



From left, Consul General Mario L. de Leon, Jr., Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer and PACC President Michael Nierva.

The Philippine Consulate General participated in the “Doing Business in NYC” Seminar, hosted by the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce (PACC) New York in partnership with the

NYC Department of Small Business Services, held at the New York Philippine Center on April 29.

The seminar was open to all small business entrepreneurs seeking to establish their own business, and aimed to encourage small business owners to actively pursue their trade by enhancing their knowledge of services offered by NYC that can be beneficial to them, such as preparing a business plan, securing financing and accessing city benefits.

Welcome remarks were provided by PACC President Michael Nierva, followed by keynote speeches by Consul General Mario L. de Leon, Jr. and Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer of the NYC Department of Small Business Services.

De Leon commended the PACC for championing small business owners in recognition of their vital role in the domestic economy and engaging them in dialogue in matters that are critical in an ever-shifting global economy.

He also conveyed gratitude to the Small Business Services led by Torres-Springer for supporting Filipino business owners, noting that it was only last November when he and Nierva met her for the first time and how the relationship barely half a year later led to this first project.

He further recognized Torres-Springer who, as a second generation Filipino-American, currently occupies a critical position in government and raises the profile of Filipinos in the city and the U.S.

He also observed how her success at a young age represents that segment of younger generation Filipino-Americans who aspire for public service careers.

While there are a number of challenges in establishing businesses, such as access to capital and regulatory requirements, de Leon pointed out various success stories of Filipino-American entrepreneurs for inspiration, such as tech investor Dado Banatao, who became famous in Silicon Valley; Jersey City's Philippine Bread House started by Elma Santander 30 years ago to become one of the top 25 tastes of the city featured in The New York Times; the successful

Philippine food franchises Max, Red Ribbon and Jollibee that are patronized by Filipinos and non-Filipinos in both the East and West Coast; and Erwin Santos of Philam store in Jersey City and Queens who grew his parents mini-grocery to become the biggest Filipino grocery in the East Coast.

These success stories provide not just a glimpse of possibilities but an aspiration to succeed that can be emulated in our community, he added.

In her remarks, Torres-Springer shared her own experiences as a Filipino entrepreneur herself who strived long and hard to fulfill her goals to find success in the business establishment.

She encouraged members of the community to look at the success stories of Filipino-Americans who have established prolific businesses and even gained mainstream recognition.

She explained that her administration has three pillars, namely: connecting New Yorkers to good job opportunities; promotion of strong business; and building a fair economy.

Further, she said that her administration nurtures technology to provide jobs with good wages, promotes transparency in dealing with red tape and bureaucracy, and created various initiatives to serve the underserved such as immigrants and women in NYC.

Expanding the local economy can be made with help of technology and by uplifting women as entrepreneurs because doing so uplifts families, communities and the city's economy, she underscored.

The topics of the seminar that were discussed afterwards were: "Access to Financing & Alternative Lending" by Mr. Ricardo Devallon of the NYC Business Solutions Lower Manhattan; "M/WBE & Selling to Government" by Mr. James Venia of the Division of Economic and Financial Opportunity; "Business Acceleration & Navigating Government" by Mr. William "Bill" Vega of the Department of Business Acceleration; and "Business Legal Structure" by Attorney-at-Law Sapna Gupta, Pro-bono legal attorney for NYC Business Solutions.

A short question-and-answer portion was held after each seminar.

The attendees expressed appreciation to the organizers for the seminar which provided them new perspectives on doing business in NYC with the help of SBS, the local Chamber, as well as the Consulate General which have resources that can provide them with business solutions for their concerns, whether they are growing their enterprise or are just start-ups.

Corporate sponsors were the Seven Seven Corporate Group, 13 Degrees North, Lumpia Shack (which catered the seminar lunch), RN Express and Manhattan Employment Services, Inc.