



# THE BLUE POST

THE OFFICIAL STUDENT PUBLICATION OF ST. SCHOLASTICA'S COLLEGE - WESTGROVE HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT  
SILANG, CAVITE REGION IV-A CALABARZON

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## ST. SCHOLASTICA'S COLLEGE - WESTGROVE @ 20

### Keeping the Benedictine Spirit Alive Through Love and Service

#### SSC-W CONCLUDES ITS YEAR-LONG 20TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION WITH VIRTUAL FAMILY DAY

by YZABEL REICHELANI C. MOMOSE

SSC-W Community gathered via Zoom to celebrate the 20th year of SSCW through the 20th Family Day with the theme "St. Scho Westgrove @

20: Keeping the Benedictine Spirit Alive Through Love and Service" on February 27, 2022.

The celebration began with

a Mass led by Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB. The next portion was Family Health and Wellness, which included the lifestyle medicine talk and the online Zumba. >> Page 11

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#### MATH, SCIENCE DEPARTMENT HOLDS ITS FIRST ONLINE QUIZ BEE

by ZAMANTHA ANGELIKA C. ABING

The Math and Science Department conducted its first online quiz bee via Zoom on February 4, 2022, in line with the celebration of Math and Science Month, launched last January.

comprises two rounds — elimination and final round, aims to assess students' knowledge of mathematics and science while promoting sportsmanship and camaraderie as they work together with other grade levels.

elimination round where the students from each level competed against each other was held. The top 10 students from each grade who were qualified to join the final round were grouped with the other levels.

The quiz bee, which

Using the Aralinks LMS, an

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ONLINE LIVING ROSARY

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## SSC-W EDUCATORS ATTEND TWO-DAY VIRTUAL ABS EDUCATORS' CONGRESS 2021

St. Scholastica's College - Westgrove participated in the two-day ABS Congress 2021 held on July 21-22, 2021 via Zoom. St. Scholastica's College - Manila hosted the said event with the theme, "Benedictine Education: Mission at the Service of the Human Person," which is also the theme of Benedictine schools for the whole school year.

Approximately 600 Benedictine Educators attended the online ABS Congress. The ten participating schools are the following: St. Scholastica's College Westgrove, St. Scholastica's College Manila, St. Scholastica's Academy Bacolod, Holy Family Academy Pampanga, St. Scholastica's Academy Marikina, St. Scholastica's Academy Tabunok, St. Agnes Academy Legazpi, St. Peter's College Ormoc, St. Scholastica's Academy - San Fernando, and Holy Family Vocational High School Bacolod.

On the first day, the seminar-resource person Dr. Greg Tabios Paliwen, a professor from the University of the Philippines Los Baños, delivered a talk on Designing Learning Modules in an ODL setup. Dr. Paliwen reminded the teachers to prepare learner-centered modules with activities aligned with the target competencies and assessments that are appropriate for measuring learning.

Dr. Mildred Maranan Garcia, an SSC - Manila



*Dr. Mildred Maranan Garcia, the keynote speaker, discusses the Socio-Emotional Learning in Education via Zoom*

alumna and the class valedictorian of batch 1982, was the guest speaker on the second day of the ABS Congress, where she discussed Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Education. Dr. Garcia gave tips on practicing and developing SEL competencies and applying them in the classroom, especially in the distance learning setup.

*"Change the way you view things, especially now that we are facing the pandemic crisis. Even if it's easier said than done, train your brain to look at negative situations using a positive lens. Reframe and retrain the brain,"* Dr. Garcia advised the participants.

The two-day Congress ended with an oath-taking led by the youngest Benedictine educator from Holy Family Academy, Pampanga.

## SCHOOL CLUBS ARE BACK! Club moderators invite students through promotional videos



*The Glee Club sings their rendition of Alicia Morton's Tomorrow.*

SSC-W organized a virtual club exposition on July 30, 2021, spearheaded by Janet Avila, the student activity coordinator. Club moderators promoted their respective clubs through creative video presentations.

Leah Sacay, the academic coordinator, welcomed the students in the said event, leaving them a reminder: "Choose a club that suits your personality, talent,

and skills and make the best out of your time doing the club activities."

Grade school pupils can join one of the following clubs: Arts and Crafts, Little Chef, Little Groovers, and Reading and Writing. The Little Chef is open only for third to sixth graders.

Eight main clubs and two auxiliary clubs are offered for junior high school students: Digital Arts, Fitness and Wellness, Writers' Guild, Glee, IL

Baile, KAIBIGAN, Master Chef, Visual Arts, Science, and Math. For the senior high school level, there is only one club, the Senior High School Organization.

SSC-W brings back co-curricular and extra-curricular activities with the aim to hone the students' innate talents and skills, develop a good physical, social, and mental health, and add fun and excitement to ODL.

### Online Quiz Bee from p. 1

During the final round, the finalists were placed in different breakout rooms together with their groupmates. In each room, one teacher was assigned to facilitate the Math and Science Quiz Bee, and one student from the senior high school was tasked to record the scores.

Questions were flashed on the screen, and the finalists wrote their answers on a whiteboard in a given amount of time. The questions prepared by math and science teachers challenged the students' mastery of lessons taught in the said subjects.

Group 10, which was composed of Murriah Vienneze V. Florento from grade 7, Patricia Sofia S. Bulan from grade 8, Anna Gabriella B. Mesina from grade 9, and Sophia Rinoah M. Neis from grade 10, emerged victorious in the quiz bee, garnering a total of 42 points. The awarding ceremony was held after the morning praise last February 7. Other than the Math and Science Quiz Bee, various activities were prepared for the students. The grade 1 pupils made a box of hope that emphasizes the value of sharing and giving, while the 2nd

graders made a fun way to introduce themselves using math. Pupils from grades 3-6 made a trivia show where they shared fun facts and trivia related to math and science. The grade 7 students made an instructional animation video about road safety, while grade 8-10 students created digital board games that had math and science trivia. The senior high school students created a website and virtual gallery that promotes Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM).

Best works were presented during the culminating program hosted by the Tanael twins, Mariella Joanna Tanael and Mikaella Jianna Tanael.

Sister Daniela Romero, OSB reminded the students that math and science equip young minds with life skills related to everyday living problems.

"It is important for us here in St. Scho to develop students with solid math and science foundation. Academic excellence for us is a social responsibility because we know the school equips us with skills that are not for ourselves alone but for the service of others," Sister Romero added.

## ECOLOGY MONTH SPARKS MOTIVATION IN SCHOLASTICANS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

by CARMELA BEATRIZ C. ARCEGA AND  
LIKHA C. SISON

St. Scholastica's College - Westgrove community celebrated the culmination of Ecology Month with the theme "A Home for All? Renewing the Oikos of God" last September 30 to serve as a way to encourage Scholasticans to rethink their environmental decisions and steer them to the right path.

The event, which was hosted by two grade 11 students Likha Sison and Angela Sacay, was held through Zoom. Opening with a short reflection video, the students and faculty members performed Shibashi headed by Mr. Villie Alas.

Shibashi is a series of 18 exercises that combine movement, breathing, and concentration that allowed them to relax their bodies and minds as they immerse themselves in their surroundings, providing a sense of connection and unity with nature.

Sister Daniela Romero, OSB reminded the students that stewardship is everyone's responsibility as they are all called to embrace a sustainable way of life before the works of both grade school and high school students were officially exhibited. Despite mankind's differences, humans all share a common home: the Earth, and thus, "we must continue to do what we have begun; to pray, act, connect, and celebrate," she added.

The event showcased various presentations from all grade levels. Ranging from cute songs from the kinder students and TikTok challenges from the high school students.



*Angela Sacay of grade 11 demonstrates how to create a living terrarium*

The grade school department inspired their fellow Scholasticans, as young as they may be, to do their part in taking care of the environment through the 9-day eco-challenge of the kindergarten pupils and the eco-photo collage of grades 3-6 students. The activities illustrated how they took care of the environment in simple ways, such as cleaning their respective homes, practicing proper waste management, watering the plants, and conserving electricity by turning off the lights when not in use.

The high school students delivered creative and insightful presentations. The students from grades 7, 8, and 10 utilized TikTok as a tool to educate rather than entertain through their TikTok challenges, which promoted environmental sustainability.

The grade 9 students informed the audience about climate change and how they can help solve the effects of climate change in their little ways. Meanwhile, grades 11 and 12 students created their living terrarium and pocket garden.

Students were tasked to clean a portion of their homes after the program in accordance with the famous Benedictine motto "Ora et Labora."

To fully embrace the Season of Creation, the students were encouraged to change their display pictures on their Zoom, Google, and Facebook accounts with a frame made especially for the month by a Grade 12 student, Chloe Trozado.

## SSC-W BENEDICTINE EDUCATORS TAKE TIME OFF ON WORLD TEACHERS' DAY



*SSCW Benedictine educators do a photo op on World Teachers' Day with selected SCO members*

To give the SSC-W Benedictine educators their well-deserved rest and recognition, the Student Council Organization (SCO) and Munting Pamayanan Officers, organized a virtual appreciation program in coordination with the club and class officers on World Teachers' Day last October 5, 2021.

Hosted by SCO President Jye Sumilang and SCO Public Relations Officer Kolleen Arabelle Alvarez, the program started with a prayer service dedicated to all educators.

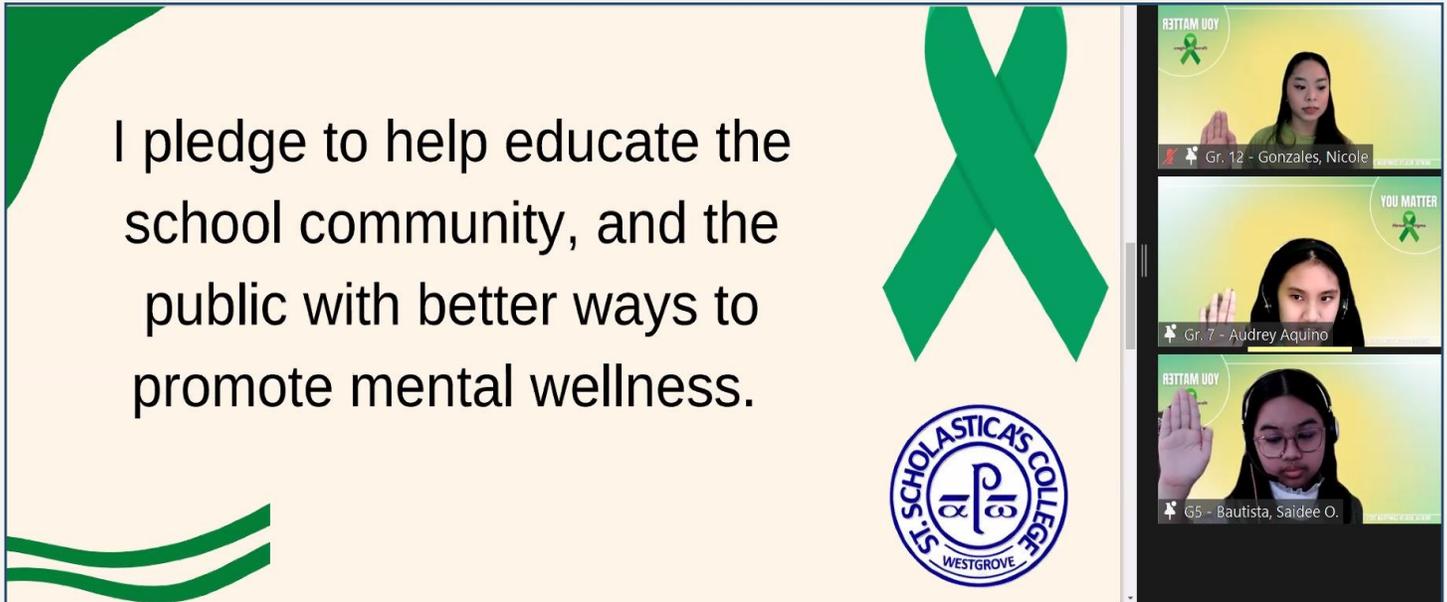
Aside from the personalized virtual background that the students used to surprise the teachers, every grade level prepared a creative presentation ranging from song and dance numbers, video greetings, to impersonation

videos. The students also sent their teachers heartwarming letters compiled in a Canva presentation.

To ensure the teachers had fun even in the comfort of their homes, SCO officers met them via Zoom after the program. They had them play Pictionary, where random participants were chosen to draw while the others guessed the item. They also played Mozilla Hub, where the teachers were divided into two groups and were tasked to answer questions so they could get out of the maze. The winners of the games received vouchers as prizes.

The SCO assigned student teachers from grades 10, 11, and 12 to facilitate all synchronous classes as the teachers enjoyed the break.

## SDWC LAUNCHES THE MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN: PADAYON



*Students take the pledge to support the Mental Health Campaign*

**Padayon: Creating Hope Through Action, the Mental Health Campaign spearheaded by the Student Development and Wellness Center (SDWC), was launched on the 11th of October, 2021 to address the mental well-being of the SSCW community and show support to the Mental Health Awareness month.**

Hosted by Audrey Aquino from grade 7 and Nicole Drew Gonzales from grade 11, the launching ceremony started with a mental health dance video *We're All in this Together*, reminding people who are experiencing a mental health challenge that they are not alone.

The students recited a pledge, promising their support of the mental health campaign.

The guidance associates Alma Kamille Palomares and Kimberlei Fae Besmonte prepared a video presentation that featured selected administrators, teachers, parents, and students who delivered messages of hope and inspiration

for everyone. The video may be viewed on the school's official Facebook page.

*"I'd like to let everyone who is struggling right now know that there is no shame in your situation. There are people who are open and willing to help, so do not hesitate to speak out and seek that help,"* Jennifer Abueg, the Parents' Association president, said in her closing remarks.

As part of the campaign, the students, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, and GSP will attend the following mental health webinar series: *"How are you? Understanding Emotions"* for grades 1 to 3, *"I Can! Managing Academic Stress and Resilience"* for grades 4-6, *"Kumusta ka? - Coping through Compassion"* for grades 7-12, *"Akap: Addressing Social Isolation and Mental Health Challenges at Home"* for parents, *"Sinag: Attaining Work-Life Balance and Burnout in a Work at Home Set-Up"* for teachers, and *"Bangon! Building Resiliency amidst Covid - 19 Pandemic"* for non-teaching staff and GSP.

## SSC-W LEADS AN ONLINE ROSARY PRAYER IN CELEBRATION OF LIVING ROSARY MONTH 2021



*Faculty members recite the prayers for The Fifth Sorrowful Mystery*

**As a culminating activity of the Living Rosary Month, SSC-W community gathered via Zoom to lead an online rosary prayer live-streamed on the school's official Facebook page on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2021.**

Hosted by the CLE high school teacher Jasper Dolor, the solemn event aims to intensify the love and faith of the families by praying and seek for Jesus's guidance and protection, especially at the time of the pandemic.

With the theme *20 Years and Beyond @SSCW: To Jesus Through Mary by Sharing the Benedictine Spirit of Ora et Labora*, the event started at 6 p.m. with welcome remarks from Sister Daniela Romero, OSB, who encouraged everyone to offer the mysteries of the Holy Rosary as a thanksgiving prayer and petition to Jesus through Mary to give the community joy, courage, and generosity of heart to carry on for the coming years.

The K1 and K2 pupils showcased their talent in dancing as they present an interpretative dance of the entrance hymn *Ang Puso*

*Ko'y Nagpupuri.*

Selected families led the prayer for every mystery. The Sacay family recited the Nicene Creed, the First Mystery by the Tay Family, the Second Mystery by the Ferrer family, the Third Mystery by the Abueg Family, and the Fourth Mystery by the Rivera Family. The Benedictine sisters and teachers recited the Fifth Mystery.

The gospel and prayer intentions were read by the Hernandez family, the Filipino teacher Ana Razel Javier, the 2002 PA President and 2006-2016 Board Member Gerry Plana, the Scholastican Awardee Batch 2014 Therese Marie Santos, and students from the grade school and high school levels, Maria Beatriz Mercedes Bautista, Maria Patricia Vega, Bianca Marie Manalo, and Marianne Patricia Lolarga.

There were song presentations orchestrated by the MAPEH coordinator Donna Lou Guingon in honor of the Mother of God after every decade. Selected grade school students sweetly sang *Bless O Dearest Mother,*

while the high school Glee Club serenaded the blessed Virgin Mary with the piece *Ave Maria*.

Selected alumnae also shared their talent with the community by dedicating a song for Mama Mary. Melchora Elena Mabilog from Batch 2011 touched the heart of the participants with her rendition of *Ave, Dulcissima Maria*, and Karen Therese Yao, the 2010 Scholastican Awardee, beautifully performed the song *Stella Maris*.

The participants looked back at the previous celebrations of the Living Rosary Month prior to the pandemic by watching the video presentation played after the last mystery as they sang *Awit ng Santo Rosaryo*.

The culminating activity concluded with the action song *High Five Para kay Maria*, which was also performed by the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing.

Sister Therese Bulatao, OSB, extended her gratitude to everyone who helped prepare and organize the event and actively participated in praying the rosary with the community.

*"Under the loving protection of our mother's mantle, we prayed and meditated on the mysteries of the Holy spirit, so that rooted in the words of Scriptures, we find the light and the strength to carry on amidst the challenges and difficulties of this time of the pandemic. We do not lose hope; we carry on,"* Sister Bulatao said.

As part of the celebration of Rosary Month, the students had prayed the rosary in between their classes for the month of October.

## ELA Month Puts Scholasticans' Excellent Communication Skills in Spotlight

by SHAIA ANGELICE P. MATTI



Chiara Jazmine Balsomo as Romeo Montague and Zadiya Leoj Rizalde as Juliet Capulet in the short film *Modern Romeo and Juliet: At the Time of the Pandemic*

**On December 16, 2021, the English Language Arts Department put an end to its month-long celebration by exhibiting the best works of the students during the culminating program.**

The ELA month celebration highlights the use of communication as protection from false information and utilizing the internet for entertainment and education. Moreover, Scholasticans again portrayed their knowledge on the matter through myriad activities.

The grade-schoolers recited poems and told stories such as *The Christmas Story* by Pam Riden and *A Psalm of Life* by Henry Wadsworth Long Fellow.

The high-school presentations focused more on educating the audience creatively rather than entertaining. Grades 7 and 8 performed informative videos about creating study habits and the development of vaccines. The grade 9 made the audience swoon with their short film *Romeo and Juliet: At the Time of the Pandemic Version*, which reminded the students of the dangers of online dating. Lastly, the grade 10

students taught the audience how to vote wisely on the upcoming elections and debunked fake news of the candidates to further help voters with their decisions.

The last few presentations are by senior high school students. The grade 11 students presented a mental health vlog which showed how they took care of themselves after a rigorous week of school works. On that matter, selected grade 12 students in the HUMSS strand proposed a bill that valued mental health. Lastly, The grade 12 students in the STEM strand creatively discussed certain health issues like Glaucoma, Aging, and why cancer cells develop through a talk show, *Thank You, Doc! (Salamat, Doc! English Version)*.

The event started early yet lasted all the way in the afternoon. This time gave plenty of opportunities for knowledge to be disseminated and for the audiences to be entertained.

The program was hosted by students from grade 10, Shaia Matti, Sophia Neis, and MJ Añonuevo, who portrayed themselves as the Powerpuff Girls.



*Jianna Abueg, the Prepared Speech Contest champion, during the elimination round*

**Showcasing their communication skills, Scholasticans across levels vied for the first runner-up in the different writing and speaking competitions sponsored by the Parents' Association during the celebration of ELA Month, which was launched on the 5th of November, 2021 with the theme *"Empowering the youth to serve amid uncertainties through effective communication."***

All students, except those from the pre-kindergarten and grade 12 levels, joined the competition prepared for their grade level.

Three students from each level who have shown exemplary performance in the elimination round were chosen to compete with the top three from the other levels. The final round was administered live by the ELA teachers via Zoom.

The creative storytelling contest was divided into two categories, kindergarten 2 vs. grade 1 and grade 2 vs. grade 3, to observe fairness when it comes to speaking skills. Serrah Louise Santos from kindergarten 2 and Anjha Jezrene Pabellar from grade 3 were declared champions after impressing the judges with their impeccable delivery of the stories.

The essay writing finalists were given two hours to express their thoughts about the question, *"What did St. Scholastica's College - Westgrove teach you about service and love?"*. In her winning piece, Alexandra Marie Tay from grade 4, shared

## SCHOLASTICANS VIE FOR TOP SPOT IN ELA MONTH WRITING, SPEAKING CONTESTS

by SHAIA ANGELICE P. MATTI

how the school shaped her values through its different activities like the outreach program, Lectio Divina, morning praise, and First Friday Mass.

In the final round of the prepared speech competition, they were asked the question *"In times of pandemic, how would you demonstrate the lessons you have learned from St. Scholastica's College - Westgrove about love and service?"*, to which the winner, Jianna Abueg from grade 9, responded, *"Love and service can be seen in different forms in our lives. And with social media, we can share it easily with the world. There are so many online charity projects and support groups that help people who come from different backgrounds. These projects make you feel like you're not alone."*

The finalists in the aforementioned competitions were given an hour to prepare, while the participants of the extemporaneous speaking contests had been given three minutes to answer after pondering on the question, *"As a voter or as a future voter, what sectors do you think our politicians should focus on serving? Why?"* Likha Sison from grade 11 snatched victory by saying that the government should focus more on serving the public sector — the households, the families, and the communities — because the public needs their help the most. They are the ones who lack money, connections, and the things they need.

Jennifer Abueg, the president of the PA Board, announced the winners during the culminating program of ELA Month.

## AWARDEES RECEIVE RECOGNITION ON THE 20TH SERVICE AWARDS

by LIKHA C. SISON

As the school year reaches its last few months before it ends, the school celebrated its 20th Service Awards via Zoom on the 10th of February in dedication to the school's loyal, hardworking, and loving employees.

The program, hosted by Kimmi Besmonte and Chlarine Dominique Gianan, started right after the Holy Mass in honor of St. Scholastica, the school's patron saint, that very same day. Entering the Zoom link with the spirit of love and compassion brought by the holy gathering, the event was carefully and thoughtfully held in a joyful heart.

The awards were announced and presented in an energetic and happy manner, with both students and employees alike basking in the peaceful and joyful atmosphere. SSC-W recognized the selfless dedication and commitment of the pioneers Janet Avila, Wilma Corage, Donna Lou Guingon, Emmanuel Roberto "Owen" Licop, Geraldine Santos, and Lilibeth Uchang for 20 years. Ana Razel Javier and Sherrine Villeta were also honored for their 15 years of service, while Ionna



*Lianne Trinos, Teresa Cadiz, and Leah Sacay surprise Donna Lou Guingon with a song and dance number*

Dianne Caoagas was put in the spotlight as she received her award in recognition of her contribution for 10 years.

