

Duterte confers LINKAPIL award to U.S.-based group

Written by Contributed to the Filipino Reporter
Tuesday, 08 January 2019 10:47



Some members of Friends Indeed USA, Inc. after receiving the Lingkod Sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL) Award from President Rodrigo Roa Duterte at Malacañang Palace on Dec. 5, 2018. In photo are (from left) Gilda Stiefel, Josie and Sal Ciccotto, Dr. Edgar and Mary Jane Lerias, Engr. Roger Alama, President Duterte, Raymond and Nena Smith (President), Rodrigo Bonifacio, Cora and Dr. Kit Reyes, and Dr. Linda Pelayo. (Photo courtesy of Malacañang Press Corps)

Profile of Friends

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Indeed USA, Inc.

No one can change the world in a day, neither can anyone do so alone.

Passionately driven by the cause to serve the poor, Friends Indeed USA (FIUSA), Inc. is a registered, non-profit organization in the United States composed of individuals who encourage sharing with the less privileged.

Through their Filipino-American friends in the United States, they have successfully held fundraising events to supply various types of humanitarian aid to their countrymen in the Philippines, imbuing in their members a sense of civic consciousness since 2005.

The organization encourages its members to live by three main virtues — kindness, generosity and *balikbayanihan* — attributes that have made their first housing project a success.

Seeing the need for decent shelter for their *kababayan*, they were able to generate U.S.\$28,000 from the Friendship Charity Grand Ball of the members alone and were able to collect an additional U.S.\$10,000 from other benefactors.

These activities allowed the organization to purchase 1,300 square meters of land in Totolan, Dausi, Bohol to jumpstart a housing project.

In partnership with Gawad Kalinga, 29 houses with potable water supply and a multi-purpose court were constructed in 2006 and turned over in 2007 for 29 families.

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The Philippines is a country more adversely affected by natural disasters, such as flooding and landslides.

With knowledge of the indigent's difficulty in bouncing back from strong typhoons, they have humbly donated cash and relief goods for victims in areas of Aklan, Capiz, Cagayan de Oro City, among others; also giving away solar lamps, water pumps, generators, and vegetable seeds.

Food packages were also given as valuable gifts to a wide set of beneficiaries, including abandoned and abused girls in Matina, Davao City; orphanage for boys in Guianga; Badjaos in the Matina Aplaya; Aplaya and Aeta community in Gabaldon and Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija; and Tahanan ni Maria Center in Cabanatuan City.

The organization grew from the relationships they created amongst each other and the world.

From assisting their countrymen in times of disasters to donating two water tanks for the 300 prisoners in Tagbilaran City Jail, their members have rebuilt the lives and touched the hearts of people they have come into contact with.

Apart from small-scale infrastructures, they have also been providing free medical and surgical services since 2007.

They conducted their first surgical mission at the Eastern Samar Provincial Hospital with three volunteer-surgeons performing 12 major surgeries.

This was followed by a second surgical mission at Quezon Memorial Hospital with four volunteer-surgeons performing 19 major and 56 minor surgeries, such as cataract eye surgery, cleft palate surgery, and lump removal, among others.

In total, they have donated roughly P16 million, reaching 35,000 beneficiaries in various sectors

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in the Philippines.

Aside from medical and surgical services, they donated medical supplies and equipment such as electrocardiogram (ECG) machines, high blood pressure wall monitors, dialysis machines, portable oxygens, and infant suction machines.

Like many developing countries, the poorest of the poor often experience a scarcity of resources.

To fill this gap, its members donated 10 sacks of fertilizers and 100 sacks of rice to farmers in Batangays Taclaon and Carmen in Bohol.

FIUSA, Inc. has also shown support to the anti-drug campaign of the Philippine Government as they believe that a drug-free environment is essential to realize the full potential of each individual.

To help reduce drug demand and dependency, they have partnered with the People's Volunteer Against Illegal Drugs (PVAID), for preventive education and values formation.

They have also coordinated with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for their skills development program to provide livelihood opportunities to their barangay recipients.

With the organization's commitment, selflessness and dedication to serve Filipinos, FIUSA, Inc. certainly serves as an inspiration to Filipino communities and organizations around the world.

(In conferring the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award to Friends Indeed USA, Inc., President Rodrigo Roa Duterte recognizes the organization's socio-economic assistance and services for the marginalized sector and underprivileged communities in the country.)