with the help and support of FAAV directors, their families and barkadas! FAAV Community Relations Officer Evelyn

Katigbak Manalo with husband Greg and the rest of their family spearheaded the distribution of relief goods in different evacuation centers.



Candon Rice Donation

by Rita Schaljo

Last May 2020, as part of Fil-Am Vancouver's ongoing relief effort to help poor families in the Philippines who are experiencing hardships during this COVID-19 Pandemic, FAAV Director Amy

Ramos Freedland spearheaded a drive to donate rice using her contacts and resources in her hometown. FAAV was able to donate 25 sacks of rice (20 lbs. each) to families in need in Candon City, Ilocos Sur. In the photo is Candon City Vice-Mayor Kristelle Singson supervising the rice distribution to the recipients.



Local Food Donations

By Chuck Reidy



St. John's St. Vincent de Paul Brush Prairie

...for I was hungry and you gave me food... I was thirsty and you gave me drink... a stranger and you welcomed me...

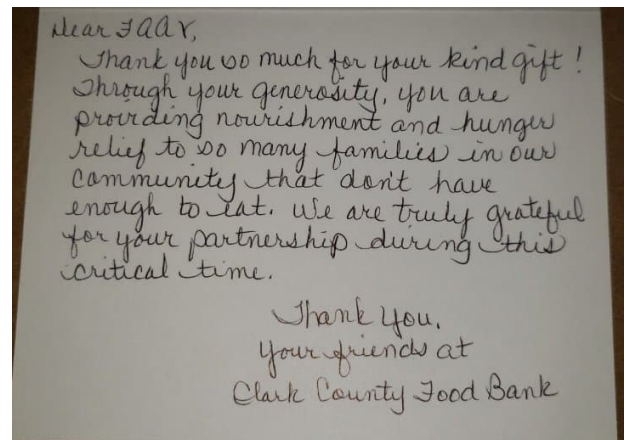
Menu



About

Saint Vincent de Paul Brush Prairie is a ministry of St. John's the Evangelist in Brush Prairie, Washington in partnership with the Clark County Food Bank and the Oregon Food Bank.

Responding to COVID-19, FAAV directors followed the Washington State Governor's proclamation of "Stay Home Stay Healthy" and went into self-quarantine. We were all quite stunned when local businesses were ordered to shut down. Thousands furloughed or laid off workers were without a paycheck. It could be months before unemployment checks would start to arrive. Directors recovering from the initial shock, this focused our like-mindedness on our Mission of caring for our community. We all rose-up and decided to restart our monthly gathering by using Zoom virtual meetings. After a lively discussion, we recognized thousands in our community had lost their job and ability to put food on their families table. We declared we'd attack "hunger in our local community" by immediately donating \$2000 to three local groups providing relief to those most vulnerable. We donated \$1000 to Clark County Food Bank providing 100 Emergency Food Boxes, each containing more than 30 meals (3000 meals total). Another \$500 was sent to Meals on Wheels People, to help with the rising number of seniors who were now shuttered in their homes and unable or afraid to restock their pantries. Finally, we sent \$500 to St John's St. Vincent de Paul serving Orchards and Brush Prairie communities with food distribution. I would like to say "Thank you" to all of our "barkada" and directors who banded together when our local community needed us most.



Pandemic Got You Down?

By Christianne Verzosa

If I learned one thing from graduating college during a global pandemic, it is that it is hard to do things. It is hard to motivate yourself to do the things you said you were going to do with no outside pressure from professors, or school functions, or even just seeing classmates in person and discussing assignments. This, I am beginning to realize, might just be the nature of adult life.

Regardless, learning in an online environment and having to conduct my life in a way that still felt socially gratifying while also maintaining quarantine and trying to get my degree was overwhelming especially in that first month. Not to mention the rising number in COVID-19 cases and the rising rates of death at the time. Moving past that, here are some things that have helped me get through quarantine as a student.