Each awardee was introduced through unique and creative video presentations prepared by their colleagues. They got emotional as they watched the videos personally made for them, ranging from heartfelt messages from their beloved to a fun dance number.

Guingon, the Music teacher and one of the pioneers, expressed how grateful she was for all the sisters and administrators who have guided her through the years, *"Looking back, one of the main reasons why I stay is the fact that I felt appreciated. The sisters motivated and empowered*

*me to become who I am today. The sisters would always thank me after every program and even after I played for the Holy Mass. Music is a minor subject, but it was given importance in St. Scho-Westgrove."*

The acknowledgment and appreciation of St. Scholastica's College Westgrove's employees is an unmissable part of Scholastican tradition. The event, however, was not only for the sake of giving awards but rather for the sake of building better relationships and foundations with the Missionary Benedictine Sisters and its employees. A quote from a video posted by the official school Facebook account even read, "We are more than a community. We are a family" – a statement that is quite true to its core.



**Alumnae who were former Glee Club members serenade the audience with the song "Till I Met You"**

**20th Founding Anniversary Celebration from p1.**

The family games were one of the highlights, where everyone got invited to keep their cameras on and participate. Bring Me with a Twist, the first game, got the participants pumped up. The mechanics are simple; the host will say a letter, and the players must bring as many objects they can find that have the first letter of what the host said. It was tough for those who participated, but those who watched just giggled and laughed. All in all, it was an entertaining game for everyone, participant or not.

Selected representatives from each grade level got to play the first game; however, everyone was given a chance to win in the second game, wherein participants were asked to guess the retail price of the items shown.

The most awaited event, the variety show, began right after the family games with Spoken Word Poetry by Maiko Lazaro, an alumna from Batch 2019, wherein she reminisces about her days at SSC-W.

Current students and selected alumnae paraded their talents in singing and dancing. The Glee Club, both former and current members, serenaded the audience with a series of song numbers such as "Till I Met You", "How Far I'll Go", "As Long as I Have Music", "Yesterday's Dream", and "I Can Hear the Bells". They amazed the audience with their perfect pitch and well-prepared performances.

Selected IL Baile members from the past to present also showed off their impeccable dance moves and choreography, surprising many because of their excellence.

The variety show, hosted by the alumnae Joey Santos and Alaine Ansong, was streamed live on the school's official Facebook page, giving the public a glimpse of the empowered and talented Scholasticans.

Sister Daniela Romero, OSB, the school directress and principal, gave her final remarks for this event. Sister Romero spoke about how much of a blessing the celebration was to the SSCW community and that although it was online, the 20th anniversary was a success.

As part of the celebration, the school showcased the impact of Benedictine education in a countdown manner. A total of 20 videos were uploaded to SSCW's Facebook page from November 8 to February 10, the feast day of St. Scholastica. A Benedictine hallmark was featured in each video.

## Scholasticans put women's social, political, and economic achievements on display

by SHAIA ANGELICE P. MATTI

With the theme "Breaking the Bias in Society," the culmination of Women's Month served as a venue for empowered and educated Scholasticans to give recognition to the achievements of women from past to present and raise awareness on social issues that hinder women from being themselves through artworks, talk shows, interpretative dances, and video presentations, which aim to uplift women.

The preschoolers started the presentations with their dress-up activity, wherein they dressed up as the woman they admire or want to be, leaving an important message, "Girls can do anything!"

The grades 1 and 2 students created collages, both traditionally and digitally. The grade 1 students created a paper collage using their favorite Disney Princesses as the subject. One student chose



**MUSEO DE FILIPINO: Grade 7 students portray significant women in history**

Luisa Madrigal from the movie "Encanto", even though she is not portrayed as conventionally "pretty" like other Disney characters, explaining that Luisa is strong and a good sister just like her. This is proof that representation in media is important for children to feel like they belong.

Grade 2 students showcased their talents in digital arts to portray their own modern-day heroes.

The grade 3 students made posters with frontliners as centers of it as modern-day heroes, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, while grade 4 made mosaics with the theme "Face of Hope in the Time of Pandemic."

The grade 5's flyers featured Filipino women in the Spanish Era to commemorate their existence and contribution to

the Philippines. Last for the grade school, grade 6 sang a song about perseverance entitled "Try Everything" from the movie "Zootopia". It was then followed by a short health break while showing the Digital Museum of the Arts Club.

The high school students showcased their arts, dance, etiquette, and communication talents. The grade 7 students did paper quilling and cooked breakfast in bed for their loved ones. In their Museo de Filipino, they portrayed themselves as iconic strong Filipino women, highlighting their hardships and achievements.

The grade 8 students prepared an interpretative dance and skit to the song "Brave" by Sara Bareilles. They also educated the student body on how receptionists at the front desk and customer service etiquette should be. *continue on page 13*



*Grade 10 students share through a video podcast their struggles as adolescent females and how they overcome them*

Grade 9 students' "Herstory" focused on extraordinary women in various fields, explaining the basic information and achievements of women such as Taylor Swift, St. Scholastica, Hidilyn Diaz, Ariana Grande, Mother Teresa, and many more.

The grade 9 also presented a series of video podcasts named *Speak Up!*, wherein they interviewed career women and had them share their personal experiences.

In their TLE class, the grade 9 was tasked to give a foot spa treatment to the the influential women in their lives, and some of their videos were shown to the audience.

The grade 10 students flaunted a timelapse of their artwork with a

short description of why they created the artwork. They also made a video podcast about breaking the gender bias and instigating confidence and personality development in people.

Lastly, for the senior high school, the Grade 11 students presented their version of Salamat Doc to raise awareness about Breast and Cervical Cancer Awareness. It aims to educate both genders, especially young Scholasticans, in determining the signs and symptoms of these diseases.

Grade 12 HUMMS made a documentary film about Contemporary Women Writers, which revealed that women, even in ancient times, were competent in writing, while the grade 12 ABM presented

ISTORYA, which is about Cherry Atilano, a Filipino Social Entrepreneur.

The last video presentation of the program is by the SHS Organization, which showcased all their programs, activities, and projects like the Mentor-Mentee program that helped students on which Senior High School track and strand to choose. Testimonies of the participants were also shown.

Maria Aprell Dulay, a Social Studies teacher, inspires young Scholasticans by saying that not only men but also women can provoke a positive change in the world.

"A woman like you can lead, inspire and change the world," Dulay said in her message to the students

In between the presentations, the school clubs shared through video presentations their activities for the whole school year.

Jye Sumilang and Kolleen Alvarez from Grade 12 hosted the event, which also served as the year-end activity of SSC-W. It was organized by the departments of MAPEH, TLE-Computer, and Social Studies.



## What Comes First: Facts or Feelings?

By SAMANTHA LOUISSE C. MADARA

It's that time of year again, and I'm not talking about the holidays - the Presidential Elections are upon us once more. The time has come for Filipinos to pick their president, and there's a lot of heated debate among the populace. I have observed lots of discourse regarding the correct choice for the president, often resulting in long Twitter threads about the failings of each candidate and their supporters or close friends in torment due to opposing ideologies.

Must our political views affect personal relationships?

Naturally, we want to stick with people who have the same beliefs as us. When our beliefs are challenged, we get defensive and it can lead to disagreement in civil discussions. Long-lasting relationships of any kind can get tested when both parties have differing ideologies. While this talks about romantic relationships, I find this applicable to any kind of relationship; according to Brittany Loggins, when you need to find common ground or simply understand

the other person's point of view, it is good to be honest and upfront with them from the beginning.

I do agree with this. **An honest conversation with your friends and family can lead to a new perspective on certain issues and opinions.** If you feel like you are unfairly criticized for something that you believe in, you must let them know. It is better to address these types of things than to keep them locked away.

In the case of the Philippine Presidential Elections, a lot of fights have broken out between the different supporters, and some candidates are more controversial than the rest. While I will not be naming any names, they are certainly a point of contention, and there is a widely held belief that if you support this particular candidate, your political opinions are in the wrong. For all my dear readers, please vote with your country in mind, and remain objective. Ultimately, it is for you to decide what kind of opinions you tolerate or agree with and what to cut off from your life.

## Education: The Key to Unlocking a Better Future

By CARMELA BEATRIZ C. ARCEGA



We have all taken our education for granted at some point in our lives. The hours put into studying for an exam and the number of all-nighters we have pulled to finish projects made us all question if this is all worth it.

The COVID-19 pandemic had hit us harder than ever and tremendously affected our way of learning. According to the Department of Education, around 6 million people in the Philippines were functionally illiterate before the pandemic. Individuals with functional illiteracy have insufficient ability to read and write in their daily lives.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, many individuals have been affected by the closing of schools. The rate of non-enrollment increased dramatically due to the unemployment of many, inaccessibility to technology, and a poor learning environment. Furthermore, as schools have been closed for over two years, many students have fallen behind, resulting in learning loss and mental distress.

I recently came across an episode of Pinoy Big Brother, a Philippines reality show, wherein two housemates could not answer simple questions about our history—topics embedded in our school curriculum at a young age. In the episode, the housemates played a history quiz bee. The host asked questions such as: “*Si Dr. Jose Rizal ay kilala sa kanyang palayaw na?*” and “*Sina Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, at Jacinto Zamora ay mas kilala sa tawag na?*” to which they

answered “J. Rizal” and “Majoha” respectively.

Scripted or not, we need to understand the problem deeply rooted in it. To put it in another way, how can a Filipino unfamiliar with the country’s significant monuments, people, and culture know our history? And who is at fault? The students? Or the education system? Both sectors could be at blame, in my opinion. Both sectors have a role in our education crisis: educators must effectively deliver these concepts, while students must put out the effort and concentrate on their studies.

**History is vital in understanding the past and developing a better future. It enables us to avoid the mistakes that led to our country’s struggles in the past.** Being educated on such matters can help stop our dark history from repeating itself. I am under the impression that a wise voter is not only educated on our history but also on values, ethics, current issues, and complications that need to be changed.

With that being said, I believe that education and information are significant factors in being a good citizen. Our duty as Filipino citizens is to ensure that our country continues to prosper, and being a wise voter is one of the many ways we can perform our responsibility. Even those ineligible to vote can utilize their knowledge to help voters choose the right leaders by spreading awareness and information.



## The Psyche of a Reader, Synonymous to a "Learner"

By JACQUELINE MARIE S. POSADAS

Literature contains a plethora of ideas that may one day spark a change within an individual's soul. As we read books, we subconsciously take in information that influences our decisions and way of thinking. There are writings that may cause us discomfort or writings that may make us euphoric. One's identity is often influenced by the literature he/she reads. As stressed in *The YA Filipino*, one of the reasons as to why writings hold great effect to its audience is the fact that many young adults, at a certain age, are susceptible to influence. Kids like myself are still figuring out how to go about life, and at this stage, our identities are malleable. This is the age of self-discovery wherein one is still finding their place in the world. Due to this, certain materials may affect the way we develop e.g. reading certain things. Literature forges a path towards believing specific ideas if the source material is able to latch onto a reader's mind.

At a certain stage, most people develop a sense of stubbornness. Individuals become less receptive over the years and open-minded thinking is not as common from older generations (note, this is a generalization). This is due to the phenomenon of how age causes one to solidify their beliefs. Ideas become harder to change as time goes by, due to the length at which it has survived within people. At times, people associate their ideas to their personhood. They believe that criticism of their ideas is an attack towards their character. When one confuses their beliefs to their identity, the conversation no longer becomes rational. Criticism becomes harder to take when a person overconnects themselves to what they believe in. The conversation no longer becomes a question

of what *should* be believed, rather it becomes a defense of one's personal view

The way we read literature is affected by this phenomenon. Nowadays, people only entertain ideas that fit their criteria. This applies towards their choice of books that they pick off the shelf. Sometimes, people will drop a book simply because it does not reassure their world view. Most people no longer debate ideas for the sake of understanding both sides, instead, reading becomes a way for people to reassure themselves. If it comforts their belief, then it is a positive, but negative if otherwise. Whilst this is obviously a generalization towards human behavior, it is nonetheless true in certain scenarios.

The thing about literature is that it always carries a bit of influence towards its readers. This influence may vary depending on the current beliefs that the reader holds. The main takeaway is that one must not limit their willingness to discover new things. **Separating one's ego from one's ideas is an incredibly healthy way of approaching discussion.**

I believe that readers should look at literature as an opportunity to expand their knowledge. One should not drop a book simply because it offers a different perspective (this statement does not apply to books with insulting themes). Personally, I believe that the world could move two steps forward if people learned to separate their pride from their ideas. Learning requires humility. Likewise, a humble reader will find that literature can offer much more to the willing mind. Those are my thoughts on the topic, and I thank you for taking the time to read. Godspeed to every reader.

## Fanfiction Is a Combination of Good and Bad

SOPHIA ISABEL P. BAGRO



Fanfiction, or fanfic for short, is a fan's adaptation of a favorite original work. It's a collection of both DISASTERS (quick slideshow of poor grammar/Mary-sues/concerning amount smut fics) and exceptional, well-written works of art! The majority of them may be found on Fanfiction.net, Wattpad, Ao3, and some other sites. Fanfiction is a sea of sloppy writing and poor execution; nevertheless, it's chock-full of ambiguous and enjoyable content.

Fanfiction is written by young, amateur authors ranging in age from teenagers to young adults who are experimenting with well-established ideas and concepts to and from the source material while also having an expanding vocabulary and grammar. Story writing is HARD. Especially for developing minds. Therefore, it's understandable the story could come across as cliché, includes cardboard characters, cringey dialogues, unnecessary fillers, and a story with no plot and consists solely of smu-(supposed to be smut but cut off for comedic effect)

What makes Fanfiction so great is that writers come up with unique story ideas and concepts, as well as tweak their premise. However, the lack/abundance of explanation and the undisputable idea hinder the plot from developing. What Fanfiction does with the characters of its original source material is that they have the freedom to put them in various situations and occupations and even write them out of character. The struggle with writing characters in Fanfiction, or fiction in general, is that they don't experience consequences, and they illogically act because they were written haphazardly. If the

characters were poorly written in Fanfiction, it is apparent the audience, particularly those who love the specific characters, would be upset.

Apart from poorly written and executed fanfictions, there are always great ones that you can find after wading through the bad ones. The criteria of a great fanfiction include: little or no grammatical errors, recognizable canon characters, consistent tone, and pacing, has a believability factor that is relevant to the task at hand, avoids obfuscation or making it difficult for the reader to follow/understand, and when a plot is required, there is no needless dialogue or an appearance of one. Despite Fanfiction being a nearly complete disaster (flash image of fire), it still has content in it; whether it is poorly written or not, there are readers that enjoy and support it. For instance, I used to read Wattpad fanfiction when I was 12 and genuinely enjoyed sloppily written ship fanfics, but looking back now, I can't help but cringe at the majority of the stories I saved in my library.

**Fanfiction can be sloppily written with poor grammatical errors and poor execution, but it also excels in enjoyable and ambiguous content.** I don't hate Fanfiction; yes, some of them have flaws that make them unattractive, BUT they are a practice for young authors to use their creativity while also improving their writing skills and understanding. Who knows...? This material could have the potential to inspire readers to write and possibly establish a community.



## The Top Two Leading Presidential Candidates for the 2022 Elections

By ANGELA MAE M. SACAY

margin at the 95% confidence level" revealed that the top two leading presidential candidates for this upcoming 2022 elections are Ferdinand "BongBong" Marcos, Jr with 60% of the people's votes and Vice President Maria "Leni" Robredo with 15%. What qualifications do these people have that make them one of the best choices to become the next president? We are all aware that whoever we elect this year will significantly impact the education, livelihood, economy, security, and overall well-being of all Filipinos. That's why it is crucial for us to see what Marcos and Robredo have to offer in terms of their background, accomplishments, and platform. So before anything else, let's check where they came from and what they did back then.

Marcos came from a family of politicians with a history of unpaid taxes that cost P203 billion and their "ill-gotten wealth" that has a value of P328 billion along with their other assets found by the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) in Switzerland, Singapore, the United States, and even in some places in the Philippines as well. In contrast, Robredo did not even come from a family that was involved in the field of politics, but when she became a part of it herself, the Commission on Audit (COA) gave Robredo and her office the highest ratings due to her consistent compliance and transparency with her assets, financial statements, expenses, taxes, and the like (Galvez, 2021; Viray, n.d.; & Mercado, 2022). Marcos has taken a great portion of the country's Thus, we can say that both of them have an ample amount of experience working with people in the government, except that the other has a stain of corruption and dishonesty in their work, while the other doesn't.

Since we are aware that they have experience, let us now see their contributions to our country. Marcos declares that he initiated the wind power technology in some parts of Northern Luzon, especially in Ilocos Norte, which was found false because the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) of Estados Unidos stated that this project was actually done by the NorthWind Power Development Corporation (NPDC) of the Ayalas, while Robredo and her office started the "Angat Buhay Program," which brought aid to indigent 622,000 families, 223 cities, 391 youth, and 140 youth groups, which assisted her in accomplishing more than 46 projects in their respective communities (Antonio, 2022; Legacy, n.d.; & Rappler, 2021). Since Marcos's only legacy was

revealed to be untrue, he hasn't really done much yet. Meanwhile, Robredo doesn't only seem compassionate as she has reached countless remote areas where people are in most need of help, but she also seems trustworthy as many volunteers put faith in her hands that their funds in millions of pesos will go to less fortunate Filipinos. So we can say that they both promised to help the poor citizens during their presidential campaigns, but only one of them has done something significant to prove that he/she would be able to fulfill their plans for the next six years.

Now that we know what they can offer, let's listen to what their plans are for the next six years regarding the pandemic, job creation and retention, human rights, education, and public services. With his "Unity" platform, Marcos promises to remove the lockdowns, lower the taxes, give tax holidays and amnesties, provide a free online educational platform for all students, offer occupations to PWDs, and modernize the ferry transportation system, and implement intensified urban planning. On the other hand, Robredo, with her "Gobyernong Tapat" platform, guarantees to increase funds for our healthcare system for more equipment used and compensation received by our medical workers, awaken trust in the government, increase the strength of industries, end discrimination at work, support small businesses, and provide safety nets for those who lose their jobs, take down the anti-communist task force, pay for the students' study materials, collaborate with the internet service providers to make it accessible to all students, support unemployed citizens by giving them 80% of their salary for three months, and issue the National ID System (Patag, 2022 & Gregorio, 2022).

After hearing their announced goals for the different sectors of our society, have you changed your mind about who you will be voting for? Whether you will be supporting Bongbong Marcos or Leni Robredo, it is indeed true that we must not be die-hard fans of any of these candidates, so we may continue to respect each other's opinions. **However, giving the highest position to someone who doesn't show enough or has no qualifications at all is just an even worse form of disrespect towards our fellow citizens, our former leaders, and national heroes who selflessly fought for our freedom. Be a responsible citizen by checking and analyzing their records, contributions, and intentions from valid sources.** Then, you can be certain that your chosen leader is not just a popular figure but a person of value to others!

## Equal Rights for Women

By SOPHIA RINOA M. NEIS



Have you heard of a woman who was shot because she wanted to go to school and be educated? She is Malala Yousafzai, who promotes education for women. Do you know any student who would swim across a river to be able to attend classes? She was the mother of my grandmother or my great-grandmother. Her father did not want her to go to school and refused to give her money for transportation, so she would just swim across the Pasig River to get the education she wanted. These are women who wanted equal opportunities in education. We have other women out there who believe that women could also be great in other areas like politics and employment. This just proves that women can be just as smart as men if they are given the same or equal opportunities.

In the past, women have always been confined to their homes to do household chores and take on the responsibilities of wife and mother. They were not asked to give their opinions because they were considered inferior to men. They were not even allowed to vote during the election. As years went by, this situation gradually changed, and women's voices were eventually heard; they were allowed to go to school and even vote during the election period. Why? Because they have proven that they could be as smart as men and sometimes even better than them. Unfortunately, some cultures around the world still believe that women are subordinates to men. This should not be the case because all the people in this world are created equal; therefore, women should be given all the rights given to men.

It should be noted that if women are given the same opportunities given to men, they could be much better than men. In politics, Margaret Thatcher was the longest serving British prime minister and the first woman to hold that office. She was called the "Iron Lady" because of her leadership style. In New Zealand, it was also

evident how a female prime minister was able to win the battle against COVID-19. She is Jacinda Ardern. Her leadership is not based on telling them what to do, instead, she stands with them and makes them feel that she is with them in this battle. She sympathized with them and understood what everyone was going through, which helped them fight COVID-19.

Some people believe that women cannot function well in the workplace because they tend to become emotional, they do not have the ability to organize their work, and they are not good at making decisions. On the contrary, women's emotions help them better understand people in the workplace which results in making better decisions. Because of their experience as a wife and a mother, women could stand the pressure in the workplace and produce better quality output. The belief that women are weaker than men cannot be true. One gender should not be considered superior to the other because both have their strengths and weaknesses. Men and women should work together for a more progressive future.

Women should not be treated differently because of their gender. We now have women engineers, painters, presidents of companies, doctors, lawyers, etc. In politics, people have started voting for women candidates in different positions because they have recognized the ability and skills of women. Women, therefore, should be given equal rights as men. **There should be no discrimination against women at home, in the community, workplace, in school, or anywhere. Let us all remember that gender alone does not define a person.** One cannot say that a person is not allowed or has no right to do this or that simply because that person is a woman. This is unacceptable.



## Tattoos = TABOO?

By SOPHIA ISABEL V. TAPALES

Are you a fan of art? Do you think it can be placed in one's body? Well, it was once said by Johnny Depp, a famous actor, that "My body is my journal, and my tattoos are my story." As a teenager who admires tattoos, I would like to tell you that there is nothing wrong with having a tattoo on your body, and here is why. The art of tattoos has been going on for ages since the ancient Greeks decided to use them for communication with spies or criminals, which is maybe the reason for deeming tattoos as unprofessional figures. Regardless of people's thoughts about it being unsightly and unprofessional, I respect people who express themselves through this body art because this allows people to show their confidence, reveals their true selves, and can grant them some health benefits.

First of all, tattoos allow people to show their confidence. Some individuals have a hard time expressing themselves which can lead to social anxiety. People get anxious about a lot of things like their body proportions, facial features, beauty marks, body marks, etc. However, with tattoos, people gain courage about themselves because they draw away unwanted attention from their physical appearance and focus instead on who they are inside. There are also issues on how society has the mindset of judging a book by its cover which leads to a lot of toxicity. We have our own beliefs, and everybody should respect that fact. Everybody should accept that not everyone is meant for tattoos and that not everyone is allowed to have them, be it of health or religious issues. People should also accept that having a tattoo does not mean that this person is dangerous or this person is a low life because they are not. Having a tattoo makes them feel better about themselves than leaving it to that idea. No space for judgments whatsoever; just let them be.

