



SHARING HOSPICE

Dedicated to the care and comfort of the dying
 A Quarterly Newsletter of the Madre de Amor Hospice Foundation

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2008

ISSUE 32

EDITORIAL

Gaining Media Mileage

In a banner article “Hospice care for the dying alive and well in RP” front page, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, November 1, 2004, Ma. Ceres P. Doyo wrote at length on the role of the Los Baños based Madre de Amor Hospice Foundation in hospice and palliative care as one of the prime movers of the hospice movement.

It started to generate general interest in the program and subsequent media exposures followed.

Four years later, the foundation basked in brighter limelight not only nationwide but also worldwide. In 2008 the country’s giant TV stations ABS-CBN and GMA-7 featured terminally-ill patients in their homes and hospice volunteers in action.

Robin Coligado, nine years old met his idol and namesake Robin Padilla through the program “Wish ko lang” and eventually received a “Kabuhayan Showcase” which became a source of income for his family before his demise on December 22, 2008.

ABS CBN, the program “Salamat Doc” featured Dr. Rhodora D. Ocampo, as a part of the National Hospice and Palliative Care week.

Still other exposures included “The Correspondent’s” staff with Bernadette Sembrano on the helm, interviewing hospice patient Gillian Sumilang, Dr. Rhodora D. Ocampo, Virginia Cabrera and hospice volunteers and was shown worldwide. Enthusiastic kababayans caught the program through The Filipino Channel.

2009 started well as Dr. Rhodora D. Ocampo and Trustee Teresita C. Gonzales of the MDAH and Kythe’s Executive Director, Ms. Girlie Lorenzo were featured in Tina Monzon-Palmas’s “Talk Back with Tina” (ANC). This was about the hospice advocacy.

Through the various media exposures, the Foundation gained considerable footage enhancing the hospice program.

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THE PEACEFUL DEATH OF NANAY DOLORES

Every Tuesday, we are scheduled to visit cancer patients; one of these patients was Nanay Dolores. We visited her more than ten times before she left this world but in that short period, we came to be like a family. Nanay would welcome us and we would talk endlessly. She was a teacher, for a long time. When she was still well, she took care of her grandson Nico, but as her condition worsened, parting seemed inevitable. She was in terrible pain, had difficulty in breathing and eating. It was then that she decided to entrust Nico to her in-laws.

After the first volunteers’ meeting for 2009 held at the Romana’s residence, Nida and I brought a hospital bed for Nanay. She had been unable to lie flat on her bamboo bed for 3 days since she could not breathe properly. We transferred her to the hospital bed with the help of her grandson, J.R. and my driver Jeffrey.

We talked to her granddaughter Renny and learned that Nanay listens to El Shaddai. We asked if she wanted to see a priest and she eagerly said yes, so we searched for a priest in Real, Calamba. Fortunately, Fr Jhun was available but he was still saying mass. We attended the mass and waited for him. He and his sacristan came with us. Fr Jhun prayed and during his benediction with holy oil, Nanay fell asleep without anyone noticing. Knowing she rarely gets a break from the pains of her illness, we let her be.

That Sunday, around 10:00am, we visited Nanay Dolores. She was hallucinating. She asked about clearing up Jollibee boxes that were not there. She also said that her parents came by to pick her up but she told them that she can not go yet, and that her husband came too. She was glad because they could eat together again. J.R. told us that Nanay had been looking for us since last Friday. She only ate 5 spoonfuls though.

Nanay Dolores hoped that she could rest in peace. On Monday morning, her eldest son went to visit her. Later, at past 3:00pm, she passed away. Her eldest son was with her. At the funeral, her peaceful sleeping face attested that God granted her wish.

“O Lord, let your perpetual lights shine upon her soul and grant her rest. I thank God and Mama Mary for her peaceful death. May Nanay Dolores’ soul rest in peace, Amen.

-Lilian Cheng

MDAHF CELEBRATES WORLD HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE DAY

The Madre de Amor Hospice Foundation joined in the worldwide celebration of the World Hospice and Palliative Care Day led by the Palliative Care Alliance with a mini concert held at the Hospice Center. The theme of the celebration was, Hospice and Palliative Care: A Human Right, the same theme adopted by the World Hospice and Palliative Care Day. Atty. Asuncion B. Kalalo, President of Hospice Philippines, in her message to the nation, underscored the crucial role of hospice and says thus: "Today, we stand proud to have remained steadfast for the last past years in our resolve to bring about quality of life to indigent terminally-ill patients and those afflicted with life-threatening illnesses." And so, rocking and rolling to the music of rock stars and swaying to the nostalgic songs of balladeers, the Hospice staff, volunteers and friends, joined in the glorious celebration of life!

Ed.