It has been said before, but once again, it is so important to have routine. Just have at least two or three things to accomplish every day. Go on a run or a walk, bake bread, read a book, paint a picture, do a jigsaw puzzle, clean and organize/re-organize your home one room at a time. I make sure to write down a couple goals for each day to feel like I am making some kind of progress.

If you are still a student taking summer courses, or if in person class is not reinstated in the fall, I highly recommend setting up study session over Zoom or Skype so that there is more than yourself to keep you accountable for the work you do. It's good

to keep morale up this way and feel like you are still part of a school community. That being said, I cannot begin to detail how important and integral it has been to my quarantine routine to keep in contact with my friends. Having someone who you feel comfortable consistently reaching out to, calling them, watching a movie with them over Zoom or Seven (highly recommend trying these out, with Zoom, one of you has to screen share to make it work). Have outside support in place so that you will not get tired of the people you are quarantined with (and so you can complain about the people you are quarantined with to someone).

If you are having trouble thinking of someone you could contact, try calling or texting someone you have always intended to get closer to. This is the time to reach out to literally anyone you want, it is the perfect excuse—I mean reason—to talk to others because everyone else is very likely just as bored and in need of human connection.

Above all, I have learned that we will get through this. It feels hard, and overwhelming right now, but know that this community is here to support you. FAAV has always been there to support me, and I cannot thank them enough. We stand together (at a safe 6-foot distance) and we will come out at the end together as well. As the social distancing measures start to lift, please remember that it is only because we have stayed safe thus far that we are able to move forward. Stay safe and stay healthy, and hopefully we'll see each other at the next FAAV event sometime soon.

Scholarships: An Investment in our Community

By Bernice Bevard

As part of its commitment to serve and support the local community, Fil-Am Vancouver offers scholarships to students from Clark County. This program was established in 2012 and 14 scholarships have been awarded since its inception.

Through various fundraising efforts and generous donations from donors such as Microsoft and On Point Credit Union, FAAV has been able to continue this program to invest in the education and future of Clark County community members.

There are a number of things we would like to emphasize about the scholarship:

1. It is not just for those going to college. The scholarship is also available for people going to vocational, certificate and technical programs.

2. Scholarships aren't just for the young, but also for the young at heart since there is no age limit for the scholarship application.

3. To open this up to more applicants, we have removed the requirement for financial need. So all are welcome to apply.

We encourage you to help us spread the word and invite qualified candidates to apply for the scholarship.

An investment in
knowledge

always pays the best interest.
- Benjamin Franklin

Be the next FAAV scholar!

The Scholarship Application for Calendar Year 2021 is OPEN.

Scholarships are open to students pursuing a vocational, certificate, technical, associate, or bachelor's degree program. Students pursuing advanced degree programs are not qualified.

All ages are welcome to apply.

Submission deadline: Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2020 at 11:59pm PST.

Two qualified students will each be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship for the Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2021 Calendar Year.

Qualifications:

1. Must be a permanent resident of Clark County, Washington.
2. Must be a high school senior by the time of selection and award or must be currently pursuing a vocational, certificate, technical, associate or bachelor's degree program. A student pursuing an advanced degree program is not qualified.
3. If attending a college or university, must be registered for at least 6 credit hours.
4. Members and family members of the FAAV Scholarship Committee are not eligible to apply.
5. Must be of Filipino descent.
6. The Scholarship Award must be used no later than the immediate calendar year following the date of the award, otherwise, it will be forfeited.

Selection Criteria:

1. Community and extra-curricular activities, including employment history.
2. School transcripts showing academic achievement/GPA.
3. Two (2) letters of recommendation.
4. Personal statement (minimum 500-word essay).
5. Personal photo in jpg or png format.

Please visit www.FilAmVancouver.org/scholarship to download the Scholarship description and Application Form.

For questions and requests for additional information, please contact **Bernie Gerhardt** at gerhardtbm@gmail.com.

Congratulations, 2020 Graduates!



Congratulations to **Tracy Katigbak** (pictured on the left with her brother, PBA D-League Player Nico), Executive MBA Class of 2020 from the University of Oregon. Proud parents are FAAV Community Relations Officer Evelyn Katigbak and Greg Manalo.