Next is the fact that it reveals their true selves and actual values. People have their times when they just want to truly express themselves. Tattoos have meanings behind them or are momentous because they may remind them of their loved ones. Tattoos do not also determine one being unprofessional, but humanity does. For this reason, professional

jobs should reconsider their opinion about it. Body artworks cannot determine who you are; getting to know a person by talking or engaging with them is the proper way to know a person. Just because criminals used tattoos in the past does not mean that the individuals in the present are the same. Changes happen, and we need to be more open about these kinds of things. One cannot judge another based on looks.

Lastly, tattoos have been proven to have some health benefits. Some people may not be able to have tattoos because of allergies and other health problems, but when one decides to have a tattoo, they are not deemed to be unhealthy. Multiple studies discovered that it can improve immune systems and reduce stress. Tattoos were figured to reduce cortisol levels to avoid migraines, increased weight gain, hindrance of memory and learning, and high blood pressure. Tattoos also instigate an immune response and can strengthen it. The fact that tattoos can help people cope with stress and help the immune systems just verifies that sometimes assistance is where you are less likely to find it. Most people do not find tattoos good because it does minimal harm to the body, but it has some benefits that can ensure people that tattoos are not that bad. However, I am not encouraging people who have allergies and health problems regarding the skin to have tattoos because this might damage your body.

**Tattoos should not be a measure of one's professionalism. The confidence that individuals get from having tattoos proves that it can alleviate one's mental health and give courage. The truth about one's personality cannot be determined with one having tattoos; an individual's character can be shown through words and actions, not because they had decided to have art on their bodies.** Health should also not be a problem when having a tattoo because professionals will surely care for you and some benefits are present. As a teenager, tattoos really gave off a fascinating vibe to me. It shows me how a person can cope with a tattoo on their body and how it can be a significant remembrance. So what else can I say? People only live once; why not be a canvas for your interesting stories.

## A Human's Best Teacher, the Book

By PATRICIA MARIE H. ZOTOMAYOR



I see literature as a source of knowledge that always leaves a reader reflecting on the message of any writing. It can be analyzed objectively or subjectively; it can also be used as an inspiration for the reader. But I believe that it affects their identity when the message hits too close to their feelings or the position in their life at that moment. Let's take the literary piece "Rosary Fridays" as an example for this case. If a Filipina closeted - gay woman that lives in a religious household were to read this piece, this would make them feel connected to the story. It affects them immediately as they can relate to the character in the story, and they can identify the characters' emotions. This allows them to confirm their sense of identity as they have felt what they've read as something enough for them to relate to. Most of the time, it's the sense of empathy that makes a person feel their sense of identity as they feel the sense of pain or joy in what they have read in a literary piece. Although people who do not experience the same pain or joy may have themselves only reflecting, and perhaps it may make them rethink their sexuality (in the context of "Rosary Fridays"). Another case for others is that people tend to learn about themselves through literature. Not everyone can recognize the development of oneself, so they only discover a characteristic of themselves when it's being described to them. It's like the role of teachers wherein they encourage their students to develop their skills and talents, a student will only pursue it when they're told that they are good at it.

When they are able to associate a characteristic from a book with their personality, it develops another form of identity. For example, a girl that has just read the book "Harry Potter". Upon reading this book, she discovers that she likes Sci-Fi and fantasy stories, therefore, it becomes a part of her identity that she can relate to others. In some cases, however, literature may affect some people negatively as they learn about things that they don't like about themselves. Let's say that a female student was given

homework by their teacher to read a book about the stereotypical beauty standards towards women. When they learn about the definition of beauty from the perspective of society, it gives them a sense of disappointment when they cannot identify themselves to the standard. Because of this literary piece, they have started to identify themselves as someone considered "ugly". **So with this scenario, we can make an assumption that not all literary pieces can create a positive outcome for a reader. This also applies to how a reader analyzes a book. If a pessimistic person were to read a book that speaks about understanding the positive things in life, they would soon get disassociated with the book as they cannot relate to the message of what the book is trying to convey. It is true that words are a way to convey feelings, but it does not always reassure us that it will be understood by everyone.** Let's put out another example that may help us understand how a person's identity can be affected by how they read literature. If a woman were to read literature pieces that are dated back to the perspective of male scholars like Sigmund Freud, they would all seem misogynistic in the eyes of the woman since she identifies herself as a modern woman. She will soon feel negative about the literary piece and soon nitpick the wrong ideals of men towards women, leading her away from the point of the literary piece. So what we can learn from this is that it is important to understand where the book is coming from and how it may be different from one's beliefs. But nevertheless, all of these forms of literature are still necessary for the development of one's identity. Because without literature, no one would be able to associate themselves with different characteristics, nor will they be able to practice their sense of analysis in different situations. Literature affects our development in many ways; it is only up to us if we will make use of what we know from what we have read from a positive or a negative perspective.



# speaKULASA

What's one of the best things you've done for yourself or for others at the time of the pandemic?

Being a 'person' for my classmates and friends during the pandemic has been one of the most worthwhile things I've done for them. There's a quote that a lot of people I know use that really hits me. They usually say it to their friends and persons who had helped them when they were at their lowest, and no one knew. "You are my person." It's a simple sentence, but it conveys a lot of meaning.

- LM FLORENTO

I would consider one of the best things I have done for myself is letting go, may it be items or people. - ZAM ABING

Finding and understanding my lost self by focusing more on myself and what I want and not what others want for me - SHAIA MATTI

Helping someone when she doesn't understand a topic and giving contributions to batch projects - MIKA GALLARDO

One of the things that I've done for myself is that I learned and explored a lot of things at the time of the pandemic. I'm happy to say that I have learned things that I can be proud of in the future. - AMANDA DE GUZMAN

I think the best thing I have done is constantly remind myself that I am doing just fine, and everybody has their own timeline. - ELIZA NATIVIDAD

I reached one of my goals, which is to be included in the With High Honors list. - KAYE UCANG

I think one of the best things that I've done for myself is to give myself time to breathe and enjoy. Personally, the pandemic gave me a really hard time, most especially because I was an extrovert and I really love social gatherings, but now that I'm stuck at home, I'm so grateful for the time that I've spent doing things that I never knew I love, getting to know more about my capabilities not just as a student, but also as a person. And for others, I think one of the best things that I've done for them is constantly checking up on how they're doing and reminding them of my presence every once in a while.

- JEN PALO

The pressure and stress are real, especially having online classes during this pandemic. I believe that the best thing I did was that I took short breaks throughout this school year. I also encouraged others to do so because we have to calm ourselves down and pause when things don't go our way anymore. - YZA MOMOSE

# spea**K**U**L**A**S**A

One of the best things I have done for myself during this pandemic was to understand myself more. It helped me manage my emotions and the way I act towards others.

- ELLA RIVERA

At the time of the pandemic, I think one of the best things I've done for myself or others was to check in on the people I hadn't spoken to in a long time. Keeping in touch with them online and in person also includes sending letters to let them know I'm thinking of them.

- JOANNA BARROS

One of the best things that I've done for myself during this time of pandemic is stepping out of my comfort zone. I like to try new things that I haven't experienced before.

- ASHLEIGH SIMBAHAN

One of the best things that I've done for myself and for others too is still being happy even though we failed at something, especially in an online class setting, because learning from our mistakes makes us better people. There are more opportunities where we can succeed. I remember one of my teachers reminded us when we did a pair-work in breakout rooms: "You must work together and help each other; you cannot work individually. Don't blame each other for getting a mistake because if you make a mistake, it's also your partner's mistake. Just laugh it off." I believe that the element of teamwork is still important not only in face-to-face classes but also in online.

- STEPHANIE PEJI

One thing I've done both for others and for myself is by communicating with my friends and relatives. The pandemic has taken a toll on us and made it difficult for us to reach out and reconnect with our friends. One of the best things I've done is maintain our friendships despite the fact that we do not see each other face to face.

- BIANCA MANALO

I guess something I've done for myself this pandemic was making decisions and choices without having to consult another person. It may be a small thing but I honestly feel really proud of it. Though I am still in the process of becoming less indecisive, I am proud of what I have achieved right now.

- TRICIA GIRON

I think the best thing I've done is help others cope during this time. I like keeping others company so it isn't really a problem staying with others. I also met a lot of new friends that I think will be the friends I will keep for life.

- BEA VEGA

Catering to outreach programs in our province, especially when the lockdown has just started

- JYE SUMILANG

The best thing I've done for myself during these times was to try to improve myself. Spending my days cooped up in my room has brought about so many realizations about myself. It made me open my eyes to all the unnecessary pain and suffering I've inflicted upon my person. I am glad that I've finally learned to be kinder to myself.

- ARIA MONTESCLAROS

*A teacher, a politician, or a healthcare worker: if you were given a chance to choose, who would you like to be at this time of the pandemic?*

KIM AMBER M. VERACRUZ (G7)

It's been two whole years since this pandemic began. I wasn't able to go out to malls, beaches, or all the fun places, and I couldn't go to school unless it was online. At home, every 4:00 pm in the afternoon, I see my father, a health worker, restless after long work hours. Then I go to my zoom class and I see my teacher's sometimes having a hard time helping us through this new normal when they are still trying to get used to it too. Then I heard about next year's elections, and that made me wonder, what have politicians been doing in this past pandemic? ***I thought to myself about being a politician, and it came to me that being a politician could have helped us stop this chaos.***

Politicians are the ones explaining the guidelines and protocols served by the health department, but they could also create suitable ones as well. They are people who can create, enforce, and renew these laws. They could be the people who can start the chain of ending covid.

I would serve my country as a politician by doing these three simple acts.

**1.) Being a role model:** Politicians are known as the leaders of most countries. If we first act as better role models to the citizens by simply following the protocols we presented, then the citizens are likely to follow. If we simply do not reflect on how we want our citizens to do in this pandemic, they won't follow, so set as the first example is best. If politicians simply act more responsibly then managing this pandemic would be easy.

**2.) Providing better protocols and guidelines:** According to Joey Concepcion, a presidential adviser for entrepreneurship in Manila, months ago, vague guidelines for indoor activities of business establishments in places under alert levels 2 & 3 posed risks to citizens. Because of these vague guidelines, the citizens are in danger. If we only provided better guidelines and stricter ones, this situation could have been avoided.

**3.) Helping the citizens:** Many people lost their jobs, some are homeless, and some are not in a good state of mental health. If we try helping the citizens by donating goods, helping provide for those who lost their jobs and providing online counseling, the citizens would be safer and happier.

If I were a politician and did these acts, there won't be much risk. If there are not many risks, front-liners can finally take some rest and check their health. Students can finally have better education, and citizens will no longer be in a state of panic. If I pose as a role model, provide better protocols and guidelines, and help my people, this pandemic will surely end.



**MARIA ANGELA OUIDA R. MONTESCLAROS (G9)**

*"To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded." -Ralph Waldo Emerson*

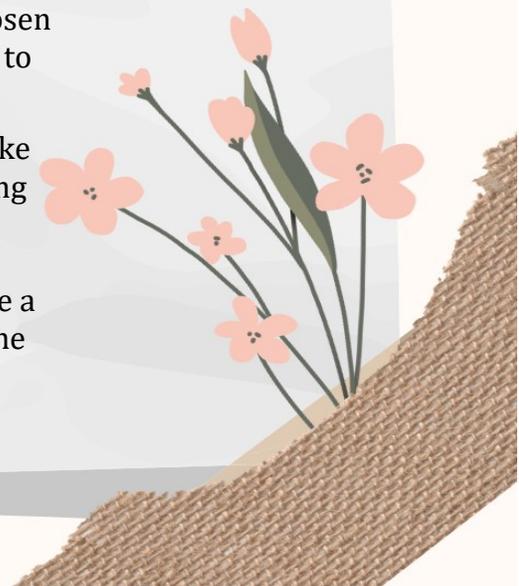
Everyone has experienced their own hardships during this pandemic. Some experienced challenges to a much higher degree, and some are still thriving nonetheless. However, the common denominator between these two distinctions is the desperate need for healthcare. The COVID - 19 virus does not choose its victims; it does not discriminate. Does not care if you are rich or poor, selfish or selfless, kind or unkind. If you were in the wrong place at the wrong time, you could be unfortunate enough to contract the virus. Some survive it; the rest we live to remember.

**If I were given a choice to be a teacher, a politician, or a healthcare worker during these times, I would choose to be a healthcare worker.** There are many reasons behind this, but I'll go with the most conspicuous cause. I have always wanted to be a doctor. Even in childhood, I liked to play-pretend with plastic stethoscopes and my family as my "patients." Back then, I knew I wanted to be a doctor, but I didn't know why. Thankfully as I grew older, the reason became clearer in my head.

When I was born, I wasn't a perfectly healthy baby. Since my birth until I was about a year old, I was in and out of the hospital. Tubes, wires, and other miscellaneous things were stuck into me so I could survive. On one account, I was even forced to ingest something similar to radiation-emitting scintillating crystals just so they could trace under the x-ray what was going wrong inside my body. I can't say it was psychologically traumatizing; I don't even remember it happening. But my body must have remembered those occurrences because I believe that my survival despite all those health issues is what has driven me to strive to help out others in need. If the excellent doctors, nurses, caregivers, and other healthcare workers weren't there when I went through that, I might not be here delivering this speech to you.

I want to be a healthcare worker despite the threat of life endangerment. Being exposed to deadly diseases every day is a risk I'm willing to take if it means service to the people. I want to be a healthcare worker despite the sleepless nights, the emotional impact, and other factors that people weaponize to discourage me from continuing my chosen career path. All of this is simply part of the one point that matters most to me; the devotion of my life to making others continue living.

There are many ways to interpret Ralph Waldo Emerson's quote, but I like to take it literally. If I could aid even a single life to breathe easier by being a doctor, then I'd have succeeded. If an easier life is made accessible to the general public through my craft, if people's lives are made longer, made better, then that is my measurement of success. I will choose to be a healthcare worker, and in so doing, I am ensured that I can achieve the success that I've been craving all my life.



## JIANNA ARABELLA G. ABUEG (G9)

Whenever my friends and I talk about school, there's always one person who says something along the lines of "*I hate school in general.*" Going to class can be boring at times. But sometimes I like to remember the fun moments I've had in class. Maybe the teacher would put on a movie, organize a game, or simply make the lecture fun.

Fun moments like these catch my attention. I start listening in class, and I get passionate about the topic. Ever since I've familiarized myself with that passionate feeling in school, I've longed for it. Not only does it make studying easier but it makes me feel like I actually learned something useful. I started actively looking for moments in class that could pique my interest.

Until I realized I never would've loved these topics if they were discussed by someone else. If I had read an article about these topics then I probably would have never finished that article. I realized that it was my teacher who made this class fun. My teachers were the ones who gave me that passionate feeling for school.

And this is why teachers are so important. Teachers have the power to give students passionate feelings about what they learn. And with this passion, kids could do great things. School was never about being the smartest or having the highest IQ; it was always about what kids would do with what they've learned. **If I could choose a profession during this pandemic, I would choose to be a teacher.**

We have health workers. So why a teacher and not a health worker? Well, health workers are currently saving the world by curing covid patients and making vaccines. But let's all be honest, being a healthcare worker is a dangerous and stressful job right now. They haven't been getting any justice or rest.

Now, who else are our heroes during this pandemic? Politicians. Now, politics has never had a pretty image. But these are our big leaders who make big choices for our country. Being a politician is just like being a healthcare worker, stressful but rewarding.

Now, where is this going? Well, we need to take a step back again. Let's all ask ourselves, who taught these healthcare workers and politicians how to do their job? Who gave them the basic skills they needed to save the world? That's right, Teachers. All of these heroes used to be students like us. Sitting in class and finding passion in their topics.

And now, that is exactly why I would choose to be a teacher. I want to give the youth the same passion that these professionals had in school. The same passion I was given.

Teachers do not work for the present, but they work for the future. They teach you the skills and values you will use when stepping into the adult world. If we just aimlessly use our knowledge in our jobs, we'll get demotivated and exhausted easily. By putting meaning, spirit, and passion into our work, we can say that it was worth it.

I like to think that at SSCW, our teachers gave a special name to this passionate feeling. As a Benedictine community, we've named this passion The Benedictine Spirit. This spirit is filled with love, passion, and feeling of the need to serve our community. Students are being prepared to serve and become the heroes of the future.

Politicians and healthcare workers save the present, but teachers save the future. Just as UNICEF said, "*Teachers are leading in crisis and reimagining the future.*" This is the perfect balance for development as a society. And this is why I would like to be a teacher during this pandemic.



*Meeting You Again*

CHIARA JAZMINE C. BALSOMO

How my life is withering,  
Each step I take I can hear my last.  
But for I do not dwell,  
For what reason is in the past.

I have yet to be there with you soon,  
Just preparing for my arrival.  
I've been waiting for this day,  
And I've made my decision final.

So these last steps I take,  
Hope it ends my heart aches.  
I can hear your lovely voice,  
And being with you is my last choice.

It will be my happiest day,  
Yet saddest for some.  
But I still get to be,  
With the one I love.

*A Great Life Lived*

MARIA ANGELA OUIDA R. MONTESCLAROS

Glassy eyes and red noses,  
Caskets and red roses,  
Great is sorrow, great is pain.  
When much is loss, and little is gain.

Night falls unnoticed, town cloaked in black.  
The death knell echoes the sound of its chime.  
Hushed cries mourn what they cannot get back.  
In stupendous grief, overlooked is the sublime.

For when there is pain, we refuse to see,  
The beauty in everything and all that has ascended.  
In one's death, disgrace not their memory;  
Tarry not on the loss, but on the joyful life 'fore it ended.

What are these moments of ache and agony,  
In a lifetime of exuberance and glee?  
What are these moments of ache and agony?  
In a great life lived, they're nothing at all to me.

*Paper Airplane*

SOPHIA ANGELICA R. SAMANIEGO

From paper to planes, from a nobody to a somebody.  
Folded to fly high, molded to reach great heights.  
To journey meaningfully and die empty;  
To pass through gloomy skies and bright lights.

Flawed wings to spread and a purpose to seek  
The flight is seemingly scary; being baggage-free is the sole  
key.

To take off is not to end at the final peak,  
But to fulfill with faith a servant's duty.

With a flying paper airplane flies time,  
With its landing reveals the gate to start anew.  
With a fresh beginning comes the ticket to the eternal prime;  
A one-way ticket with no return to the world so untrue.

Set forth for what flew afar awaits an afterglow ahead.  
In the hearts of the beloveds, what has departed will remain.  
On the grounds of the ethereal paradise, what has landed  
won't be misled.

In the hands of our Pilot, what has arrived will be healed from  
pain.

*Lola*

ELIZA ANDREA A. NATIVIDAD

Years passed too quickly  
Wilted are the petals of a daisy  
Empty is the feeling of home  
Tired of uttering too many woes

Of lovely flowers blooming  
And songs playing in the morning  
They remind me of your wonder  
Warmth that became my cover

You steered sinking ships  
Taught courage to unwritten decades  
How a knight tries to flee  
And a fool faces fear with glee

How patient you must be  
Enduring storms and wild tides  
When I cried you did not wipe  
Though wept along with me

*Continuing On*

YZABEL REICHELANI C. MOMOSE

You sit in silence, deep in thought  
Beginning a day you know you'll hate  
Another day without acceptance  
But you refuse to stay in this state

The pain is like a bolt of lightning  
For it has struck your very core  
A loved one so special to you  
A loss you must set free to soar

The next day, you try again  
This time with a smile on your face  
You realize that life must go on  
So a new day you shall embrace

The fire has now burned out  
You're ready to let go of this pain  
So as you continue to live  
The memories will remain

*A Garden of Clouds*

PATRICIA BEATRIZ L. GIRON

You passed away,  
Days before my birthday  
What must I do to feel better?  
For I miss your love and warmth, O so tender

When the flowers bloom,  
I always remember you  
Like those dandelions and sunflowers so yellow,  
Like the orchids up in the air and tulips in the meadow

I never knew the clear sky would take you away so easily  
But if that is where you will find peace, so it be  
In the garden of clouds above  
You will guide and soar like a free dove

In the garden of clouds, genuine happiness will peak  
Keeping us on the right path as we speak  
May it be the clear sky or rainy sky I look upon  
In our hearts, you will never be gone

*Final Destination*

SHERYL E. BOFILL

My life came to a point,  
Where the sound of breaking bones gives such  
pleasure;  
Where the imagery of bloodshed and dislocated joint,  
It gives such oxytocin gore.

The pungent smell that I can only view through  
imagery,  
The orientation of human anatomy through  
videography;  
The emotional expression that gives satisfaction,  
The crackling hymns that result from orgasmic  
brutality.

Such a scene that's very hunting,  
Such music that's very satisfying;  
The variety of dangers one can label as unknown,  
The cries, gasp, and exhaustion in the zone.

If such a movie gives such purgation of emotion,  
Ever wonder what would it feel like to be in your own  
*Final Destination?*

*The Scythe Reaps*

JIANNA ARABELLA G. ABUEG

When I hear the heavy wings of angels I'll know it 's time.  
When I feel the wind from their flight I might smile.  
Fight or Flight? We always seem to have a choice.  
But when it 's time, we'll see that the scythe isn't something  
we can avoid.

When I hear the bells I remember sound.  
The sounds I shared with loved ones around.  
Cries and laughter come into mind, what am I to them?  
How will I be remembered? An enemy or a friend?

These days a scythe is always hiding in plain sight.  
We always hush it away, but it keeps coming into light.  
Do we really think we can hush the inevitable?  
The cycle of ashes is not controllable.

I don't want to be reaped away yet, but if it's time I will go.  
I'll enjoy the last drops of sand, say my farewell without  
woe.

I was given a try, a shot, a chance.  
The scythe doesn't discriminate so let us lie in acceptance.

## *A Segmented Truth*

By SAMANTHA LOUISSE C. MADARA

Sometimes, the mind chooses to bring light to a long-forgotten memory. It's an odd thing that is unfortunately quite common. You're going on with your day, and nothing interesting is happening to you, so your mind picks a memory from a catalog of things you may or may not be eager to forget. Remember that thing you did that one time? It asks, and it shows you. It's natural. It's a result of synapses firing at a certain pace. You can be confused, embarrassed, or nostalgic. Or all three.

It was like this for Kate Torres. On the plane ride to her mother's hometown, she remembers a vague afternoon she's not sure actually happened. She was seven and watching her grandmother hang laundry in the backyard. Behind the house was a great stretch of woodland, and beyond that were the mountains. The woods seemed scary for her at the time, even in the brilliant afternoon sun.