Our patient Gillian Sumilang singing with his mom and sister.



Nurse Pretzel jamming with Irma and Juliet Dimaranan.



Robin's special guest Piolo Pascual along with his family and friends singing happy birthday.

ROBIN'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Robin Neal Coligado celebrated his last birthday on December 20, 2008 at the Hospice Center during the Christmas gift-giving by the staff of Banco de Oro head office and actor Piolo Pascual. It was a pleasant surprise for Robin! Lilian Cheng, Robin's volunteer, brought him a birthday cake, spaghetti, hotdog with marshmallows and balloons. The BDO staff brought fried chicken from Max's. Surrounded by the volunteers, staff and guests, Robin made a wish before blowing the candles on the cake. Later, in spite of the boy's obvious weakness, Lilian and company gave in to his request to go to the mall to buy a favorite toy.

From the mall, the group, together with the daycare "barkada", went to Kamayan restaurant for lunch - to grant Robin his other request, to eat his favorite "sinigang na sugpo". Because he had difficulty in breathing and felt pain all over his body, Robin managed to eat just a little of his "sinigang". The leftover was taken home for his dinner. On Dec 21, Robin suffered severe pain and unlike before, this time, he asked for a pain reliever. He asked for every member of the family to be around him especially his father. Via mobile phone, he called his siblings who were out of town, to come home and be with him.

He kept telling his mother and the rest of the family that he loved them and that he wanted to meet his grandparents who were both dead. On December 22, Robin died peacefully surrounded by his beloved family. I went to Robin's wake on Christmas day for a last glance of our little day care patient. I felt bad seeing the obvious pain of his family. But I was grateful for the precious time we had with him. I know that like me, all his day care friends will never forget him. They were all present at his funeral.

-Virginia G. Cabrera

NILA: A STORY OF RESILIENCE AND HOPE

My first association with Nila started in September 2008 during a 25 minute car ride to her house in Calauan. The house was small, one room hut that was smack right in the middle of ricefields. It was at the very end of a narrow, though cemented, road in Mabacan. As told by Nurse Pretzel, I thought Nila's story was a sure candidate for a telenovela. Though born in Oriental Mindoro, Nila grew up in Calauan where her family migrated due to lack of a decent source of living in their home province. At the early age of 12, fate handed her a severe blow when she fell off a tricycle.

She suffered back injuries from the accident which her parents thought were not serious. She was not brought to a hospital or a doctor for a thorough examination. Gradually, she felt pain in her back which in time, worsened. Apparently, the trauma of the injury affected her spine seriously. At age 15, Nila had to undergo a laminectomy, to relieve the pressure on her spinal nerve. The pressure was the cause of her constant back pain. However, the surgery failed to improve Nila's condition. After the procedure, she was unable to walk normally and her condition continued to deteriorate. She lost control of her bowel and urinary functions and feelings on her lower extremities. She became a paraplegic, confined to a wheelchair, hardly able to move herself around.

But the Lord has reserved pleasant surprises for her. Despite being a semi-invalid with scarce opportunities for social interactions, Nila eventually met an extraordinary man. After a brief courtship, they were married. Gerald Exconde was originally from Mindoro too and worked in a dairy farm about 5km from Nila's place.. Though ten years younger, Gerald gave Nila memorable and happy moments that might have been elusive because of her condition. In 2006, the couple were gifted with a precious bundle of a baby girl they named Nicole. Nila confided to Pretzel that when she gave birth to Nicole, she felt absolutely nothing! No cramps, no pain! I thought it was very unusual...to feel nothing while your baby is being born! What a blessing from the Lord, to exempt her from further suffering! In addition to her being a paraplegic, Nila was also "nursing" an ominous lump in her breast. She felt the lump 2 years before her pregnancy which she chose to ignore. I guess that given the condition she was in, the lump was just a "minor" thing, the least to worry about. But the lump grew into a mass during her pregnancy and turned into a nasty abscess. After giving birth to Nicole,

Nila was given antibiotics to treat her open wound. It dried up but the mass continued to grow. In December 2006, Nila was brought to the Philippine General Hospital for a biopsy. The biopsy confirmed Nila had an invasive ductal carcinoma. She was advised to undergo chemotherapy. However, because of fear and the lack of financial resources, the suggested treatment was not pursued. Through all these, Nila's firm and strong relationship with the Lord carried her along, it was supported by the unwavering love and care of her mother who practically raised baby Nicole while ministering to her needs. An elder sister also came home from abroad to help them.

Her enrollment at the Madre de Amor Hospice in July 2008 was providential for her. The Hospice sustained her need for pain relievers and the Hospice nurse and volunteers gave her and her caregivers, the fellowship, assurance, comfort and advise which they desperately needed.