CONGRATS
CLASS OF
2020

Congratulations, 2020 Graduates!

Continued

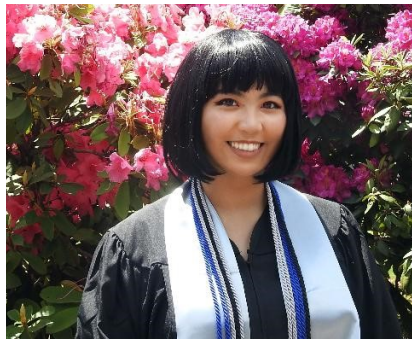


(L) **Adrienne Agbayani** finished her 8th grade year at Pacific Middle School. She is excited to join the Evergreen High School Plainsmen, and is anxiously awaiting the start of the EHS Girls Soccer season.

(R) **Noelle Tadeo** earned her Bachelor of Arts, Humanities: English and Digital Marketing and Minor in Spanish from Washington State University Vancouver.



(L) **Angela Kim Mashinski** graduated from Union High School and also received her Associate in Arts with Honors degree from Clark College. She will be attending the University of Washington pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in English - Creative Writing.



(Above) **Jolly Monzon** graduated from Clark College with an AA in Business Administration with Honors, Accounting Clerk Certificate of Proficiency and Marketing Clerk Certificate of Proficiency with Honors.



(Above) **Janela Oribello** finished at Cedar Park Middle School and will be attending Beaverton High School in the fall.



(L) **Christianne Verzosa** received her Bachelor of Arts in English - Creative Writing from the University of Washington.



(L) **Evan Verzosa** celebrated his high school graduation from La Salle Catholic College Prep.

(R) **Bhianca Lagamon** graduated from Northwest Culinary Institute with a degree in Culinary Arts. She is very excited to be continuing her education through an internship with Bob Osilla at St. Barbra Pinoy Bakery in Portland. She was able to persevere through the Covid-19 quarantine and graduate at the top of her class.



Staycation

By Luis Ordon

What is staycation? A quick internet search defined "staycation" as a vacation spent in one's home country rather than abroad, or one spent at home and involving day trips to local attractions. So, what about it?

My family and I love to travel. It has become a tradition for us to schedule our vacations around Spring Break, Summer, and Christmas. We really strive to make it fun, enjoyable, and memorable. In addition, if funds allow for it, we try to go to at least one new destination every year. A lot of times, how we come up with our destinations revolve around the numerous reunions (75% of which never materialized) that my wife and her close childhood friends planned. You see, my wife has this close-knit group of childhood girlfriends, made up of approximately 9-11 girls (now women) who swore a lasting bond to each other by making everyone a godparent to at least one child, which they followed through with. Thanks to the magic of social media, they have been able to stay close (and stay in touch) all these years. I personally find it endearing, but I digress.

For my part, being the ultimate planner (some may call it obsessive-compulsive), I like to plan things as far out in advance as possible. So, when my wife came up to me around the end of Summer of 2019 and suggested Japan as a possible Spring Break vacation destination (yes, for a possible reunion with her friend), I immediately started planning for it.

Fast forward to the Corona Virus-19 Pandemic era of 2020. Spring Break had come and gone. The whole world is in what seems like an eternal lockdown. Travel has been restricted (although it has started to ease in some areas as of this writing) everywhere. Our Japan plans have been put

on hold. We are still in the midst of adjusting to a "new" normal. For at least the first month of this crisis, it seemed as if everyone stayed home. It was even hard for someone like myself, who is a self-confessed introvert. One would think I would be perfectly fine with the isolation. The thing is that I am also claustrophobic, so it did not take long before my house walls started to close in on me. In a sense, since my family and I have been cooped up together 24/7 in our house that we are in a staycation mode already. The only thing missing was that we were not taking advantage of the situation.