"You can go to the woods if you like", her lola says. "But you might see something you don't want to see." Little Kate asks, "Like what?"

Her lola looked at her with a resigned warning in her eyes. "Things that will give you nightmares. Things that will watch you in the dark," her solemn tone had made Kate shiver. And the memory ends there. There was probably more that was said, and the feeling lingers.

Her family was always...a little strange. One rule she had growing up was to never come downstairs after 9:00 in the evening. When she asked why, her mother always said, "It's just for your own good." She tried breaking this rule once, and she saw nothing out of the ordinary. Then when she went back to her room, she saw a pair of blinking eyes outside her window, watching her closely.

Probably not a big deal, right?

Kate is used to constantly moving about, and this trip was

merely another one that comes and goes. Her mother is reading a travel magazine next to her, and the window shows buildings and trees materializing into view. Kate settles back in her seat and thinks of other childhood memories.

It felt good to see the familiar landscape as they continued. As soon as they arrived at the house, their lola was waiting for them with a warm smile. The itinerary was simple; stay at home, eat lots of maruya, and maybe go swimming before the weekends. This trip was shorter than their usual; a brief kumusta before they go back to Manila.

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"I heard she's back again."

Kate hears whispers from two middle-aged ladies across the street. She's back from an errand, and she pauses for a moment to listen. Eavesdropping like this was probably not the best idea, but she liked to listen. She learned very interesting things about the town in this way.

"Miss Jacinta is expecting her second child any time now. I'm worried for her - she barely made it last time," Lady #1 says, fanning her face.

"I pray for her dearly," Lady #2 replies sadly, shaking her head. "She's been through so much."

Kate remembers Miss Jacinta, the proprietor of a small carinderia downtown. She was known for making good food but also suffered many miscarriages in her lifetime. And it was all because of...

"You don't think it's the aswang again, right?" The words were spoken in hushed tones.

"It's been happening too much to be a coincidence. I'm worried about her."

Kate walks away from the conversation, wanting to know more but also trying not to be too nosy. In the end, they were all baseless rumors. How could anyone talk about a tragedy like that?

When she gets home, her lola is in the kitchen preparing dinner. Kate hands her a packet of soy sauce, which was the reason she went out in the first place. She huffs, unable to get the rumors out of her mind.

"I heard something while I was on the way home," Kate says. "Miss Jacinta is apparently pregnant again. And there is talk that an aswang is out and about."

Lola pauses. "Where did you hear this?" she asks gravely.

"I...uh, just heard some people talking in the street, that's all."

It was as if a dark cloud hung over her lola's face. "Have you ever heard of Corazon?"

"Sorry, who?"

"We called her Corazon, after that one horror movie. We were fools to have called her that, but it was better than acknowledging the truth."

"Lola, sorry *po*, but aswangs aren't real."

"Oh, no. This one is real indeed."

Kate wanted to laugh. Her family was already quite superstitious, but believing in creatures of the night? The line must be drawn somewhere. And Corazon? Really? Surely it wasn't the actual name they came up with.

"I know you don't believe me, but everyone knows about Corazon. Only the unfortunate ones have seen her in the flesh. That includes me, of course."

Despite herself, Kate wanted to know more. She props her head on her hands, resting on the kitchen counter as her lola begins to tell a tale.

Corazon is an ordinary woman by day. Normal in every possible way. But at night, no trace of humanity remains - she splits in half, growing wings and baring her teeth, and she searches for her prey. No one escapes her hungry gaze. When you hear commotion on the rooftop, it's a sure sign that she has decided to scare you. Her visits are not frequent, but every year, she appears at least once. And every woman and new couple fears her, even if they say otherwise.

"There is a way you can identify her," Lola states. "Once she resumes her human shape, there is no difference to regular people. But her eyes are always bloodshot red, and...she can't hold herself back when there's a pregnant woman around. Ay, it's truly disgusting - sniffing the air and panting like a dog; that's what she does."

A chill ran down Kate's spine. "No way."

"Yes. And the worst part is, she always changes her features so that we won't recognize her right away. We've learned not to trust newcomers so easily." Lola claps her hands together with finality. "But it's your choice not to believe."

Kate nods. She ruminates on her lola's words. Her mother comes back just in time for dinner, chattering away about meeting up with friends. She's quiet for the whole meal - there's an uneasiness in the air, and she finds herself checking and double-checking the eyes of her family. She realizes two things. Firstly: Lola had seen the aswang in person, but she didn't get into detail about it. Secondly: something was off about her mother. The shifty look in her eyes was too unusual to overlook.

When it was time for bed, Kate tried to forget the information. She was here for a good time after all, and she wasn't about to let some scary story ruin her mood. She sleeps for a few hours, but wakes up when she feels the need to use the ladies' room. The clock reads 9:01.

She tiptoes downstairs, gets her business done quickly, and sneaks back upstairs when she notices the door to her mother's room. It was slightly open, light shining through the crack.

Despite her instincts protesting, Kate looks. And what she sees is...

The lower half of a body, cleaved in two; flesh and blood all exposed, still dressed in the clothes from when they traveled just a few hours ago. The segment was clean, almost surgical in its precision, and not a stain was visible on the clothes. If she didn't know any better, she would've mistaken it for a hunk of flesh meant for the butchery, but the outline of the legs and posterior were too obvious. The light made each detail of the viscera sharply distinguishable.

Kate feels her stomach turn, and the bile violently rises to her mouth. The sight was burned to her eyelids. Closing her eyes did nothing to make her forget. She stumbles back into her room, and the moment she closes the door behind her, she vomits all over the floor.

Her sleep is plagued with images of that stump, laying in plain sight, and it was in her mother's room too. *Was she dead? She would never be sure.*

"Are you okay? You've been pale since this morning."

Kate stares at her mother. Her face is lined with concern, just like normal.

"I'm fine..."

But she wasn't fine. She couldn't eat her corned beef without remembering that accursed stump. Her lola looks on, mirroring her mother's face, and Kate feels trapped in the dining table. They eventually let it slide, and Jocelyn announces going out to the main city to buy some groceries.

Hours later, when she's left to her own devices, she remembers every little thing about her life so far that always seemed odd. The 9pm rule, the blinking eyes, the level of familiarity when her lola spoke about Corazon. Perhaps...

"Is Corazon my mom?" she says out loud, and the words ring dreadfully in her ears.

With her mom away, she burst into her room, and found no trace of the stump. Still, there was a faint scent of iron in the air, a sure sign that what she saw was perhaps real after all. She feels her stomach turn again.

*"Anong ginagawa mo dito, iha?" asks a voice from behind her. Kate sees her lola with a broom in her hand. "Here to help me clean?"*

"Lola..." she says helplessly. "I think I saw something I wasn't supposed to."

Lola's face falls. "Tell me everything."

And so Kate tells her. The stump, her suspicions - and her lola is more remorseful by the second.

"I never wanted to tell you the truth," Lola says finally. "It's a secret that I intended to keep."

"What do you mean?"

"You know, I had two daughters. Your mother Jocelyn and another baby girl."

"I remember you said that you've met Corazon," Kate says. "Was your baby taken by her?"

"No...Corazon was my daughter."

Kate gasps. "Lola, is this true?"

"I was pregnant with twins. But when it was time for me to give birth, there was only one...and for months, I was devastated. For years I wondered what happened to her, but I had to focus on raising Jocelyn. When Jocelyn left for Manila, a woman that looks exactly like her began to appear in the town - as if she never left. Then I somehow knew..."

*"She was the manananggal," Kate supplies.*

"Whenever you two began coming here every year, she timed her visits to make sure it would coincide with yours."

"Does my mom know about this?"

"No."

Kate rose to her feet. "We must stop her from causing any more trouble."

"Well...I don't know."

Lola pauses, a grave look in her eyes. "Tonight, you must find the stump and rub it with salt and holy water. If nothing goes wrong, Corazon will disappear from the face of the earth." Kate nods vigorously, a new fervor spreading to her limbs. For a horrible moment, she thought her own mother was a monster. She turns to exit the room, but a question still nags at her.

"Lola, how come you didn't do it? If you knew that Corazon did all these bad things, why didn't you stop her?"

"Because she looked too much like Jocelyn...I couldn't do it," Lola said sadly.

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With a pouch of salt and a bottle of holy water swiped from the altar in her pockets, Kate sneaks to her mother's bedroom. This time, the door is completely closed. "Protect me, Lord," she murmurs. Willing her heart to be still, she opens the door wide open.

"Hi, dear. What do you think you're doing?"

Her mother...but this was not her mother. It was a creature wearing her mother's face, sinews and veins splitting apart, a manic grin dribbled with blood. Dark wings unfurled behind it. The light in the bedroom flickered, and soon, darkness enveloped the room.

"I don't know what kind of trick you're pulling here," it rasped, reaching for her with gnarled claws. Kate yelped, barely dodging them. "But if you're going to kill me, I'm afraid you can't do that."

"You can't keep hurting people anymore," Kate says defiantly.

The creature snarled. With a sickening squelch, its halves attached again. It reaches out again, but Kate throws salt in its eyes in time. It retracts with a pained hiss. She stumbles forward and pushes the creature backward with all her might. The top half came undone, leaving the lower half exposed. Quick as a whip, it tried to reattach itself again, but Kate was desperate to keep her distance from the creature, wildly kicking and punching the air. With one

hand, she fishes out the bottle of holy water from her pocket.

"No, please, no!" The creature morphed into her mother again, looking at her with wide eyes. "I can't die. I'm your mother."

"You're not my real mom!" she cried and uncorked the bottle, letting the water splash all over the exposed flesh. It sizzled and steamed on impact. Salt mingled with blood and a rotten stench filled Kate's nostrils.

The creature shrieked a loud ear-splitting scream, and it soon disintegrated in a pile of ashes. Kate collapsed to the floor. The last thing she saw was her lola and mother - her real mother - rushing into the room. She smiles, breathing a sigh of relief. Everything would be okay again.

They ask her questions relentlessly, as expected ("Why on Earth would you even try to do that?" "Did you even know the risks?!" "What if that monster killed you?"). At one point, her mother had begun ranting in Bisaya, chiding her recklessness and how it was absolutely stupid of her to do that, so never do that again, okay?! And Kate laughs. She was fine. Then Lola started crying, and then her mother did too, and they sank into a sobbing heap right there. It was truly the craziest night in their lives.

The next day, there is an unspoken agreement amongst the Torres family - never talk about what happened the night before. Lola returns with the broom again, sweeping away the ashes, while Jocelyn invites an albularyo over to cleanse the house. Kate gets to do nothing but explore the town. When she goes to the sari-sari store for ice cream, she sees the two middle-aged ladies along the street again.

"Corazon hasn't arrived yet," Lady #1 says. "Perhaps we can finally get a break from that foul creature." Kate feels a strange self-satisfaction at these words. She defeated Corazon, almost like a superhero would. She sees Miss Jacinta walking by and licks her ice cream as she looks on.

"God bless you," the two ladies say, and Miss Jacinta bows politely, looking quite happy.

Kate walks away with a smile on her face. She never knew that defeating a creature of the night would be included in her summer vacation itinerary.



## VENGEANCE AT YOUR SERVICE

BY CARMELA BEATRIZ C. ARCEGA

Cora stares blankly at the tombstone in front of her. Wasn't it just three years ago when she was living the perfect life? She reminisces about the life she once had as she traces the engraved name written on the stone, a life that everyone dreamed of having.

Cora's parents were both successful entrepreneurs who owned several businesses. They were occasionally away from home, spending nights in their offices or on business trips. Cora was an only child, and her parents feared that she would feel lonely on days when they were gone, so on her seventh birthday, her parents gifted her a Welsh corgi which she named Luna. Luna quickly became a part of their family too, and her mother particularly had taken a fond inkling for Luna. Luna was treated as if she were her child.

Although Cora's parents were always working, the weekends were always reserved for family time. It was Cora's favorite part of the week. She'd spend hours in her parents' bed, talking about school and her parents' work. They would go to the beach, have a picnic in the park, and watch movies together. From the inside and out, the Chase family was living the picture-perfect family.

But that was all in the past. Her mother had died on this very day three years ago, and if Cora closes her eyes, she can watch it happen all over again.

It was a lovely Saturday afternoon, and Cora was excited to reunite with her mother, who was on a business trip in Canada for a week. She accompanied her father to the airport to pick up her mother, and she brought Luna along with them. After that, they enjoyed a nice meal in the park by the river. They were all happy for a moment until they were heading back to their car. Luna was unleashed and ran to the road. They were all terrified, yelling her name, and telling her to come back. The signal was still red, so they couldn't cross the street. But cars were moving, and Luna stood in the middle of the road. Her mother risked it: she ran to the road, Luna in her arms, while the cars continued to move. However, on her way back, she was struck by a car while still holding Luna in her arms.

Cora and her father did not handle her death well. Luna had survived with just minor injuries, but what about her mother? She cursed the world for taking her mother away from her. Cora needed someone to blame, and although it

wasn't necessarily Luna's fault, she took out all her anger on her. The day after her mother's funeral, Cora took Luna on a stroll in the park, sat her on the bench to fetch some water, and then she never came back. She made the decision then and there that she would never associate herself with pets ever again.

Cora places a white rose among the many others that have been left on the coffin. On her way home, she receives a call from her best friend, Maya, who tells Cora that she will be on vacation with her parents and will need someone to look after her cat while she is away. Most of Cora's friends are unaware of her for animals, mainly because they, too, have pets. She doesn't like the idea of looking after another pet, but she doesn't want to let her friend down, so she agrees to take care of it for a month.

Her father, having also developed a hatred for animals after her mother's death, was not in favor of having another animal in their house. Cora says that she isn't serious about taking care of it. They would just let it stay near their backyard shed and feed it from time to time.

The next day, her friend drops off her Siberian cat, Calbee. Cora tries to show her excitement for caring for the cat as much as she can, assuring her that Calbee will be in good hands. She tells her not to worry about her cat and just enjoy their vacation.

When she comes back to the living room after saying her goodbyes to Maya, she looks at Calbee with disgust. Her eyes flashed back to the accident three years ago. "Stay in the shed and don't bother us," she says. "I don't want anything to do with you."

It's only been two days since she has been left in Cora's care, and Calbee wishes to return home. She yearned for her owner's casual attention, the softness of her bed, and the scent of lavender that soothed her to sleep. She craved the delicious tuna pie she'd have for dessert. But now she is stuck in a filthy shed, with no food, no water, or a cozy bed. Cora barely enters the shed to check up on her.

She'd give her leftovers from her meals, which wasn't much, and she'd open the shed now and then to see if she is still alive in there. Maya had no idea what truly awaited Calbee.

Calbee wasn't used to being treated like this. When her owner would bring her to the mall, everyone would stop in admiration of her cuteness. She was used to being complimented and so loved by strangers.

One day, Cora and her father had left the house to go grocery shopping. Calbee was finally free from them for a few hours. After she had made sure that the car had left, she pushed open the shed's door and made her way to the open window of their house. Desperate to satisfy her hunger, Calbee had gone inside her house in search of food. This was the first time she'd get to explore the house. It was a two-story home with a modern interior.

The walls were painted in neutral tones, and the furniture was just minimalistic. Pictures were framed and displayed in different parts of the house. Before heading out, Calbee decided to explore the house once more. It's only been around 15 minutes since they left the house, they probably wouldn't come back so early.

The second floor had four rooms: two bedrooms, one bathroom, and an extra room. Cora's room was located at the far end of the corridor. The design was quite simple, and there were snow globes displayed throughout the room. She climbs into her bed, which feels nice and homely, unlike the rusted and uncomfortable shed. Soon enough, the tranquility had eased her to sleep, and for the first time in a while, she slept in peace.

"What is she doing here?!" Cora exclaims. They had just returned home from running errands when she found Calbee sleeping on her bed. "Go away!" she shouts. Calbee is startled awake by the noise. She only realizes that she fell asleep on her bed seconds later. Cora is furious and throws her to the ground. She yells at her and kicks Calbee out of the door, slamming it in her face. Cora's father throws her back into the shed and locks the door shut. Now, Calbee is locked inside the shed. She feels excruciating pain all over her body. This pain all feels unfamiliar to her, and she doesn't know what to do. She can feel her limbs weakening and the sharp pain that comes from her ribs.

She was now scared of Cora and her father. She was afraid of staying with her any longer. Will she be able to survive in this place before her owner comes back?

For the remainder of her stay, she remained in the

shed not daring to go out. After the incident that had happened in Cora's room, she decided to mind her own business and remain in the shed. She didn't bother looking or asking for food, because then she'd have to put up with Cora's antics. Cora was always there to harass her whenever she would roam around the backyard. Sometimes she would have a bottle of hot water to spray her with, or even worse, a hose to pour cold water. Cora would find it funny whenever she'd slap and hit her.

One morning, Cora finally carries her out of the shed, but this time she doesn't have a spray bottle nor does she hit her. Instead, she brings her inside their house, gives us a warm bath, then takes her to her room where a huge feast of tuna, chicken, and beef was waiting for her. This sudden affection was new to Calbee, but she appreciated it nonetheless.

She immediately devoured each dish because she hadn't eaten a proper meal in so long. As she was eating, she heard a familiar voice from downstairs. It was Maya! But then Calbee began to put the puzzle pieces together. "Oh, it all makes sense now", Calbee thinks.

Calbee immediately runs up to her owner and finds comfort in the warmth of the embrace she has missed so much. She stays on Maya's lap, never wanting them to separate ever again. Maya extends her gratitude towards Cora for taking good care of Calbee while she was away. "Of course! she was really cute and fun to play with!" said Cora as she gently patted Calbee.

Calbee had been weak and unwell for the next few days at home. When she was brought to the vet, she says that given her condition, it may be a sign of animal neglect and cruelty, which Maya found to be odd. Maya didn't believe the vet because she had never done such a thing to Calbee. That is true, Maya is the gentlest and most caring owner a cat can ever have. But Cora, on the other hand, was not. Calbee wasn't the same when she returned home.

Reliving the tragedy in the shed left her with little to no energy and appetite. She returned to the vet several times due to vomiting, dehydration, and difficulty walking. She was prescribed more medication over time, and she couldn't handle the pain any longer—physically and emotionally. A few months later, she died.

up, down, left, and right, with each stair leading to a different room. There were dogs, cats, and hamsters walking on these stairs too. She begins climbing the stairway and sees a lot of different doors, whose labels had words that she could not read. All the doors appeared to be locked as well. Despite this, she continued walking from one staircase to the next. Is there something she must be looking for? When she asks the other animals she passes by about the place, they simply say one word: joy, freedom, love, hope, and similar words to this, but Calbee has no idea what they mean.

Maybe this is heaven after all because she feels no hunger, thirst, or exhaustion even after walking for an hour. She was so preoccupied with her thoughts that she failed to notice the sign over the door. "Vengeance," Calbee mutters as reads it out loud. And then she suddenly realized that she could read the sign; unlike all the other signs she had encountered, this was the only one she could understand so far. She quickly got up and tried to open the door. Unlike the other doors, this was unlocked.

When she opens the door, she is greeted by a gorilla named Morty. Morty leads her to the center of the room where a table and two chairs are placed, and a projector in front of it. The red-painted walls made Calbee feel unwelcomed. She begins bombarding Morty with questions as soon as she takes her seat.

"This isn't heaven nor hell, and this isn't a dream either," Morty says. "This is a place where all animals go after they die so that they can move on to their next life."

"So this is some sort of reincarnation place?"

"Well, it's a lot more complicated than the conventional reincarnation scenario of 'I'll get to be a tree in my next life.' Our goal here is to guide you into your next life by allowing you to live the life you want. As you may have seen, there are a lot of doors here, but there is only one door made specifically for you. Do you remember what was written above the door before you entered?"

"Vengeance," Calbee answers. "So you're saying that's what I desire in my next life? Revenge?"

Morty nods his head and gestures to the

projector, flashing a picture of someone familiar. Calbee recognizes that face right away, and suddenly all the memories from that one month of absolute misery flood back to her, fueling her emotions.

"Do you remember your last thoughts before you died?" Morty asks. Calbee doesn't respond, she's still gazing at the screen in front of her. "You wanted her dead," he answers for her. "And that's why I am here to help you!"

"And how exactly are you going to do that? Will you murder her for me while I watch and enjoy the show?"

"That's not how this place works. You'll be the one working to achieve your goal; we're just here to give you a head start."

"But how? I'll be back at square one once I'm reincarnated. I'll need to grow up, finish school, and get a decent job before I can even get my revenge. And how about my memories of this life? They'll be forgotten when I am born again."

"We're a special type of reincarnation service. Do you know how many people are living on earth? Approximately 7 billion. But out of all those billions of people? Not everyone lives in happiness. Not everyone looks forward to waking up the next day. They don't find pleasure in living at all; they just do what they have to survive. Here is where we, the *renovamen*, come in to help!"

Morty reverts Calbee's attention to the screen, showing a long list of names and their profile, including their age, gender, occupation, and personality.

"People who exist rather than live are called the 'empty souls' because they are alive, but they have no desire to do anything with their lives. On the other hand, animals dream of achieving something far greater than what their fur bodies are capable of. With the bodies of empty souls, you'll be able to fill that empty soul with life, live as a human being, and achieve your goals! A win-win situation for everyone!"

Calbee is persuaded and fascinated by this whole reincarnation system, but she doesn't know how to feel about borrowing bodies. It just feels wrong to take away someone else's body and use it as their own.

"Their souls will be brought to this place. There are animals who, after living a human life, regret reincarnating into one in the first place. When this happens, they can return to this world and give their body back to their rightful owner, and then they return here for other reincarnation options. Others choose to stay as they were, having no particular reason to live as human beings in their next life. Choosing to be reincarnated without a purpose for your next life erases your memories, so you're starting a whole new fresh life. However, there are a lot of animals who accept the deal and are currently living as humans. Approximately 3 million animals are living as human beings at the present time. But please remember that their body will become yours. If you die while on earth, the soul of the person who owns the body also dies. Both of you will die. The chances of your next reincarnation will be very slim as well. I'll give you time to think about what you'd like to do for your next life," Morty says as he begins to stand up.

"I have already decided, I want to take revenge."

Morty takes his seat and hands Calbee a red folder.

"This is who you'll be from now on. Her name is Leia. She's in her mid-20s and she's currently taking up law. Examine this file for information about her personality, likes and dislikes, friends and family, and practically her entire existence. She is currently enrolled in her first year of law school. All you have to do now is study for two more years. With her intelligence, you'll finish your degree and become a lawyer."

"A lawyer? How is that supposed to help me get revenge? Shouldn't I specialize in guns and knives? I should be a mobster, or even a policeman maybe."