- Ruth M. Villareal
Volunteer

Death Opens the Door To Life Evermore

We live a short while on earth below,
reluctant to die, for we do not know
Just what dark death is all about
and so we view it with fear and doubt.
Not certain of what is around the bend,
we look on death as the final end
To all that made us mortal beings,
and yet there lies beyond our seeing
A beautiful life so full and complete
that we should leave with hurrying feet
To walk with God by sacred streams
amid beauty and peace beyond our dreams.
For all who believe in the Risen Lord
have been assured of this reward,
And death for them is just graduation
to a higher realm of wide elevation.
For Life on earth is a transient affair,
just a few brief years in which to prepare
For a life that is free from pain and tears
where time is not counted by hours or years.
For death is only the method God chose
to colonize heaven with the souls of those
Who by their apprenticeship on earth
proved worthy to dwell in the land of new birth.
So death is not sad, it's a time for elation,
a joyous transition, the soul's emigration
Into a place where the soul's safe and free
to live with God through eternity.

- Helen Steiner Rice

MUSIKA NG PAG-ASA

The much anticipated event, “Musika ng Pag-asa” featuring Noel Cabangon sponsored by the Madre de Amor Hospice Foundation, Inc. finally took shape on November 27, 2008. Much work was put into the affair through the concerted efforts of the medical director, her staff and the volunteers.

Noel Cabangon is the voice behind the popular song “Kanlungan or Pana-panahon”. He is also a singer-song writer and a musical director for theater. Most of his songs are about the common Filipino’s experiences from the poor farmers and overseas Filipino workers.

He has already released four albums under his name. Aside from being a singer, a song writer, and a musical director he is also an environmental advocate, an Ambassador for Conservation of the Harribon Foundation and is involved in the campaigns of Green Peace International and a Campaigner for Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP).

Upon arriving at Los Baños Noel’s group went directly to Mio Cusina to have dinner with the Hospice Program Director Dr. Rhodora Ocampo and her staff and later proceeded to Lina’s Orchard where the concert proper was held. The band prepared for a while to fix their desired positions and set their particular instruments.

Before the concert, a powerpoint presentation about the story of Madre de Amor Hospice Foundation was shown to get a background of hospice.

The crowds of both young and old were treated to a repertoire of his famous songs echoing the simple lives of ordinary people, their struggles and aspirations. It touched the nationalistic hearts of the listeners.

Spectators was also treated to “All you can eat congee” prepared by the Hospice volunteer kitchen brigade under the expertise of Eva Data with the help of Laguna State Polytechnic University students, Hotel and Restaurant Department. Bottomless ice tea was served at the Nestle, Philippines attractive booth.

The event was a huge success and an affair to remember for a long time.

-Rene Michael C. Gonzales



Noel Cabangon and his band on stage.



The audience say their pledge to be a good Filipino.



The happy volunteers and staff with Noel after a successful concert.



Our nurses Cris and Pretzel walking amidst coconut trees on their way to visit patients.



No one is too far for our nurses to visit.



Cris showing her love and caring touch to a patient.

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I OWE IT TO THE HOSPICE

A few experiences have inspired me in my life. On top of the list is being a hospice nurse.

When the opportunity to work in the hospice opened its door, I did not have second thoughts. Bearing in mind that I will be taking care of the dying patients which I know will be a difficult task, I took the challenge.

I must admit that hospice work is not as easy as working in the hospital. It took me long time before I became familiar with the processes in the hospice and the nursing care delivered to our dying patients. During my training with Nurse Pretzel and Dr. Dory Ocampo, I learned about hospice care which has disciplines that is far from what we had in the nursing school, specifically, pain management. I learned how to communicate with the patients who are undergoing the grieving process--- accepting their loss, and the prospect of imminent death. I learned to shed tears and empathize.

Everyday has been a learning experience for me at the hospice. I have learned many new things both in nursing and about life.. In the future, I may be taking a different path, but I will cherish all the things that I learned in the hospice.

*-Cristina Matulac, R.N
Hospice Nurse*

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- Wheelchair Foundation thru Los Baños Rotary
- Whitley Methodist Church, London UK
- Whitley Wives, London UK

Our Hospice needs your help. Here's how:

1. Be a volunteer and share your time or talent.
2. Donate your old clothes for our regular ukay-ukay sale.
3. Donate cash through:

Bank of the Philippine Islands

Los Baños Branch

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We are PCNC accredited.

For more information about our hospice, you may call us at +6349-536-0644, or text at 0918-915-7490, or email us at info@hospice.org.ph and hospicelb@yahoo.com.

Visit our website at www.hospice.org.ph or

<http://hospicelb.multiply.com>

*"Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers,
you do it unto me".*

- Matthew 25:40