After realizing that the world probably will not change for a while because of the pandemic, we decided to make the most of it. We started to plan our evenings and weekends out. We bonded together over everything. We created new dishes together, traveled to local scenic areas that we somehow have not been to before. We started doing physical activities together. We bought new board games and dusted off old ones. We Zoomed, Skyped, and FaceTimed our way in and out of not only meetings, but virtual social gatherings as well. We waved, exchanged dishes, greeted and wished our friends from a distance with banners and flying hugs and kisses.

I know my family situation is not unique, as I know of other families' stories that are very similar to ours (thanks to social media). We may have even gotten some of our activity ideas from others. The point is that as humans, we are social beings that somehow always find ways to learn, adjust, and evolve to adopt and make our current situation livable. That is just our makeup and who we are. We - as in the entire world - are in the midst of an extended staycation, so why not just make the most of it. Stay safe everyone, and be kind to one another.

COVID-19 in Real Time

By Vivian Tadeo

Ever since Eric and I arrived from the homeland at the end of February, I have been hearing "in the abundance of caution", a phrase that resonated in the news in the early stages of the pandemic. So in the abundance of caution, we quarantined for 2 weeks, wore masks, practiced social distancing, wore more masks, elbow bumped, air waved, wore even more masks, threw kisses, wore masks, made more masks and wore those masks. I can joke about it but if you suspect that you might have been infected, it is no laughing matter.

I woke up one morning with a toothache accompanied by a severe sore throat. Because I obeyed all protocol, I was positive that I was not CV positive. With just one symptom, but with all underlying conditions I was not about to take any chances. Eric and I tele-consulted with a doctor who urged me to come in. Why do emergencies always happen on a Saturday? But because the clinic was almost empty, Eric was allowed to come in with me. The doctor was not too concerned but nevertheless asked me if I wanted to be tested. "Only if it does not hurt". I replied. He stepped out and in came this nurse in a blue hazmat suit: complete with shield, mask, and gloves. I was taken aback. "Where is the war", I almost asked him. With all the scary stuff I heard about THE swab, I braced myself, closed my eyes and prepared for the "brain poke". It was quick, it was painless, I did not faint but I sneezed. Once for each nostril.

It was the longest day and a half waiting for the results. I was beginning to plan my funeral in my head. When the results finally came, it was the best Negative I ever heard. A sigh of relief for Eric I'm sure because he did not have to be brain poked and provoked to sneeze....I mean tested. It turned out to be an infected molar. Nothing that anti biotic, Tylenol, visit to the dentist, and lots of TLC couldn't fix.

Surprise Birthday Caravan for FAAV Vice-Chair

By Francis Guevara



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FAAV Vice-Chairperson Joan Barcelon had to cancel her 50th birthday celebration. In spite of what has happening around the world, her fellow FAAV members and family prepared a birthday celebration that left her emotional and full of joy. We kept our safe distance and stood outside her house to surprise her with a birthday song, cakes, food, gifts, car decorations, banners and loving wishes. We were happy to see each



other again after a long time and most especially happy to see Joan's emotional joy.

To express her appreciation, Joan sent the following message: "A very big and heartfelt thank you for all the birthday wishes and lovely messages I have received today. I have enjoyed reading through each one of it. Plus this surprised social distancing celebration from my FAAV Family who sang me a birthday song under the rain made my birthday extra special. The birthday messages on the cards, the food and cake and gifts also made me feel so loved and so blessed. I very much appreciate you all. May God Bless us



Celebrating Amelia's Birthday

By Jolly Monzon



On June 13, 2020, the friends of Amelia got together to do a surprise caravan birthday party. The plan was to do a drive-by because we had to be sensitive to Amelia, who is considered immunocompromised and at high-risk for COVID-19. We made sure to maintain social distancing and stayed 6 feet apart.

Some people went to the Amelia's place early to stealthily decorate her front yard as part of the surprise. Then, at 12:30 pm, about 25 of Amelia's friends met at the designated area before travelling together to the Freedland's residence. Most of the cars were decorated with festive balloons. When everyone was ready and gathered outside, they rang the Freedland's doorbell. Everyone stayed quiet. Even with masks on, looking like ninjas, you could see the twinkle in everyone's eyes as they all excitedly anticipated either Gary or Amelia opening the door.