"I can't tell you the exact details, but just know that we, the renovamen, create perfect opportunities for everyone here who chooses to get revenge. In four years, you'll have the perfect opportunity to destroy Cora's life. I won't tell you what it is, but all you need to know is that your profession will do the trick. Just work hard and climb to the top. Make connections and learn the dirty tricks if you must, because once the time comes, getting revenge won't be easy. You'll be putting your skills as a lawyer into action."

"If you're ready," Morty says as he places a light red pill on the table, "you should take this. You'll feel lightheaded and nauseous, then the next thing you know it, you'll be living as Leia. I wish you the best of luck. Never forget your will to live."

She scans the folder containing Leia's whole life. Leia, according to the file, was introverted, withdrawn, and insecure. She lives in a small apartment right across from her university. She had cut ties with her family after she graduated high school. Her mother was an alcoholic, while her father was rarely at home, only returning when he needed money. She's been living alone for almost three years, balancing studying and her part-time job. She only leaves the house to go to school and work. She's just simply trying to survive.

Calbee takes the pill in her hand and decides it's now or never. Not only will she help herself, but she'll also bring Leia's soul some peace. Just as Morty said, it's a win-win situation. She's only got one reason to live now: which is to destroy Cora's life, and she'll be sticking to that until she achieves it. She takes the pill, and at first, nothing happens. Then, she becomes lightheaded; her surroundings begin to blur, and everything goes black.

When she regains her consciousness, she wakes up in a room she's never seen before. She goes out of the bathroom and explores the small spaces of her apartment. There is nothing extravagant about her place. Leia's phone rings and she hesitates to answer the call. Maybe her voice will sound the same, but the way she talks may not seem like Leia's, and she doesn't want anyone to get suspicious. Social interactions have been one of the things she feared when reincarnating into a human, but she picks up the phone and tries to sound as natural as possible as if she were Leia. The girl on the other end of the line is her only best friend. She knows this because she saw her name on the file. Her friend just called to remind her about their study sessions together in preparation for their upcoming exams. Calbee has never been a hard worker, mainly because she doesn't have to. Her previous life consisted of her just sleeping and eating, and she enjoyed living that life. But this new life is different. She is Leia, not Calbee. She is a person, not a cat.

That's how she spent her last two years in law school.

She gave her entire attention to school, declining social invitations, staying up late, and working her part-time job too. Living as a human was tougher than she expected. Law school was already tough enough with the heavy workload and toxic environment of overachievers, but on top of that, she had no one to rely on. She cooked her meals, did her laundry, cleaned the house, commuting to school, and had to make ends meet to pay for all her expenses and her rent.

But she endured it and survived Leia's last two years of law school. She graduated with high marks and obtained her law degree. She was initially offered the position to work in one of her colleague's law firms, which she gladly accepted. However, as the time for revenge drew nearer, she managed to open a small office for herself where she can work alone when the time comes. On some days she'd wonder what Cora was up to and what her owner had been up to. She didn't live that far away from their homes, but she didn't want to see them again. They'd be crossing paths eventually. Still, she dreamt about the day she'd finally get her revenge. She dreamt about reuniting with her owner, even if they would have a different relationship now. These thoughts kept her going as she grew as a lawyer. She worked with several clients and successfully won their cases. She has also made connections with other competent professionals.

One morning, Leia finds a letter placed on top of her desk. Is it possible that someone broke into her office the other night? How did this letter get here? The letter was sealed inside a red envelope, and when she opened it, the letter was blank. Instead, a red pill was attached to the letter. She noticed a small piece of paper rolled up inside the red pill since it was translucent. It read, "It isn't the truth, but you will make it the truth." What was this supposed to mean? She couldn't decipher the meaning behind it, but one thing was for sure: the day she had been living for had finally arrived.

Soon enough, Leia had seen the news of Cora's alleged crime. Many news reports were circulating on the internet about it. According to the article, Cora was found beside Lincoln Bayes, a teenager known for dealing with drugs. The witness was Lincoln's sister, Rebecca. According to her, she found Cora kneeling beside Lincoln's dead body with a knife in her hand. Apart from the witness statement, Cora's fingerprints

were found on the murder weapon. The authorities believed Lincoln refused to sell Cora any drugs, which enraged her and drove her to kill him. Cora lost her father a year ago, and as a result, she resorted to delinquent behaviors like taking drugs and smoking weed. However, those motives are just an assumption. The case requires further investigation, so the criminal case escalated into a trial.

Cora did not murder Lincoln, that is the truth. Cora only went to Lincoln's house because she received a call from an unknown number telling her that Lincoln wanted to meet her that day. When she arrived, the door was slightly left open, and she found Lincoln already dead. The knife was still attached to his lifeless body, and without thinking, she pulled it out from his body, thinking it might do anything. And it didn't, all it did was frame her for the murder. Before she could even explain it to Rebecca, she had already called the police.

She knows no one would believe her. It was true that she did do drugs, it was her only way to cope with her father's death. However, she regretted it immediately and sought to quit her addiction.

Thankfully, Maya was still on her side. She argued with the police, with Rebecca, and the media, and she visited her in the detention center. Maya had been there for her all her life and she felt guilty about what she had done to Calbee that one summer.

Surprisingly, Cora does manage to find a lawyer who could represent her. His name is Alex Hugh, a lawyer who takes up cases of those who had been falsely accused in particular. Cora tells the whole story to Alex, and he listens. It would be difficult to prove her innocence, but Alex is willing to take the case.

Meanwhile, Leia got in contact with Rebecca and offered to represent her in the trial, positive that she would win the case. Rebecca tells her how Cora and her brother had not been on good terms lately. Lincoln wouldn't sell her any drugs because he was concerned about her and genuinely wanted her to stop her addiction. If Leia connects the dots, from the letter to the case, she knows that Cora is innocent. It will be her job to make sure that she is found guilty. She knows that it won't be difficult to prove Cora's crime.

Everything points to her; there's a witness statement, a murder weapon, and she doesn't have a strong alibi to prove her innocence. However, she heard that Cora managed to find a lawyer that would help her prove her innocence. When she looked up Alex Hugh online, she discovered that he has a great reputation for "bringing justice" to those who have been falsely accused. Cora Chase? Justice? Innocent or not, she doesn't deserve justice.

There were only five trials in total, and the first three trials weren't going well for Leia. Alex Hugh proved his competency and dedication to bringing justice. His argument was quite convincing; according to the forensic report, the blood on the knife suggested that the victim had already died an hour before Cora had found his body. Instead of 3:14 pm, the time that Cora had found his body, he died at around 2 pm. This proved that he was already dead even before Cora had arrived.

Alex didn't stop there. He also managed to locate an eyewitness who saw Cora enter his house an hour after the estimated time of death, which he brought to court to provide his testimony. He also mentioned the suspicious phone call Cora had gotten, which prompted her to come to his house in the first place. Why would that person call someone using a burner phone? Why would he not want his identity to be traced back? Unfortunately, this was dismissed by the judge since they couldn't provide tangible evidence on that matter, nor could they prove that Cora did indeed receive such a call.

Leia had left the courtroom feeling unhappy. She did present strong arguments to the judge, but these weren't enough and new. She was also irritated to see Maya on Cora's side.

During the last two trials, she managed to turn the tables around. A few days before the trial, she met with the eyewitness that Alex brought in the last trial. She bribed him with a hefty amount of money so that he can take back his testimony. She forces him to state that he had been forced to lie about seeing Cora arrive an hour after the estimated time of the murder. Instead, he will say that he saw Cora enter the victim's house at 12 p.m. and saw her car leave through the garage at around 2 p.m., only to return an hour later.

In the final trial, it was time for Leia to play her trump card, her key to winning this case. With the help of a professional voice actor, Leia was able to construct a fake phone call using a fabricated burner phone that was the same phone used to call Cora. Well, not quite the same, but it was the same model as the phone.

The fabricated call goes like this: Maya, who had called Cora, tells her that Lincoln is now alone at home, and it is now a good time to resolve the conflict between them. Cora tells Maya that she wishes to use this opportunity to resolve their dispute, but she can't. He was the reason why she ended up a mess. If he just hadn't offered to sell her drugs, she wouldn't have been miserable like she is now. "I want to kill him," is what she says before hanging up.

The entire audience gasps in shock. Alex tried to refute Leia's argument, but it was too late. The judge had given her a ruling. Cora is found guilty of the murder of Lincoln Bayes, and she is sentenced to 30 years in prison. Cora gives Leia the coldest glare before being dragged away by the police. Maya is screaming and sobbing on the opposite side of the room, pleading with the judge for mercy and telling Alex to fight again.

She had done it. She had destroyed Cora's life. A 30-year sentence wasn't exactly what she wanted, but she'll still take it. As horrible as it may sound, she feels happy to hear the life Cora would live for the next thirty years of her life.

As she walks triumphantly back to her car, she sees Maya walking toward her. They're standing face to face, but Maya hasn't said a word. Leia smiles at her. "May I help you?" she asks. Maya is still silent, but her eyes speak for themselves. They appear outraged, livid, and sad.

Leia asks her again, but before she can even finish her sentence, she is interrupted by a sharp pain that electrifies the rest of her body. What is this feeling? She feels weak and as if her organs are shutting down as the pain intensifies. When she presses her hand against her abdomen, her hands come out sticky and red. She finally looks down to see a knife pressed on her lower abdomen. She looks at Maya, tears welling up in her eyes.

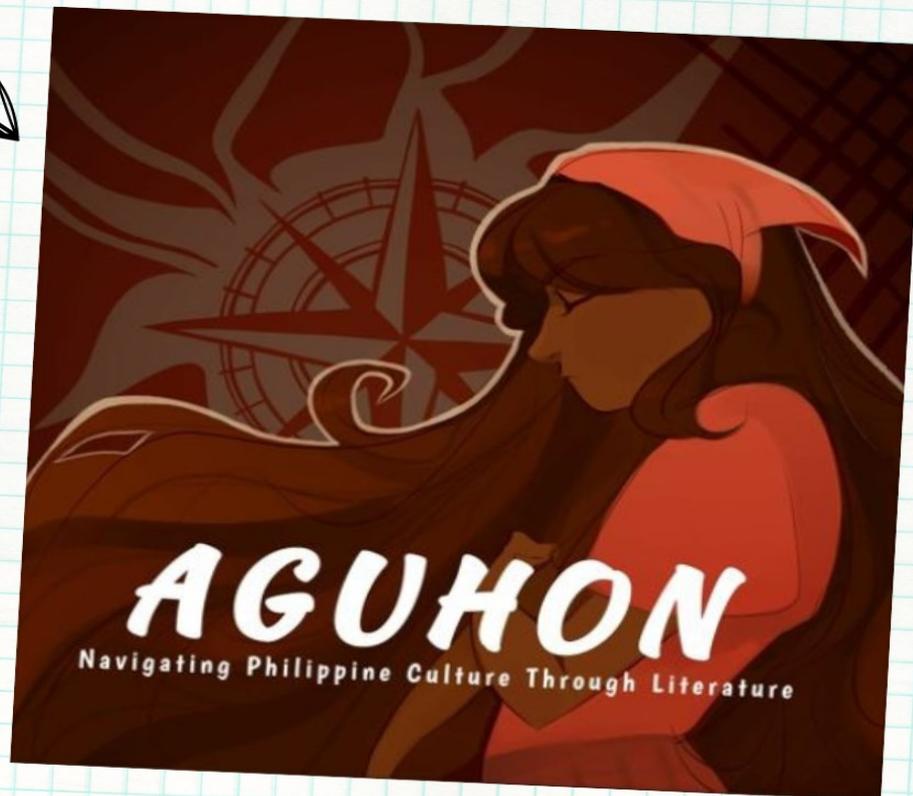
"How could you," she exclaimed, releasing all of her anger in the worst way possible. She pulls out the knife and tosses it beside her, saying, "You're not human." Leia could not even speak. Her body and mind weren't one anymore; she was gradually falling into unconsciousness. Maya took her hand and rubbed it against the knife. Fingerprints. Then Leia watches her walk away, her distance becoming farther and farther. "Help," she tries to call out. "Someone, please help," she tried to shout, but it came out as a whisper. No one but her was there.

Was this the life waiting for her ever since she opened that door? She may have gotten her revenge, but at what cost? Perhaps living life solely for revenge isn't living at all. Because in the end, you'll be nothing but an empty soul.

## LITERARY DISCUSSION

Aguhon, from the Filipino term for "compass," is a podcast established with the aim to navigate and share Philippine culture through various forms of media, including literature.

In this episode, the speakers talk about various Philippine works, promoting cultural appreciation and understanding at the same time.



[CLICK HERE.](#)

Grade 12 -  
St. Irmina

#SupportLocalArtists

## JIANNA ABUEG WINS BRONZE MEDAL IN 2021 ONLINE TAEKWONDO CHAMPIONSHIPS

By LADY MARGARITA V. FLORENTO



*Jianna Abueg films her entry for the Interschool Taekwondo Speed Kicking Championship*

Jianna Arabella Abueg, a Scholastican who is a highly trained and passionate Taekwondo player, won a bronze medal at the 2021 SMART/MVPSF Online Calabarzon Taekwondo Inter-School Poomsae & Speed Kicking Championship last October 16, 2021.

The competition was divided into multiple categories classified per belt level. Numerous students from different schools participated in the competition, but most competitors were students from De La Salle University and Beacon Academy.

Taking account of the threat of Covid-19, the competitors were asked to submit video entries to the judges instead. Participants filmed their entries in line with strict guidelines and rules made by the judges to ensure the integrity of the participants.

Abueg scheduled a specific time and date to film her Taekwondo entry before submission. She also asked for assistance from her parents to set up

her videos to be graded by her coach prior to submitting them to the judges. The judges and their coaches examined the progress of the contestants.

*"During the competition, I was actually out. I had to get the flu vaccine so I wasn't able to watch the stream. I was super nervous because in the Global competition, the Philippines placed the most and I had to make a lot of videos,"* Abueg stated, expressing that she felt immense pressure and nervousness prior to the competition.

*"We wanted to use the competition as an experiment. We were put in a higher category for a challenge and to see if we could be promoted to an important level. And to compare progress and see what we needed to improve on,"* Abueg added.

Abueg, a 9th-grade student of St. Scholastica's College - Westgrove is currently at the blue belt level in Taekwondo. However, she was delegated to compete within the red belt level for the competition. The recent championship was Abueg's third time joining a Speed Kicking competition since she was encouraged to join competitions when she was at the yellow belt level.

In search of a new hobby the summer before she entered 8th grade, Abueg discovered an ardent desire for Taekwondo. She once thought of dropping out of practicing Taekwondo, but she found her training exciting and amusing, which motivated her to continue.

Abueg offered a piece of advice, also given to her by her coach, for fellow Scholasticans who aspire to train in Taekwondo: *"Find fun in it. It's okay to make it fun as long as you do it properly. Do your best because it's rewarding and find fun in it to motivate yourself even more."*



**Selected Grade 12 students light the SCHOlympic torch at the field of SSC-W**

**St. Scholastica's College-Westgrove kicked off its first online intramurals called St. SCHOlympics 2021 via Zoom last October 27-28 with the theme "Uplifting the Human Person through Discipline, Teamwork, and Excellence."**

Hosted by Jye Sumilang and Kolleen Alvarez, the opening ceremony featured the lighting of the torch by Serena Mcmillan, Kolleen Alvarez, Jye Sumilang, and Leyla Reyes from Grade 12 level.

The academic coordinator and assistant principal, Leah Sacay, welcomed everyone on the first day of the online intramurals, reminding them that the school will not refrain from providing its students with the traditional school lifestyle they are accustomed to despite the distance learning setup. "In whatever situation or condition

*we humans are in, we will always find ways to connect, communicate and build camaraderie with friends, classmates, relatives, and people in our community," Sacay said.*

The event served as an avenue for students to showcase not only their physical and athletic skills but their talent in dancing as well. One of the program's highlights and the most awaited event was the pre-recorded cheerdance performances of each grade level from grade school and high school departments.

The Il Baile, the school's pride, amazed the crowd again with their dance performance. The competitive senior high school students did not fail to dazzle the audiences with their creative and magnificent performances too.

## SSC-W KICKSTARTS ST. SCHOLYMPICS 2021 ONLINE

By LADY MARGARITA V.  
FLORENTO

The GSP and office staff surprised the viewers with their astounding dance presentations filmed at the SSC-W while following the safety protocols.

With the special participation of Sister Daniela Romero, the faculty members had also recorded their performance at the campus, capturing the different areas of the school to give the students a virtual tour since they cannot go to school yet because of the COVID-19 threat.

To maintain the tradition and sportsmanship of every participant in the St. SCHOlympics, the oath of sportsmanship was led by Shaia Matti, a grade 10 student, as the students repeated her pledge to sportsmanship and integrity.

The opening ceremony was streamed live on Facebook, which attained over a thousand views as of writing.

## GRADE 9 - DAUNTLESS DECLARED OVERALL CHAMPION OF ST. SCHOLYMPICS

By LADY MARGARITA V. FLORENTO

**In the online awarding ceremony of St. SCHolympics 2021, the Grade 9 - Dauntless was declared the overall champion for attaining the highest scores in seven out of eight games.**

The Team Dauntless placed first in all of the games except for the Volleyball Bump Challenge, in which they got second.

Maria Veronica Cervantes, the Grade 9 president, expressed that one of the many things she was proud of about their batch was their unity.

*"We're really strong when we work together, and we cheer everyone on without foul play. We like participating in competitions with the attitude of being fair, all while doing our best. We also just had fun while doing everything, so that made every game happier!" Cervantes said.*

Despite having the intramurals held online due to the ongoing pandemic, the representatives from different levels showed enthusiasm by actively participating in the said games while their classmates cheered for them.

Five players per grade level competed against other levels on the two-day event held via Zoom.

On the first day of the St. SCHolympics, the first game began in the afternoon, following the opening ceremony.

The physical games on the two-day event are paper ball squat, sock and cap, toss clap catch, volleyball bump, wall ball, and bottle flip, where the players were given a minute to do each challenge.

The students flaunted their skills in playing online games during the Mobile Legends and Call of Duty Mobile tournaments as they competed during the elimination and championship rounds.

Each level was named after the faction in Veronica Roth's novel *Divergent: Grade 7 - Amity, Grade 8 - Candor, Grade 9 - Dauntless, and Grade 10 - Erudite.*

Lianne Trinos, the overall moderator of the event, facilitated the games with the help of selected teachers and senior high school students.

St. SCHolympics aims to promote teamwork and engage students in physical activities despite the school setup.

### THE BLUE POST EDITORIAL BOARD (S.Y. 2021-2022)

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# ANG ISKOLASTIKAN

ANG OPISYAL NA PAHAYAGANG PANG MAG-AARAL  
NG ST. SCHOLASTICA'S COLLEGE - WESTGROVE

DISTRITO NG SILANG, DIBISYON NG LALAWIGAN NG  
CAVITE, REHIYON IV-A CALABARZON



## ANG DISKRIMINASYON SA MGA WIKA SA PILIPINAS

“ Kung wala tayong gagawin tungkol sa diskriminasyon, lahat ng ating nakamit bilang isang lipunan ay walang silbi. (p. 9)

**BALITA OPINYON PANITIKAN LIBANGAN**

## DUM SPIRO SPERO 2, ISINAGAWA SA PAGTATAPOS NG AKADEMIKONG TAON



*Litrato ng pagtatanghal ni Rox Puno sa Dum Spiro Spero 2*

ni LADY MARGARITA V. FLORENTO  
Noong ika-22 ng Abril taong 2022, inilunsad ng Parents' Association Board ang birtwal na konsyerto na "Dum Spiro Spero 2" na nangangahulugang "Hangga't may buhay, may pag-asa."

Ang Dum Spiro Spero ay isang fundraising event na nakalaan para sa Iskolar ni San Benito, ang scholarship program ng SSC-W na itinatag ng PA Board. Malaking tulong ang ibinigay ng mga indibidwal na bumili ng pledge ticket at dumalo sa konsyerto.

>> pahina 5

## SSC-W, NAMAHAHI NG PAMASCHO SA ILANG RESIDENTE NG BARANGAY INCHICAN AT BARANGAY BANABA

Hinandugan ng pamaSCHO o *bags of goods* ng komunidad ng St. Scholastica's College - Westgrove ang ilang residente ng Barangay Inchican at Barangay Banaba noong ika-20 ng Disyembre.

Sa tulong ni Ate Rose, isa sa mga tauhan ng St. Benedict Parish Social Action Ministry, at ang mga katekista ng simbahan, 50 na pamilya sa bawat nasabing barangay ang inanyayahang pumunta sa SSC-W.

Ang natanggap nilang *bags of goods* ay naglalaman ng panghanda para sa Noche Buena, *hygiene kits*, at iba pang grocery items na nalikom mula sa donation drive na inilunsad noong ika-29 ng Nobyembre hanggang ika-18 ng Disyembre.

>> pahina 6



*Isa-isang inabutan ng bags of goods ang mga piling residente ng Barangay Inchican at Barangay Banaba*

## SSC-W, IDINAOS ANG BIRTWAL NA PAGTATAPOS NG BUWAN NG WIKA 2021



*Handog na kanta at sayaw ng ika-10 na baitang para sa mga Pilipino ngayong panahon ng pandemya*

Sa temang **“Filipino at mga Katutubong Wika sa Dekolonisasyon ng Pag-iisip ng mga Pilipino”**, matagumpay na idinaos ng St. Scholastica’s College - Westgrove ang pang-wakas na palatuntunan ng Buwan ng Wika sa pamamagitan ng Zoom noong ika-27 ng Agosto 2021.

Bilang pagbibigay pugay sa wikang Filipino at iba’t ibang wikang katutubo, ipinamalas ng mga mag-aaral mula pre-school hanggang ika-labing dalawang baitang ang kanilang husay at galing sa pag-awit, pagsayaw, pag-arte, pagguhit ng poster, pagsulat ng islogan at maikling kuwento, pagbabalita, pagtatalumpati, pagbigkas ng tula, at pagbuo ng bidyo.

Ipinaalala ni Sister Daniela Romero, OSB, ang tagapamahala at punong-guro, sa kanyang pambungad na pananalita na ipagpatuloy ang pagpapahalaga sa wika kahit tapos na ang buwan ng Agosto.

*“Ang pagmamahal ay nakaugat sa malalim na pagkilala. Nagiging mas mahal mo ang isang tao kapag lalo mo siyang nakikilala at ganoon din pagdating sa wika. Lalo mo itong mamahalin kung*

*iyong mas kikilalanin. Sana hindi rito natatapos ang ating pagpapahalaga sa wikang Filipino at mga wikang katutubo. Patuloy pa rin nating kilalanin ang ating kultura, ang ating pagiging Pilipino. Ating mahalin, gamitin, at ipagmalaki ang ating wikang Pambansa,”* sambit ni Sister Romero.