The doorbell kept ringing. One, two, three! Then finally, emerged! Everyone serenaded Amelia with the happy birthday song. There was also a Bluetooth speaker to make sure the entire neighborhood heard that it was Amelia's Birthday.

Amelia was shocked and her face lit up as she saw her friends - from the Puget Sound,

Oregon, and Washington - who made the time and effort to join the surprise birthday party. Amelia was stunned as her friends gave her their gifts and put them down on the designated table for presents. The party lasted about an hour and everyone had a good time singing and dancing on the Freedland's driveway and keeping six feet apart from each other. Amelia was delighted, to say the least.

The birthday caravan was successful because of FAAV friends and family support. Despite the pandemic, everyone made the effort to stop by and greet Amelia a happy birthday. That is Filipino culture at its best! Even when we are going through an uncertain time, we never leave our vulnerable friends behind. Amelia's friends were there for her to make sure that she knows that she is loved. Happy birthday Amelia, from your Kapamilya friends and family in Vancouver, WA.



SW Washington Real Estate News

By Zenny Way

How is the real estate market during the current COVID-19 climate you ask. Not as bad as many of you may think. Clearly there has been a decline in sales across the nation as a result of the corona virus outbreak. How much of a decline? Nationally, there has been a 26.6% decrease (from a year ago) in transactions that include single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums and co-ops according to the National Association of Realtors (NAR). Here in SW Washington, however, our closed sales have decreased by 10% (compared to May 2019) which means that we are doing better than the national average.

How are we doing pricewise in Clark County and vicinity? In comparing May 2020 to May 2019, the average sale price has increased 4.8%... from \$400,100 to \$419,400. In the same comparison, the median sale price has increased 6%... from \$364,400 to \$386,400. These numbers from RMLS (Regional Multiple Listing Service) mean that there's still good news in our local real estate market with property values on the uptick.

With home buyers reemerging as the economy reopens, the current local inventory of 2.3 months is not nearly enough to meet demand, hence prices will trend upward. Combine this with record low mortgage rates tempting more buyers to purchase homes, the short term future of real estate is looking well.

NAR President Vince Malta has this to say... "Although the real estate industry faced some very challenging circumstances over the last several months, we're seeing signs of improvement and growth, and I'm hopeful the worst is behind us."

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Donations to Philippine Hospitals & Sagip

By Bernice Bevard

FAAV's service does not stop at the local community level, but also extends to our homeland of the Philippines. Because of the pandemic, there is a need for personal protective equipment, commonly referred to as "PPE", for healthcare workers in order to minimize exposure to the COVID-19 virus that can cause serious illness. Personal protective equipment may include items such as gloves, safety glasses and shoes, coveralls, vests and full body suits.



The donation to Binan Doctors Hospital was received by (L to R) Administrative Assistant Adelaida Purificacion, President and CEO Dr. Roderick Ramos and Executive Assistant to the CEO Dr. Therese Almeda. The President is holding the envelope with the donation.

The FAAV Board of Directors felt it was important to help provide PPEs to the workers that were providing care and service to those affected by Corona virus. The Board chose to make donations to four smaller hospitals and one organization that do not typically get support from the public namely:

- **Infant Child Children's Hospital** in Sampaloc, Manila
- **National Children's Hospital** in Quezon City
- **Binan Doctors Hospital** in Binan, Laguna
- **General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital** in Trece Martires, Cavite
- **Sagip Community Life Center Inc.** – a non-profit organization that provides specialty medical and dental services to the poor.

(Below) Holding the thank you card is Dr. Ambagan, Chairman of Internal Medicine at General Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial



(Above) The donation to National Children's Hospital was received by (L to R) Dr. Philip Morales - Residents Training Officer, Dr. Dolores Cruz - Asst. Chair Dept. of Pediatrics, Dr. Ma. Louisa Peralta, Dr. Amy Dy - Chair Dept. of Pediatrics, Dr. Camacho - Chief of Committee on Research, and the Chief Resident at NCH.



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