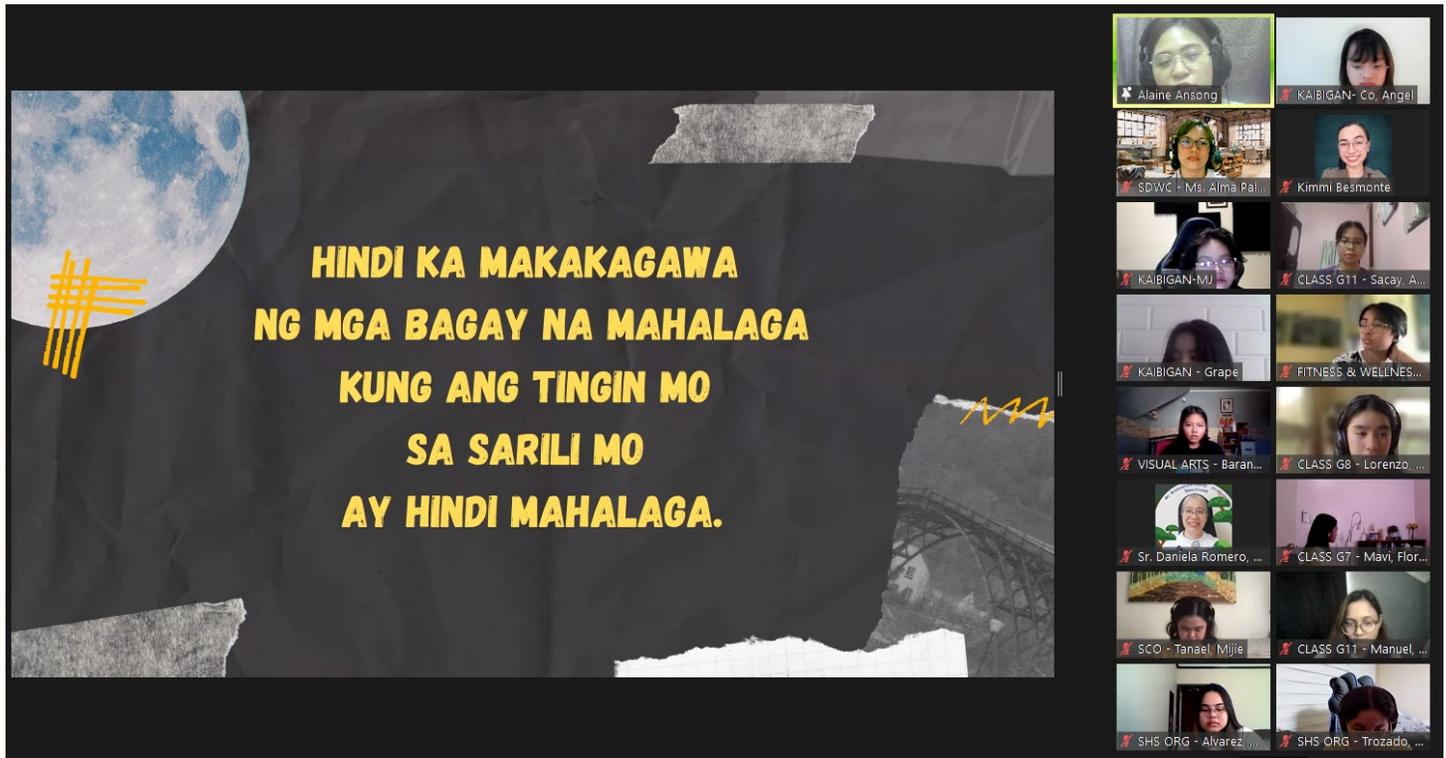
Sa kanilang nakakatuwang komento sa presentasyon ng bawat baitang, naghatid ng saya at aliw sa manonood ang mga punong abala na sina Kolleen Arabel Alvarez at Nicole Drew Gonzales mula sa ika-12 na baitang.

Isinagawa man ng birtwal ang palatuntunan, ang mga mag-aaral at guro na nasa kani-kanilang tahanan ay nagsuot ng barong, Filipiniana, at iba pang pambansang kasuotan bilang pakikiisa sa pagdiriwang.

Isang makulay na pagdiriwang din ang naganap noong inilunsad ang Buwan ng Wika noong ika-6 ng Agosto na kung saan ipinalabas ang mga aktibidades noong Buwan ng Wika 2020 bilang pagbabalik tanaw.

Ang paglulunsad at pagtatapos ng Buwan ng Wika ay inorganisa ng Departament ng Filipino sa gabay ni Sharmaine Doroin, ang pinuno sa Ingles at Filipino.

## ILANG LIDER-ESTUDYANTE, DUMALO SA BIRTUWAL NA LEADERSHIP TRAINING ni JENNETH L. PALO



*Pagbibigay mensahe ni Anna Lorraine Ansong sa mga lider-estudyante ng SSC-W  
(Litrato mula kay Alma Palomares)*

**Dumalo sa Leadership Training na isinigawa sa pamamagitan ng Zoom ang mga presidente, bise presidente, at kalihim ng bawat club, klase, at organisasyon mula sa mataas na paaralan noong ika-9 ng Septyembre 2021.**

Ibinahagi ng inimitahang panauhing tagapagsalita na si Anna Lorraine Ansong, isang alumna ng St. Scholastica's College-Westgrove, ang kaniyang karanasan sa pamumuno. Nagsimula ito nang siya ay sumali sa Our Lady of Fatima Children's choir bilang taga-kanta at tagatugtog ng piyano noong siya ay labing-isang taon pa lamang.

*"Ang simpleng pag-aya ko noon sa mga kalaro ko na sumali sa akin para kumanta ang naging pondasyon sa choir ng aming simbahan. Ang mga simpleng bagay gaya nito ang pundasyon ng mas malaking bagay na nakakamit sa pamamagitan ng simpleng pagsimula,"* sambit ni Ansong.

Nakuha ang atensyon ng mga mag-aaral nang magpalaro si MJ Añonuevo, ang presidente ng KAIBIGAN, ng *4 pics, 1 word* na kung saan masayang nakilahok ang lahat.

Sa pamamagitan ng isang bidyo na nagpapakita kung paano hinati ni Hesus ang limang tinapay at dalawang isda upang mapakain ang libo-libong katao, ipinaalala ni Ansong sa lahat na ang bawat isa ay binigyan ng pribilehiyo upang mamuno at makapagdulot ng malaking pagbabago.

Hinikayat ni Ansong ang mga mag-aaral na hanapin ang kanilang bokasyon para sa mas malinaw na direksyon bilang isang lider. Natapos ang kanyang presentasyon sa pagbibigay ng personal na payo, *"Huwag mong tanungin kung mahirap. Tanungin mo kung kailangan."*

Nakapagtapos ng kolehiyo si Ansong sa Ateneo de Manila University ng Information Technology at kasalukuyang tinatapos ang kanyang master's degree sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas. Natapos ang webinar sa isang wakas na panalangin na pinamunuan ni Ria Vega, ang bise presidente ng SCO.

Ang nasabing Leadership Training ay inorganisa ng guidance associates na sina Alma Palomares at Kimberlei Fae Besmonte at ng student activities coordinator na si Janet Avila.

## SSC-W COMMUNITY, NAGSAMA-SAMA SA CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION 2021



*Nagpakitang gilás sa sayawan ang GSP at Staff sa kanilang Christmas dance presentation*

**Kahit sa panahon ng pandemya, hindi nagpapigil ang mga mag-aaral, mga magulang, at mga empleyado ng SSC-W na magsama-sama sa kauna-unahang birtwal na Christmas Celebration noong ika-17 ng Disyembre.**

Nagpakitang-gilas sa sayawan ang Grade School Dance Club pati na rin ang IL Baile at naghandog naman ng awitin ang piling mag-aaral mula sa mababang departamento.

Hindi rin nagpahuli ang High School Glee Club sa kantahan at kanilang pinahanga ang mga manonood sa pamamagitan ng pag-awit ng kantang “Kumukutikutitap”.

Nagbigay ng ilang payo ang Fitness and Wellness Club kung paano mapapanatiling malusog ang isipan at pangangatawan sa darating na Christmas break.

Nasorpresa ang mga manonood sa pagdalo at pag-awit ng special guest na si Cris Pastor, isang propesyunal na mang-aawit at Tawag ng Tangahalan celebrity contender.

Kinagilawan din ng lahat ang inihandang

presentasyon ng GSP at office staff pati na rin ang sayaw ng piling mga magulang.

Pinaalala sa lahat ni Sister Daniela Romero, ang tagamanihala ng SSC-W, na ipagpatuloy ang pagiging mapagbigay at mapagmahal hindi lamang tuwing panahon ng pasko kundi araw-araw.

*“It is during this season that there is more to what we do. We love more. We share more. We give more because of a God who loves us so much,”* dagdag nito.

Ang punong abala ng programa ay sina Audrey Aquino mula sa ikapitong baitang at Maria Angela Ouida mula sa ikasiyam na baitang.

Bago ang nasabing programa, ginanap ang pagdiriwang ng banal na misa na isinagawa sa online na pinangunahan ni Rev. Fr. Dan Paraiso, Jr. Ang misa ay mapapanood sa St. Benedict Parish Facebook page.

Matapos ang programa, nagsama-sama ang bawat baitang para sa kanilang birtwal na Christmas party.

## PARENTS' ASSOCIATION, NAGSAGAWA NG GIFT-GIVING PROGRAM PARA SA MGA GSP AT STAFF

ni KRISTEL LORRAINE C. UCANG



*Pagsasagawa ng panunuluyan (Litrato mula kay Lilibeth Ucang)*

Nakatanggap ng pamaskong handog ang General Services Personnel (GSP), security guards, at office staff mula sa Parents' Association sa isinagawang gift-giving program noong Disyembre 18, 2021.

Ilan sa kanilang natanggap ay bag na naglalaman ng grocery pack, isang basket ng prutas, at ayuda para sa noche buena.

Bago nagsimula ang programa, isinagawa ang panunuluyan na kung saan ay nag-alay sila ng dasal sa Poong Maykapal at isinabuhay ang kapanganakan ni Hesus.

Naging mas kapanapanabik ang programa nang nagpakita ng galing sa sayawan ang GSP at office staff.

Nag-abot ng pasasalamat sa kanyang pangwakas na pananalita si Mang Gener, isa sa mga GSP na higit sampung taon ng nagbibigay serbisyo sa SSC-W, sa mga biyayang kanilang natanggap.

Nang matapos ang programa, nagkaroon ng munting salo-salo ang lahat kasama na rin ang mga madre.

### *Dum Spiro Spero mula sa pahina 1*

Agaw atensyon sa mga manonood ang pagtatanghal ng mga tampok na mang-aawit na sina Charlotte Ferguson, Rox Puno, at Cris Pastor mula sa *"The Love Project"* ng Resorts World Manila. Tuwa at galak ang dala ng masiglang pagtatanghal ng mga panauhing mang-aawit sa mga estudyante, guro, at ibang pang manonood.

Nagpakitang gilad din ang Il Baile at Glee Club sa sayawan at kantahan. Mahusay na inawit ng Glee Club ang *"Love is the Answer"* sa madla. ni Todd Rundgren. Ibinida naman ng IL Baile ang kanilang pre-recorded na sayaw na kinuhanan pa sa kampus ng SSC-W. Ang mga presentasyon mula sa dalawang grupo ay nag-iwan ng matinding pagkamangha

Malakas na tugtugan, magagandang mga awitin, masigasig na pagtatanghal, at masisiglang mga tagapanood ang nagbigay-buhay sa gabi ng konsyerto. Hindi man pisikal na ginanap ang tanghalan, hindi ito naging hadlang sa mga Kulasa upang gawin ang pagdiriwang na isang gabing babalik-balikan ng marami.

Ipinahayag ni Sister Daniela Romero, OSB ang kanyang taos pusong pasasalamat at pagbati sa bawat estudyante, guro, at miyembro ng PA Board sa kanilang mga pagsisikap para maidaos ang akademikong taon ng 2021-2022. Maraming mga aktibidad at pagdiriwang ang matagumpay na ginanap ng komunidad ng SSCW kung kaya't damang-dama ang diwa ng selebrasyon sa konsyerto.

Inanyayahan ni Jennifer Abueg, ang presidente ng PA Board, sa kanyang pangwakas na pananalita ang mga estudyante na magboluntaryo at mag-sign up para sa Iskolar ni San Benito. Pinasalamatan din ni Abueg ang mga donasyon at mga isponsor na tumulong sa pagbuo ng programa na Iskolar ni San Benito.

*"A Continued Celebration of Hope"* ang naging tema ng Dum Spiro Spero 2, karugtong ng kauna-unahang selebrasyon ng Dum Spiro Spero na ginanap noong ika-23 ng Abril taong 2021.

## SDWC, NAG-IMBITA NG ILANG UNIBERSIDAD PARA SA CAREER CLINIC AT COLLEGE FAIR

ni LIKHA C. SISON

Noong ika-22 ng Oktubre, ang mga mag-aaral ng Senior High School Department ng St. Scholastica's College - Westgrove ay dumalo sa Career Clinic at College Fair na inorganisa ng Student Development and Wellness Center bilang preparasyon para sa pagpasok ng mga mag-aaral sa kolehiyo.

Layunin ng nasabing programa na gabayan ang mga mag-aaral sa Senior High School sa kanilang paghahanap ng unibersidad at trabaho na nais pursuhin.

Bago ginanap ang tinatawag na College Fair at Clinic Fair, binigyan ang mga mag-aaral ng isang listahan ng iba't ibang mga kolehiyo na dadalo sa nasabing programa, pati na rin ang iba't ibang kurso na kanilang inaalok. Ang mga mag-aaral ay pinapili ng apat na kolehiyo at apat na kurso na kanilang nais tingnan at mas lubos na makilala. Pagkatapos makapili binigyan sila ng ZOOM link para sa bawat aktibidad. Papasukan ito ng bawat

mag-aaral simula ala-una hanggang alas-singko ng hapon.

Sa College Fair na ito, ang mga estudyante ay napakilala sa mga iba't ibang kolehiyo at unibersidad tulad ng De La Salle University, Far Eastern University, Mapua University at University of Asia and the Pacific na nagpakita ng kani-kanilang mga campus at kurso na maaaring pagpilian. Ang mga kurso naman na ipinakilala ay Accountancy, Business Economics, Criminology, Aviation at Communicating Arts.

Natapos ang program na mayroong bagong kalinawan at kaalaman ang mga mag-aaral sa kanilang mga nais pursuhin sa kolehiyo at pati na rin sa mga maaaring maging kurso na kanilang dati'y hindi pa nakita. Napakilala rin sa kanila ang mga iba't ibang unibersidad na pwede nilang pasukan na dati ay wala sa kanilang mga pagpipilian.

### ***SSC-W, namahagi ng pamaSCHO mula sa pahina 1***

151 na mag-aaral ng SSC-W ang tumugon dito at namahagi ng kanilang donasyon.

Sa pamumuno ng Campus Minister na si Sister Therese Bulatao, OSB, sinimulan ang programa sa pamamagitan ng prayer service at pagninilay sa tunay na kahulugan ng pasko.

Upang maiwasan ang pagkalat ng COVID-19, piling

miyembro lang ng bawat pamilya ang dumalo sa programa na ginanap sa umaga at hapon.

Tumulong sa pag-aayos, pag-iimpake, at pamamahagi ng mga donasyon ang ilang guro mula sa mababang paaralan.

Bilang bahagi ng taunang Christmas outreach, isinagawa rin ang Lugaw Feeding at pamamahagi ng mga libro sa mga mag-aaral ng Caingin Elementary School.

## CAREER WEBINAR, DINALUHAN NG MGA MAG-AARAL SA JUNIOR HIGH ni CARMELA BEATRIZ C. ARCEGA

Isang online career webinar na pinamagatang “Alpas: What’s in store for me?” ang isinagawa ng SSC-W noong ika-2 ng Marso 2022 na may layuning hikayatin ang mga mag-aaral sa Junior High na suriin ang kanilang mga hilig at hangad bilang paghahanda sa academic strand na kanilang pipiliin bago sila tumuntong sa senior high at kursong kanilang kukunin pagdating ng kolehiyo.

Ginabayan ng panauhing tagapagsalita na si Therese Castillo, RPsy ang mga mag-aaral sa junior high sa landas ng kanilang magiging hanapbuhay sa kinabukasan sa pamamagitan ng pagkukuwento ng kanyang mga karanasan at pagbibigay ng mga payo kung ano ang maaari nilang asahan sa kanilang paglaki at kung paano malalagpasan ang mga sagabal. Dahil dito, nagkaroon sila ng mga kuru-kuro kung ano ang haharapin nila.

Si Castillo, na dati ring isang Scholastican, ay isang psychologist, therapist, facilitator at isang project manager. Sa tulong niya, napag-isipan ng mga mag-aaral ang kanilang kalagayan kung nasaan sila ngayon at kung ano ang nais nilang marating at pati na rin ang



*Isang photo-op kasama ang panauhing tagapagsalita na si Therese Castillo, Rpsy (kuha ni Alma Palomares)*

kanilang mga prayoridad. Natutunan din ng mga mag-aaral ang iba’t ibang paraan kung paano makayanan ang mga mahihirap na bagay habang nag-aaral tulad ng paghahanap ng libangan, pagiging maalalahanin sa sarili, at pakikipag-usap sa mga kaibigan at kamag-anak.

Nang malapit nang matapos ang kanyang webinar, sinagot ni Castillo ang mga katanungan ng mga mag-aaral tungkol sa paghahanap ng inspirasyon at pagkakaroon ng tamang motibo, paghahanap ng tamang karera, at pagkakaroon ng kumpiyansa sa sarili. Pinaalalahanan niya rin ang lahat na normal lang magkamali at dapat laging nasa kasalukuyan at hindi nagmamadali.

Bilang pasasalamat, binigyan ni Sister Daniela Romero, OSB ng certificate of appreciation si Castillo. Nagtapos ang webinar sa pananalitang pang-wakas ni Leah Sacay.

Giit ni Sacay na makakatulong sa pagtahak sa landas ng karera kung alam nila kung ano ang mahalaga para sa kanila, kung ano ang mga kinagigiliwan nila, at kung ano ang kaya nilang gawin nang mabuti.

*“Sundan ninyo ang inyong mga puso. Nawa’y sabihin ng inyong mga puso ang mga bagay na magpapabuti sa inyo sa komunidad, lipunan, at kaluwalhatian ng Panginoon,”* dagdag pa nito.



## IYAKAN NINYO ANG PAGKASIRA NG OZONE LAYER!

NI ANGELA MAE M. SACAY

“Takot ako! Takot ako mamatay!” Ito ang iyak ng isang batang pangalan ay Empress matapos marinig sa kanyang kapatid ang malulubhang epekto ng pagkasira ng ozone layer sa ating pang-araw-araw na buhay.

Maraming netizens ang natawa sa reaksiyon ng bata ngunit hindi ba tama ang kanyang takot na nararamdaman? Ano ba ang kailangan nating malaman tungkol sa ozone layer at bakit dapat tayong mag-alala sa pagkasira nito katulad ng batang ito?

Ayon sa National Geographic Encyclopedia, ang ozone layer ay nagsisilbing isang panangga o proteksyon mula sa nakakamatay na ultraviolet radiation o UV light na ipinapadala ng araw sa ating planeta. Mayroong tatlong klase ng UV light: UVA, UVB, at UVC. Una, ang UVA ay ang madalas na umaabot sa ibabaw ng ating planeta at kung madalas kang natatamaan nito, maaaring mas mabilis tumanda ang iyong balat o pwedeng magkaroon ka ng skin cancer na melanoma. Ang Ikalawa, ang UVB ay hindi ganoong nakakarating sa ibabaw ng ating planeta ngunit kapag lubos kang nabilad dito, maaaring masunog at mangitim ang iyong balat. Ikatlo, ang UVC ay madalang nakakarating sa ibabaw ng ating planeta dahil kung tayo man ay matamaan nito, posibleng magkaroon tayo ng pamumula at pagkasugat ng balat.

Ang ating suliranin ngayon ay tayo mismo ang

sumisira sa bagay na magbibigay proteksyon sa atin. Ayon kay Wuebbles, ang dahilan ng pagkanipis nito ay ang pagtaas ng chlorine at bromine sa ating stratosphere na nanggagaling sa chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) at iba pang halocarbons. Ang CFCs ay nagmumula sa refrigerators at air conditioners na madalas ginagamit ng bawat tahanan at malalaking negosyo sa mundo (Doc, 2018). Habang ang ibang halocarbons ay ginagamit sa pangpatay ng mga insekto, paggawa ng pandikit, paggawa ng plastik, at paggawa ng pangpatamis na ginagamit din natin sa pang-araw-araw.

Nagbabala ang Nasa Earth Observatory (2009) kapag patuloy natin itong hindi papansinin, patuloy na tataas ang dami ng CFCs at ibang halocarbons na magiging sanhi ng pagkawala ng ating ozone layer sa darating na taong 2064. **Ngayong alam na natin na mahalaga ang ginagampanan ng ating ozone layer, dapat kumilos na tayo at magisip ng paraan para ito ay pangalagaan.**

Sa ngayon, mayroon ng isinagawa na Montreal Protocol noong 1989 na kung saan ang bawat bansa ay sumunod dito. Dahil dito, maraming halocarbons ang pinatanggal sa mga produkto sa buong mundo na nagging sanhi sa pagiwas ng paglala ng global warming. Ayon sa mga dalubhasa, kung ipagpapatuloy natin ito, maaaring maibalik ang maayos na kalagayan ng ating ozone layer at maraming buhay ang maliligtas (UN environment programme, 2021).

## ANG DISKRIMINASYON SA MGA WIKA SA PILIPINAS

ni DANIELLA U. TAY



Maraming dayalekto ang ginagamit ng mga Pilipino. Mula sa Tagalog, Kapampangan, Bisaya, at marami pang iba. Bukod sa mga diyalektong ito, ipinakilala din sa atin ng ating mga dayuhang mananakop ang kanilang wika sa atin. Ang pinakatanyag na halimbawa ay Ingles.

Karamihan sa mga Pilipino ay marunong mag-Ingles. Sa katunayan, ang Pilipinas ay nasa ika-dalawampu't pito mula sa isang daang bansa sa 2020 Global EF English Proficiency Index. At pumapangalawa lamang ang Pilipinas sa Singapore sa Asya. Ito ay nagpapakita na maraming Pilipino ang nakakapag salita o nakakaunawa ng Ingles. Kahit papano, ang karamihan sa mga Pilipino ay marunong makipag-usap sa Ingles. May mga Pilipino ring inangkin ang Ingles bilang kanilang pangunahing wika.

Ang mga Pilipinong nagsasalita ng Ingles, kapwa matatas at hindi matatas, ay nakakaranas ng diskriminasyon. Ang mga Pilipino na hindi matatas sa Ingles ay nakakaranas ng diskriminasyon. Ang pangkaraniwang sitwasyon kung saan nakakaranas ang mga Pilipino ng diskriminasyon ay sa lugar ng trabaho sa ibang bansa. Sa kasamaang palad, karaniwan para sa mga OFW na maranasan ang diskriminasyon sa pinagtatrabahuhan mula sa kanilang mga dayuhang amo. Ang isang sitwasyong tulad nito ay nangyari noong 2010, animnapu't siyam na mga Pilipinong nars ang nagsampa ng kaso laban sa isang ospital na kanilang pinagtatrabahuhan dahil sa diskriminasyon. Sinabi ng mga nars na mayroong "patuloy na panliligalig at kahihyan kapag sila ay nakipag-usap sa mga miyembro ng kanilang pamilya sa telepono" (LA Times).

Ang mga diskriminasyon sa pagsasalita ng Filipino ay nangyayari din sa loob ng Pilipinas. Noong 2011, nagkaroon ng kaso sa isang elementarya ng

Pilipinas kung saan pinarusahan ang mga bata sa hindi pagsasalita ng Ingles. Ang mababang kapulungan sa Pilipinas sa oras na iyon ay nag-imbetiga sa sitwasyong ito.

Ang mga Pilipinong inangkin ang Ingles bilang pangunahing wika ay hindi rin nakaligtas sa diskriminasyong ito. Ito ay halos kapareho sa mga halimbawang nabanggit sa itaas. Bilang isang tao na inangkin ang Ingles na pangunahing wika, nakikita ko ang mga taong katulad ko na nakaranas ng parehong mga bagay tulad ng mga nabanggit sa itaas. Bagaman, hindi ako nagsasalita para sa lahat ng mga Pilipinong nagsasalita ng Ingles bilang kanilang unang wika.

Sa aking karanasan, nararamdaman ko rin ang takot sa diskriminasyon. Paminsan-minsan ako ay nakakaramdam ng pagsisisi dahil hindi ako matatas sa Filipino. Tuwing sasabihin ko ang isang bagay sa Filipino, ako ay laging kinakabahan dahil nariyan ang takot na mapagtatawanan ako dahil may sinabi akong mali sa Filipino.

Walang dapat gawing katawatawa dahil lamang hindi sila mahusay sa pagsasalita ng ibang wika. Sa katunayan, dapat isaalang-alang na kahanga-hanga ang mga taong marunong magsalita ng dalawang wika.

Ang bawat tao'y nagkakamali. Lahat tayo ay ginagawa ang ating makakaya upang makahanap ng isang paraan kung saan lahat tayo ay magkaintindihan.

Nais kong kilalanin ang paksang ito dahil ang diskriminasyon, sa anumang anyo ay hindi tama. **Kung wala tayong gagawin tungkol sa diskriminasyon, lahat ng ating nakamit bilang isang lipunan ay walang silbi.**



## KABATAAN NGAYON

NI BIANCA MARIE V. MANALO

Ano na nga ba ang mga batang Pilipino ngayon? Gaano na nga ba kalawak ang kaalaman nila pag dating sa iba't ibang bagay lalo na sa wika? Gaano nga ba kalaki ang impluwensya sa kanila ngayon ng iba't ibang kultura at paniniwala ng iba't ibang lahi? Tulad nga ng wika ni Doktor Jose Rizal na, "Ang hindi magmahal sa sariling wika ay higit pa sa mabaho at malansang isda". Ang mga kasabihang ito ay nagpapatunay na higit natin dapat tangkilikin ang ating wika. Ngunit sa makabagong panahon ngayon, ilan na nga lang ba sa atin ang may pagmamahal at pagtangkilik pa sa wikang kinagisnan?

Wika, wika ang pinakamahalagang sangkap ng komunikasyon. Ito ang ginagamit natin sa pakikipagtalastasan. Ito rin ang ginagamit natin sa pakikipag-ugnayan. Kasabay ng pag-unlad ng mga teknolohiya ang pagbabago ng ating hinaharap. Higit na naapektuhan dito ang ating wikang kinagisnan.

Kasabay ng mga makabagong palabas, alituntunin, paniniwala, ang pagbabagong dinaranas ng ating wika. Ngunit bakit tila nakalimutan na ng iba sa atin kung ano nga ba ang wikang mas dapat nating mahalina? Kasabay ng mga nag lilipana ng makabagong palabas, Korean dramas, Chinese

dramas, Taiwanese dramas at marami pang iba, ang pagtangkilik natin sa wikang sinasalita nila. Hindi naman masamang matutunan natin ang kanilang wika. Nangangahulugan nga ito na lumalawak at umuunlad ang pansarili nating kaalaman. Pero bakit tila nawawaglit sa ating isipan na mayroon tayong sariling wika? Sa pagtanggap natin sa mga wikang Ingles ay kasabay nito ang pagkalimot ng iba sa atin sa wikang unang natutunan.

Isa pa ito sa kasabihan ng ating pambansang bayani: "Ang kabataan ang pag-asa ng Bayan". Ngunit pag-asa nga ba kami kung ang ilan sa amin ay tuluyan ng nakain ng sistemang makabago? **Ang paghanga sa lingwahe at kultura ng iba ay natural lamang sa amin. Ngunit mas higit nating tangkilikin ang sariling atin.** Ang pag-ibig sa lupang sinilangan, sa wikang kinamulatan, maging sa mga bagay na mayroon tayo. Gamitin natin ang ating mga natutunan mula sa ibang lahi at ibang larangan sa pagpapalawak ng ating Wikang Pambansa. Kaming mga batang Pilipino ang dapat na mas maging matalino sa pagpili. Kami ang kayamanan ng bayan kaya sa amin nakasalalay ang wikang sasalitain ng bagong henerasyon. Hindi masama ang pag-unlad kung isinasaisip, isinasapuso at ginagawa natin ang sariling atin!

### ANG ISKOLASTIKAN PATNUGUTAN (S.Y. 2021-2022)

**PUNONG PATNUGOT:** Likha Sison

**BALITA AT PANITIKAN:** Carmela Beatriz Arcega, Lady Margarita Florento, Jenneth Palo, Likha Sison, Kristel Lorraine Uchang

**MGA KONTRIBYUTOR:** Raine Aala, Allyson Baylosis, Sheryl Bofill, Tiffany Cabra, Khloe Canceran, Sylvia Las, Marianne Lolarga, Bianca Marie Manalo, Eliza Natividad, Roanne Julia Qimbo, Angela Mae Sacay, Daniella Tay, Kristine Villanueva

**GURONG TAGAPAYO:** Bb. Sharmaine Doroin

**PUNONG-GURO:** Sister Daniela Romero, OSB

## MABUTING PAGBABAGO SA GITNA NG PANDEMYA

NI LADY MARGARITA V. FLORENTO

Narito na naman tayo, sa panahon ng pakikipaglaban sa tama,  
Panahon ng paggising at pagmulat ng ating mga mata.  
Sa nakaraang ilang taon sana naman ay natuto na tayo,  
Kung sino ang dapat bumaba at kung sino ang nararapat na umupo.

Magdadalawang taon na paghihiwalay at pagbubuklod,  
Bagong batas, protokol at pamamahala ipinatupad na dapat masunod.  
Pagbagsak ng ekonomiya at paghihirap ng bawat pamilyang Pilipino,  
Tila hindi mabigyan o matutukan ng seryosong solusyon ng gobyerno.

Umiikot ikot at dumadayo dayo sa iba't ibang panig ng bansa,  
Upang lalong lumakas ang dalang impluwensya at makaipon ng maraming tiwala.  
Huwag tayong mahiyang kumamay at makipagkilala,  
Ngunit lumayo ka na agad kung sila ay mag iipit ng pera o barya.

Kay dami nang nasawi at naghihirap dahil sa pandemyang lumalaganap,  
Para bang tayo ay wala ng daan tungo sa ligtas na hinaharap.  
Nilalabanan nga ba natin ang makamandag na pandemya,  
O natututo at nasasanay na lamang tayo mamuhay sa ganitong klase ng sistema?

Huwag nating hayaan na tapatan tayo ng halaga dahil tayo ay may dignidad,  
At atin itong mapapatunayan kung tayo ay magpakatotoo at mumulat sa reyalidad.

Lahat tayo ay naghahangad at nangangarap ng mabuting pagbabago,  
Ngunit mangyayari lamang ito, kung ating pipiliin ang karapat dapat na pinuno.





# Nawa'y Mapakinggan

NI SHERYL BOFILL

Hello?

Hello?

Naririnig mo ba ako?

Makinig ka dahil importante ang mga sasabihin ko.

Pagod na pagod na ako,

Sa paulit-ulit nyong reklamo;

Ginagawa ko naman ang mga tungkulin ko,

Maayos at kumpleto.

E kayo?

Asaan ang mga sustento?

Asaan ang mga resibo?

Asaan ang mga magpapatunay na tama ang aming mga ibinoto?

Bawat tintang ginamit,

Bawat tintang tutulong sanang makapagbigay ng mabuting kapalaran,

Bawat tinta sa daliring nakaukit,

Bawat tinta na itinatak namin sa papel na siyang magbibigay ng napakaimportanteng karangalan.

Hindi ko na tuloy alam kung sino,

Sino sa inyo ang totoo?

Sino sa inyo ang dapat bigyan ng boto?

Sino sa inyo ang may karapatan maging pangulo?

Mahal ko bansa ko,

Nakatatak yan sa dugo ko,

Kaya maging ibang Pilipino nagkakagulo kung sino ang kanilang iboboto.

Nakikita mo ba?

Ang mga Pilipino na halos halukayin ang ibang parte ng mundo para sa iyo?

Nakikita mo ba?

Ang mga Pilipino na handang makipagbakbakan sa kapwa Pilipino para ipagtanggol ang pangalan mo?

O baka naman sinasamantala mo ang mga ito?

Para lang manalo?

Nahihibang ka na ba?

Nabubulag ka lang ng pansarili mong intensyon!

Bakit ka nga ba tumatakbo?

Para lamang ba manloko?

Para humingi ng boto sa mga Pilipinong alam mong magbubulag-bulagan sa iyo?

Para maging parte ng senado na kung saan makakapagnakaw ka ng walang kaso?

At para naman sa mga rehistrado,

Gaano mo kilala ang mga ito?

Alam mo ba ang ginagawa mo?

Tandaan mong kinabukasaan ng bawat Pilipino ang nakasalalay sa boto mo!

Yang tinta sa kamay mo,

Hindi lamang basta tinta yan!

Tinta yan ng anim na taong pinaghirapan ng mga tao!

Mayroon namang pagbabago,

Kaso nakatulong ba ang mga ito?

Ito ba yung pagbabagong ginusto mo?!

Kaya isang malaking responsibilidad na siguraduhin mo kung sino yang taong pagkakalooban mo ng boto.

Kilala mo ba?

Mapagkakatiwalaan ba siya?

Karapat-dapat ba siya?

Handa ba siya mamahala?

Ikaw, mapagkakatiwalaan ka ba?

Karapat-dapat ka ba?

Handa ka na ba o para lamang sa wala?

Dahil ang tinta ng mga Pilipino, buhay ang itinaya para dito.

Pagod na pagod na ako,

Sa paulit-ulit na reklamo ng mga tao;

Kung kelan daw magbabago,

Mayroon naman talagang pagbabago, pang aabuso.

Pagod na ako,

Kaya nandito lang ako;

Naghihintay ng tamang pagkakataon,

Inaalam kung sino dapat mabigyang ng tintang iyon.

Nakakapagod,

Naghihirap ka maka-ahon;

Wala naman pala itong mapupuntahan,

Kaya sana, sana lang talaga, nawa'y mapakinggan

# LIPUNAN, HALINA'T MAGKAISA

NI KHLOE CANCERAN

Iba't iba panlipunang problema,  
Korapsyon, seguridad, pandemya  
Krimen, polusyon at utang ng bansa,  
Paano nga ba ito mareresolba?

Pangunahan sana ito ng mahusay na  
mamamahala,

Bibigyang pansin ang mga isinawalang-bahala.  
Pamumuno nang patas at maayos na pagpasya  
Tungo sa isang maunlad na lipunan at  
nagkakaisang bansa.

Damayan natin ang bawat isa,  
Hinahangad na kalinga ng ating kapwa,  
Ating iparamdam at makuha ang hustisya  
Ang matagal na pagbabago, tayo'y umaasa.

Huwag na munang maglibot at gumala,  
Manatili sa tahanan para iwas hawa.  
Manalangin sa Panginoon, ibigay ang iyong  
tiwala

Manatiling positibo sa gitna ng pandemya't  
sakuna.

Tumayo tayo bilang isa.  
Tayo-tayo ang magreresolba sa problema.  
Sapagkat ito ay simbolo ng isang pamilya,  
Lipunan, halina't magkaisa.

## LARO

NI ELIZA NATIVIDAD

Tumakbo't magtago sa mga eskinita  
Habulang laro taya'y may bala  
Matatagpua'y saan kaya?  
Hanapin ang lupang nagkulay pula

Lumipas na mga taon ay isang bangungot ika nga  
Sapagkat patuloy and madugong digmaan sa bansa  
Silang nasa itaas ay tunay ngang walang awa  
Kababayang lumuluha'y kalong ang bangkay na  
maputla

Pangako noong kampanya'y naglahong basta  
Inakalang sa kanya ang buhay ay giginhawa  
Mga nakakaalam ng lihim sa likod ng maskara,  
Ay tikom ang bibig tila pinalitada

Papaano na silang hirap sa pera?  
Sikmura'y kumukulo itulog na lang muna  
Lumbay at pighati'y ihahain sa mesa  
Pamilyang binuo ng menor de edad ay umaasa

Nakatitig ang mga magagaling lang sa simula  
Mga inabot ng dilim sa kalye'y nakahilata  
Hiling ng salat supling ay isalba  
Silang walang pangkain nga ba ang may sala?

Dasal ay ang susunod sa kanya'y iba  
Sana'y wala nang bulag na mananamba  
lahon sa kahirapan ang humihyaw na kapwa  
Bago pa abutan ng isang pakete ang bata

# TAGU-TAGUAN

NI MARIANNE LOLARGA

Tagu-taguan, maliwanag ang buwan  
Masarap maglaro sa kadiliman ng buwan  
'Pag kabilang kong sampu  
Nakatago na kayo  
Isa, dalawa, .. tatlo!

Apat, apat na magkakatabing karatula aking tanaw  
Naka-paskil kabila't kanan ang mga kaaway puwesto ang kaagaw  
Walang katahimikan ang mga lansangang nalulunod sa buwang-bibig  
Inaanyayahan ang mamayanang Pilipino making at sumalig

Lima, limang kandidatong naglalamangan sa isa't isa  
Bawat sagot sa debate ay nagpapakadalubhasa  
Pangako'y hangad ang maayos na bukas  
Pangako'y napako't naglaho sa tumagal na oras

Anim, anim na taong naglaho na ang mga pangako  
Mga kawani ng pamahalaan ay napuno ng palomara at manloloko  
Tunay na hangaring manatili sa gumon na kapangyarihan  
At magnakaw sa kaban ng ating bayan

Pito, pitong-daang pamilya'y pinalayas mula sa kanilang tahanan  
Pangangatwira'y lupa gagamitin sa bakasyunan ng mayayaman  
Kailan sila matutulungan?  
Mga taong may karapatan, napipi ang boses dahil sa kapalaran



# TAGU-TAGUAN

NI MARIANNE LOLARGA

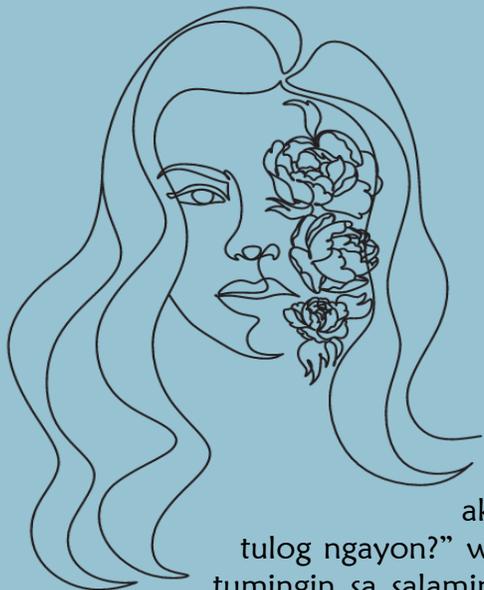
Walo, walong libong katao namatay sa laban ng droga  
Ito ba ang tawag ng gobyerno bilang "sandata ng alaga?"  
Sa mga pagkakataon na nasa bingit na ng kamatayan  
Matataas mo pa ba ang iyong kamay at huwag lumaban?

Siyam, siyam na sunod-sunod na araw matataas ang kaso naitatala  
Minumura ang sakit na tila'y hilahil ng mga Pilipino'y mawawala  
Marahil ang bansa'y naging bugbog ng pamamahalang pinsala  
Kanais-nais ba ang ganitong sistema ng pandaraya?

Sampu, sampu at marami pang dahilan kung bakit mahalaga mamulat  
Gumising na para sa darating na halalan, piliin ang karapat-dapat  
Panagutin ang mga ipinangakong ginhawa  
Lumabas mula sa maruruming bunganga ng mga walang ginawa

Tagu-taguan, maliwanag ang buwan  
Nasaan na ang mga pinunong naglalaro ng "nakawan?"  
Napakahusay naman nila magtago sa loob ng kanilang kayamanan at kahangalan  
Sapagkat hanggang ngayo'y pagkatao ng pilino'y nasusugatan





# Si Mama

NI JENNETH L. PALO

Inis na nagising sa malakas na tugtog si Isabel. “Bakit pa ba ako umasa na magkakaroon ako ng mahaba at matiwasay na tulog ngayon?” wika ng dalaga. Dali-dali siyang bumangon sa kanyang kama at tumingin sa salamin. Tinitigan niya ang kanyang mga matang mahahalata mong kulang sa tulog, ang kanyang mga labing maihalalintulad na sa disyerto sa pagkatuyot nito, at ang balat niyang maputla. Hindi na nakapagtataka na kinatatakutan at walang gustong makipagkaibigan sa kanya sa kanilang baryo. Idagdag mo pa ang kanyang presensya na napakatahimik, na baka kahit siya ay katabi mo na, hindi mo pa rin mapapansin. Umiiling na dumiresto si Isabel sa kanyang banyo upang maligo.

Sa kusina naman ng kanilang bahay ay makikita mo ang ina ni Isabel na si Mari at ang kanyang kumare na si Tess na nagluluto ng mga ulam na ibabahagi sa mangyayaring Sugbahan sa Dalan mamaya. Ang araw kasi na ito ay ang araw kung saan daan-daan na kilo ng tuna ang iihawin sa gilid ng daan bilang pagdiriwang sa Tuna Festival na magaganap sa kanilang barangay. Mga kare-kare, morcon, afritada, caldereta at lechon kawali ang naisipan nilang dalawa lutuin. Napansin ni Mari na ang kanyang anak ay hindi pa rin bumababa mula sa kanyang kwarto sa itaas na palapag kaya’t bumulyaw siya.

“Isabel, halika na dito at tulungan mo kami ni Tess maghiwa ng mga patatas at carrots!”

“Ma, may ipapasa lang po akong proyekto sa eskwelahan ko nang mabilis!”, bulyaw pabalik ni Isabel sa kanyang ina.

“Iyang anak mo talaga, napakapokus sa kanyang pag-aaral. Hindi na ako nagtataka kung bakit siya ang Top 1 sa buong pangkat niya,” singit ni Tess. “Buti pa yung anak mo, Mare. Yung anak ko puro paglalaro lang sa kanyang computer ang inaatupag! Ang kapal pa ng mukha manghingi ng pera para sa pang regalo niya daw sa kanyang kasintahan!” naiinis na dagdag ni Tess.

Natawa na lamang si Mari sa paghuhumyaw ng kanyang kaibigan. Natutuwa naman din siya na napakasipag na pag-aaral ng kanyang anak, hindi niya lang talaga gusto ito dahil sa sobrang pag kababad nito dito. Nagkukulong lagi sa kanyang kwarto at tila ba iniawasan siya nitong makasalamuha. Nagsimula ang ganyang kaugalian ng kanyang anak noong nalaman niya na namatay ang kanyang tatay.

Ang araw ay bumababa na noong nakamotor na nagtungo sa palengke sa kabilang baryo ang mag-asawa upang mamili ng atsara dahil naglilihi si Mari sa kanyang pangalawang anak. Napalayo pa sila ng pamilihan kasi wala silang nakitang atsara sa unang palengke na pinuntahan nila.

“Mahal, pwede bang bukas na lang tayo bumili ng atsara? Pagabi na kasi at mukhang uulan pa,” wika ni Oliver, ang kanyang asawa.

“Mahal, ngayon na lang, please? Gustong-gusto ko na talagang makatikim ng atsara. Mamamatay ata ako kung hindi pa ako makatikim nito ngayong gabi,” maluha-luhang tugon ni Mari. Inalo naman siya ng kanyang asawa at pinangako nitong makatikim ito ng atsara ngayon din.

Dumidilm na ang daan kaya’t nagdahan dahan sa pagmamaneho si Oliver nang biglang may humarurot na pulang sasakyan sa kanilang kanan na lubhang nagpagulat sa dalawa. Tumigil pa ang nagmamaneho ng sasakyan para murahin at pakitaan sila ng gitnang daliri ng mga kaibigan nito. Paalis na sana sila nung narinig nila ang inis na sigaw ni Oliver.

“Hoy! Magdahan dahan nga kayo sa pagmamaneho! Buntis itong asawa ko. Kapag ang mag-ina ko nalagay sa panganib, humanda kayo! Sinasabi ko sa inyo!” Napatingin sa gawi nila ang mga magkakasamang lasing at dahan dahang bumaba sa sasakyan.

“Buti na lang talaga napreno ko nang mabilis itong motor ko, mahal,” nakatitig na sabi ni Oliver sa kanyang asawa. Napangiti si Mari sa sinabi ng kanyang asawa ngunit agad ding napawi ito noong nakita niya na nagbabantang naglalakad papunta sa kanilang pwesto ang mga nakasakay kanina sa pulang sasakyan.

Napansin ni Oliver ang pagbabago sa reaksyon niya kaya’t tinignan niya din ang tinitignan ng kanyang asawa. Pinalibutan ang kanilang pwesto ng anim na lasing. “Ang tapang mo ah, bata?” wika ng lalaking nakasando at maluwag na shorts na mukhang adik dahil sa pula ng mata nito. “Bakit mo kami sinasabihan kung anong dapat naming gawin ha?” dagdag naman ng kasama nitong nakamalaking tshirt at nahuhulog ng pantalon. Tinulak siya nito nang bahagya. Napaatras ng kaunti si Oliver pero hindi naman na siya pumalag.

“Mga pare, ang sinasabi ko lang naman ay magdahan dahan kayo, kasi paano kung nabangga nyo kami?” mahinahon na paliwanag ni Oliver.

“Edi.. patay kayo?” sagot ng babaeng nakabandanang kasama nila. Kaya ang lima pang iba na nakapalibot sa kanila ay humalaklak din sa hindi matukoy na dahilan.

Nawalan na ng pasensya si Oliver at hindi niya na napigilan na sapakin ang isa kanila. Naalerto ang lahat at nakipagtuos din kay Oliver. Natatakot naman na sumigaw si Mari at hindi na malaman ang gagawin.

Tumigil sa pakikipag basag ulo si Oliver nang mapnasin niyang wala na ang kanyang misis sa kanyang tabi. Putok ang labing dumapo ang kanyang paningin kay Mari na pigil hiningang nakatingin sa kutsilyong nakatutok sa leeg niya.

“Pare! Bitawan mo yang kutsilyo na yan,” aligagang sambit ni Oliver.

Nang-aasar na umiling ang lalaking nagmamaneho kanina sa pulang sasakyan bilang tugon.



sa

“Pare, parang awa mo na. Bitawan mo na yung misis ko,” sambit ulit ni Oliver.

Nagkukunwaring nag-isip ang lalaki at sinabing “Sige, pero lumapit ka dito para kunin ang asawa mo.”

Dahan dahan namang naglakad si Oliver habang nasa unahan ang kanyang palad, na para bang nagpapahiwatig na kumalma siya. Noong nakalapit na si Oliver, mabilis na itinulak ng lalaki ang asawa niya sa gilid at sinaksak siya sa kanyang tiyan. Napasigaw si Mari at natuliro, habang ang asawa niya ay dahan dahang napaluhod habang hawak ang kutsilyo sa kanyang tagiliran. Napatingin pa ito sa kanya para tignan ang kalagayan niya, hanggang sa nakadapang bumagsak ito sa malamig na semento. Tila ba naalala ni Mari bigla ang mga masasayang mga araw na magkasama sila, ang mga araw na sinusurpresa siya ng mga bulaklak ng kanyang asawa, mga araw na hindi sila makatulog pareho nang hindi pinaguusapan ang kanilang problema.

Bawat segundong lumipas na nakahiga si Oliver sa malamig na kalsada, ay bawat segundo din ng pagkawasak ng kanyang puso. Pagkatapos ng pangyayaring iyon ay nagsitakbuhan ng umalis ang mga nantrip sa kanila dahil sa tunog ng sasakyan ng pulis. Ngunit si Mari ay hindi pa rin makagalaw sa kanyang pwesto habang nakatingin sa asawa niyang wala ng buhay. Unti unting nanlabo ang kanyang paningin at siya’y nawalan ng malay..

“Hoy, Mari!”

“Ay! Hoy, Mari!” gulat na hiyaw ni Mari.

“Kanina pa kita tinatanong kung ilagay ko na ba itong tomato sauce sa kawali. Kung ano-ano na namang iniisip mo dyan. Hay nako.” nakakunot ang noong sambit ni Tess.

“Sorry, hehe. At oo, ilagay mo na yan sa kawali para masimulan na natin ang pagluluto,” tugon ni Mari na sinangayonan naman ni Tess.

Si Isabel naman ay bumaba na sa tricycle at dumiresto sa gate ng kanyang paaralang nagngangalang Brgy. Quatro Science High School upang ipakita kay kuya guard ang kanyang I.D. Noong siya ay nakapasok na, nagtungo siya sa Faculty Room at dumiresto sa mesa ng kanyang guro, upang ibigay ng personal ang ginawa niyang research paper.

Humingi siya ng paumanhin sa kanyang guro dahil nahuli siya ng pag pasa pero sabi na lang sa kanya na walang problema sapagkat ngayon lang naman raw nangyari iyon. Paalis na sana siya sa faculty room ngunit pinigilan siya ng kanyang guro.

“Isabel!” pagtawag sa kanya ng guro.

“Po?”, napatigil sa paglakad si Isabel.

“Kanina pala, bago ka dumating dito ay may nakasalubong akong nakasumbrerong babae sa may pasilyo sa labas. Tinanong niya sa akin kung kilala ba daw kita. Sabi ko oo, ikaw yung estudyante ko sa baitang 10,” pagkukwento ng kanyang guro.

“Pagkasabi ko noon ay ngumisi siya at sinabing ‘Nahanap ko din kayo, sa wakas.’” Nangilabot si Isabel sa sinabi ng kanyang guro.

“Hindi ko alam kung tama ba yung ginawa kong pagsabi noon kaya tatanungin sana kita kung may iba ka pa bang kamaganak bukod sa iyong nanay?” pagtatanong ng guro sa kanya.



“Ma’am wala na po eh, yung tatay ko po kasi patay na po bago pa po ako maipanganak. Wala na rin naman po kaming balita sa iba pa po naming kamaganak.” nagtataakang sambit ni Isabel.

Natakot ang kanyang guro para sa kalagayan niya at pinayuhan siyang huwag masyado maglalalabas at baka mapahamak siya. Nagpaalam na si Isabel at nagtungo na sa gate ng kanyang paaralan upang maghintay ng tricycle.

Biglang tumaas ang kanyang balahibo kaya napatingin siya sa kanyang paligid. Siya lang ang mag-isa sa gate ngayon, dahil si kuya guard ay wala naman na sa kanyang pwesto. “Weird. Parang may nakamasid sa akin ngayon lang,” bulong niya sa kanyang sarili. Naalala niya bigla ang kwento ng kanyang guro kaya natakot na naman siya. Buti na lang, may dumating na agad na tricycle. Kaya nagmamadali siyang sumakay dito at isinambit ang kanyang address sa tricycle driver.

Malayo pa lang ay naririnig niya na ang malalakas na tunog ng mga drums at trumpeta. Nakikita niya na din sa kanto pa lang nila ang mga sumasayaw na nakamagagarang costumes at ang mga malalaking floats na may temang anyong tubig dahil ang pista ngang ipinagdiriwang nila ay Tuna Festival.

Bumababa na siya sa tricycle at tumakbo papasok sa kanilang bahay. Naabutan niyang mag-isa ang kanyang ina sa hapagkainan at inaayos ang mga pagkain para maging kaaya-aya ito tignan. Napansin siya ng kanyang ina kaya binati siya nito.

Ngumiti na lamang si Isabel. Aalis na sana siya sa kanilang hapagkainan ng may naalala syang tanungin sa kanyang ina.

“Ma,” pagtawag ni Isabel. “Hmm? Ano yun, anak?”

“May tao po ba na may galit sa inyo? Sa atin?” pagtatanong niya sa kanyang ina.

Natigil sa kanyang ginagawa si Mave. “Wala naman, nak,” pagsagot nito.

“Bakit mo naman natanong?” malalim ang pagiisip ng kanyang ina. Kumabog ang dibdib ni Isabel, sa naging reaksiyon ng kanyang ina. Para kasi itong may tinatago na ewan.

“Wala namang tao na may galit sa akin. Kung tutuusin imposible nga yun eh, kasi lagi akong nagddonate sa mga simbahan at napakabait ko sa mga kapitbahay natin. Kaya bakit naman may magagalit sa akin? Eh wala naman akong ginawang masama—”

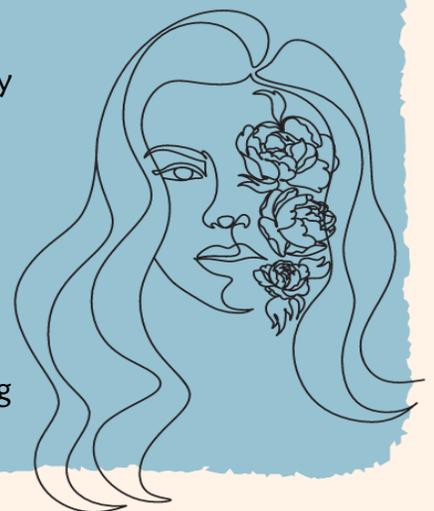
Si Mari naman ay hindi makasagot sa naging pagtanong ng muling nagbalik na panganay niya.

“Wala nga ba?” May biglang nagsalitang babae.

Napalingon ang mag-ina sa direksyon ng nagsalita. Hindi pa nila matukoy nung una kung anong itsura nito hanggang sa itinaas niya ang kanyang ulong nakapalumbaba kanina. Makikita ang isang babaeng mapagkakamalang lalaki dahil sa gupit at tindig nito. Nakangisi ito ngunit makikita mo sa kanyang malalim na mata ang galit.

“Kahawig siya ni Mama”, sa isip isipan ni Isabel.

Sa kabilang banda, maririnig ang pagsinghap ni Mave. Para itong nahirapan sa paghinga kaya’t balak sanang lapitan ni Isabel ang kanyang ina. Hindi pa siya tuluyang nakakalapit dito nang magsalita muli ang babaeng nakasumbbrero. “Ang laki mo na, bunso.”



Naguluhan si Isabel sa winika ng babae kaya't humarap siya dito at nagtanong, "Bunso? Sino ka ba? Bakit kung makapagsalita ka parang kilala mo ko?"

"Of course. Hindi mo ako kilala," sarkastiko niyang pagtugon.

"Hanggang ngayon pala kahit ilang taon na ang nakalipas na wala ako, kinamumuhian mo pa rin ako, Ma?" may sama ng loob niyang pagdaragdag sabay tingin kay Mari.

Nawindang si Isabel sa narinig. "Bakit niya tinawag na Ma si mama?" May kutob na si Isabel sa katotohanan pero parang hindi niya pa rin matanggap. Litong-lito na siya. Litong-lito na.

Ngayon lang ulit sila nagkakarap simula noong namatay si Oliver. Lumayas kasi ito ilang buwan matapos ang pagkamatay ng kanyang tatay. Dahil sa ilang buwan din na iyon, naging malupit ang pakikitungo niya kay Chesca, ang panganay niyang anak. Ilang araw din pagkatapos lumayas si Chesca sa kanilang pamamamahay, kinailangan nilang umalis ng kanilang bahay dahil sa tumitinding chismis at mga masasamang balita tungkol sa kanila doon. Kaya hindi niya talaga inaasahan na muling makakakarap nila si Chesca at mukhang nandoon pa rin ang hinanakit patungo sa kanya. Sising sisi siya, ngunit mukhang huli na ang lahat.

"Makaasta ka ngayon parang hindi ikaw ang rason kung bakit namatay si Papa ah? Kung hindi dahil diyan sa pangalawa mong anak, hindi sana kayo magpupunta kung saan saan ng dis oras ng gabi! Hindi sana masasaksak si papa! At hindi sana ako magpapabaya at magpapakalulong sa droga!" mangiyak-ngiyak na sigaw ng babae kay Mave.

"Alam mo ba na kakalabas ko lang sa kulungan dahil nahuli akong nagbebenta ng droga sa ilalim ng tulay? Tingnan mo ang ginawa mo sa anak mo, Mari! Tingnan mo!"

"Chesca, anak, I'm sorry," naiiyak na sambit ni Mave. Hindi na niya natiis pa at nilapitan ang kanyang panganay anak na humahagulgol na dahil sa bigat ng kanyang nararamdaman. Nagkayakap ang mag ina ng ilang minuto habang si Isabel ay pinagmamasdan lamang ang dalawa.

Kahit gulong-gulo pa rin ang kanyang isipan sa mga naganap, nakaramdam siya ng pagkapayapa. Ngunit hindi nagtagal ay may napansin siyang patalim na kinukuha ni Chesca sa kanyang bulsa, at sa isang iglap niya, sinaksak ng kanyang nawalay na kapatid ang kanyang ina sa parehong parte kung saan sinaksak ang kanilang ama.

Napasigaw si Isabel sa gulat habang ang ina niya ay dahan-dahang lumagapak sa sahig. Ang bilis ng mga pangyayari. At bago tuluyang umalis si Chesca, sumulyap siya sa huling pagkakataon sa kanyang kagagawan. Hindi makikitaan ng kahit anumang pagsisisi ang kanyang mga mata. Maaring dahil may impluwensya ito ng droga, pero doon napagtanto ni Isabel na may mga tao talagang napakalaki ng galit at hinanakit sa puso, na kahit ano mang init ang iparamdam mo dito, hindi pa rin matitibag ang batong ilang taon nang nabuo.

Lumapit siya sa mga bisig ng kanyang ina. Pinipilit na huwag panghinaan ng loob. Pero huli na ang lahat. Wala na siya. Sa pagkalisang nito sa mundo, siya namang pagdating ng kaibigan ng kanyang ina na si Tess. Nagmukhang siya ang nakapatay sa kanyang ina pero wala na siyang natitirang lakas upang ipagtanggol pa ang sarili sa kasalanan na hindi niya naman ginawa.



# HALALAN 2022 BINGO

ANO ANG HINAHANAP MO SA ISANG  
MABUTING PINUNO?

 <b>KATAPATAN</b>	 <b>MAHABAGIN</b>	 <b>NAKIKIRAMAY</b>	 <b>INTEGRIDAD</b>
 <b>BUKAS ANG ISIP</b>	 <b>RISK-TAKER</b>	 <b>DIPLOMATIK</b>	<b>MAY PINANAGUTAN</b> 
 <b>MATAPANG</b>	 <b>NAKAKAISA</b>	 <b>KASANAYAN SA PAMAMAHALA NG KRISIS</b>	<b>MABISANG KOMUNIKATOR</b> 
 <b>MAY MORALIDAD</b>	<b>MAY MABUTING IMPLUWENSIYA</b> 	 <b>NANGUNGUNA SA PAGBABAGO</b>	 <b>MALAWAK ANG KAALAMAN</b>

**PAGBABAGO'Y  
MATATAMO SA  
PAGBOBOTO.**

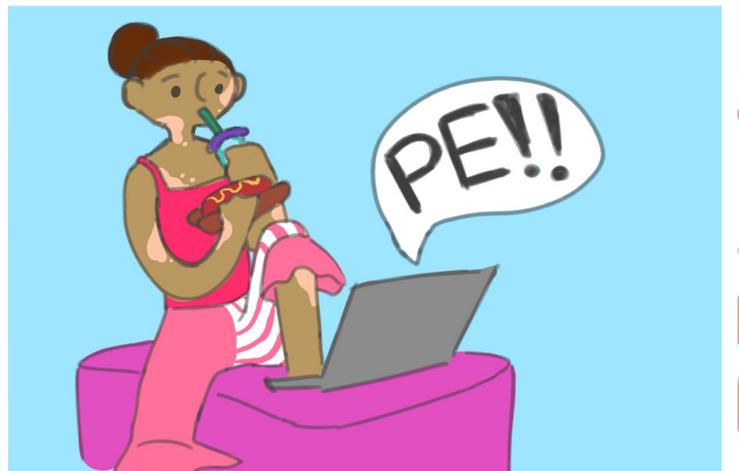
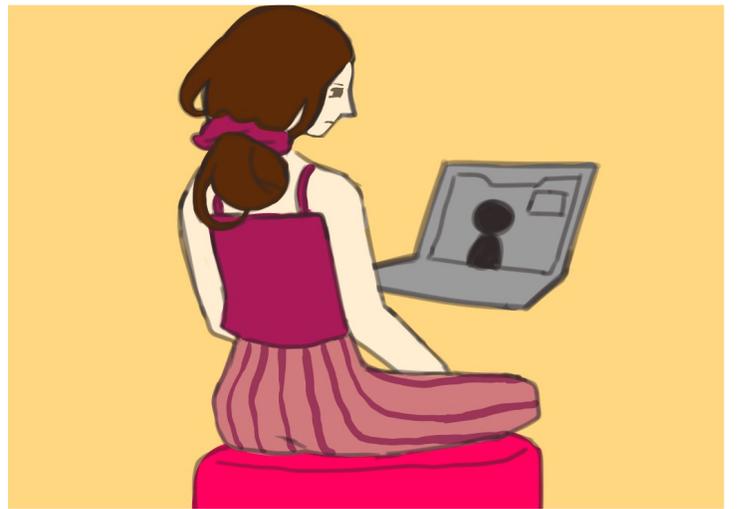
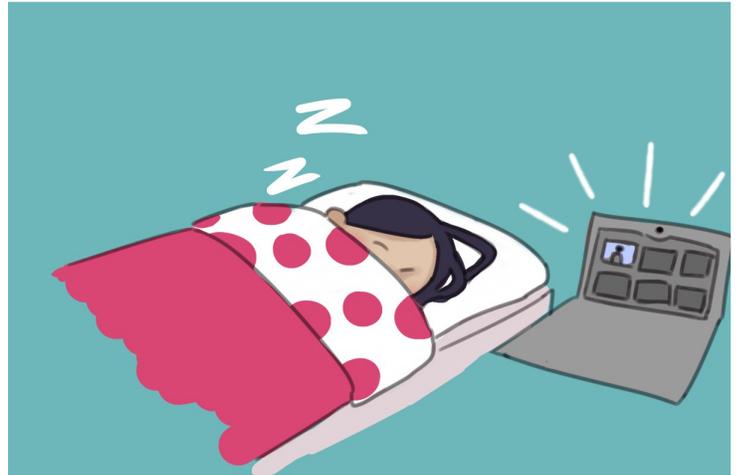
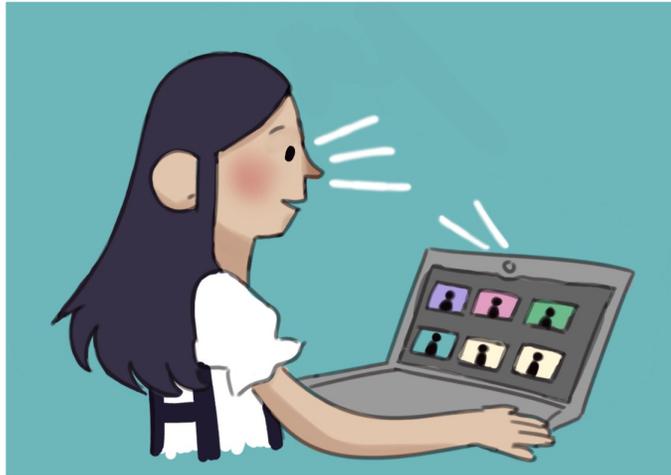
**MAKIALAM. MAG-  
REHISTRO. BUMOTO.**

Palagaan ang Dangal ng Boses ng  
Mamayanan sa Darating na Mayo 9,  
2022.

# This or That

ONLINE CLASS EDITION

Gawa ni Roanne Julia A. Qimbo



## Ano ang paboritong online class experience mo?



Chibi art gawa ni Roanne Qimbo

Ang favorite online class experience ko ay ang virtual Christmas party na naganap sa section namin last year. Tuwang tuwa ako sa pinaggagagawa namin, lalo na sa tema ng party namin; murder mystery. Ang role ng mga kaklase ko ay detective at para uniform silang lahat, nakablazer sila at naka-Zoom filter. Ako naman ang murdered. Ang layunin ng mga detective ay alamin kung sino sa kanila ang pumatay sa akin base sa mga clues na makukuha nila sa mga laro. Ang Christmas party namin ay puno ng tawanan, at bilang isang new student, mahalaga ang mga pagkakataong 'yon para sa akin. Nararamdaman kong tunay akong kabilang sa kanila. **- Aria Montesclaros**

Ang pinakafavorite online class experience ko ay bago magsimula ang klase, laging may maikling kamustahan session. Paborito ko ang experience na iyon dahil mayroon akong pagkakataon na magopen-up sa mga pinagdadaan ko at kung anong nararamdaman ko sa buong araw o sa nakalipas na mga linggo. **- Stefi Peji**

Yung sabi ko, ay sige on ko nalang muna yung link tapos ligo muna ako. Pag balik ko basang-basa pa ako tapos kami na lang dalawa ni Ms. Aprell sa main session, yun pala nasa breakout rooms na lahat. **- Jye Sumilang**

Ang pinakapaborito kong online class experience ay ang Christmas Party namin. Isa ata iyon sa pinakamasayang araw ko sa aking Grade 10 life. Yung pagjamming namin sa Christmas songs, paglalaro ng Who's That Baby, at madami pang iba. OA man pakinggan pero tinetreasure ko talaga yung memory na 'yon kasi ang saya lang talaga. Nakakataba ng puso. **- Jen Palo**

Hindi lamang isang beses pero maraming beses kaming nagkakasiyahan sa klase. Ikinagagalak ko na ako ay naging parte ng batch ko na ito, grade 11 St. Frances batch 21-22. Yung mga sandaling tawanan pag nagjojoke ang titser at pag nagkwewentuhan ng di oras, lahat ng ito'y dinidibid ko ng tunay at hinding-hindi ko makakalimutan. **- Max Mangahis**

Ang most memorable para sa akin ay yung mga times na may naka- filter at yung may biglang nag-a-unmute habang nagkaklase. Nakakatawa tingnan ang mga kaklase na biglang lumaki ang mga mata sa takot nung natawag. **- SB Bagro**

Iyong tuwing katapusan ng English month, MAPEH month, o iba't ibang selebrasyon sa bawat buwan. Masayang makita ang mga proyektong nabuo ng kapwa ko Kulasa. **- Andrea Nicole Alcasid**

Ang memorable na online class experience ko ay ang pagkalimot ko magmute ng microphone tapos kumanta pa ako. Ito ay nangyari habang nag-eexam kami. Nakakahiya pero mas nakakatawa. **- Eunice Lorenzo**

Ang naging memorable sa akin ay yung mga klase ko kay Sir Villie. Siya ang aming guro sa chemistry at natutuwa ako dahil tuwing nagpapatawa siya walang nakakaintindi sa sobrang lalim ng ibig sabihin nito ngunit ang saya pa rin dahil natatawa kami sa seryoso niyang pagbanggit ng biro. **- Yza Momose**

Sa buong karanasan ko sa pagonline class, hindi ko malilimutan ang mga pagsasanay o pagsasagawa ng mga bidyo para sa mga programa kasama ang aking mga kaklase at kaibigan. Nakakatuwa lang isipin ang mga biruan at tawanan habang nagiiisip ng mga konsepto o gagawin. Isa na rin diyan ang paglilibang namin gamit ang mga "video filters" sa Zoom at pagkuha ng maraming litrato pagkatapos. **- Joanna Barros**

