



FCDC TODAY

Filipino-American Community &
Development Center of Ocean County Inc.
2014 Bayaning Pilipino Awardee
December 2024

Member Spotlight - Kyle Koppin



While Kyle was still in his mother's womb, he gave his parents the shock of their lives. They were told that an ultrasound detected conditions that were quite worrisome but his parents made the decision to see the pregnancy through.

Thankfully, his birth was uneventful. Even in his early years, his most distinctive trait was his clear and frequent giggle. His eyes would disappear each time he smiled or laughed.

Fifteen years down the road, that ready smile and laugh are still his signature traits. He was among the top graduates of St. Dominic School and went on to be accepted into the Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science or MATES.

**Kyle's first field trip with
FACES at the American
Museum of Natural
History, New York (11/24)**



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Challenging as MATES is, Kyle finds the time to develop other interests as well. He learned to play a guitar four years ago and for three years, he has been playing in a band. They play in bars such as The Stone Pony and most recently, the band participated in the Toms River Halloween Parade where their float won 2nd place. He plays tennis for Toms River North as first singles. He also enjoys playing chess. He likes his chemistry classes and is thinking of being a chemical engineer.

Kyle first learned of the FCDC from a schoolmate and is now also a member of Bukas Loob sa Diyos.

Clearly, Kyle is using his energy and talents to develop physically, mentally, and spiritually.



family is EVERYTHING

Kyle is an only child of loving and dedicated parents Joel and Marylou Koppin.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY JASMINE ALCID



HAPPY NEW YEAR

2025

Make
THE WORLD
a
better place

Announcement:

FCDC is inviting Filipino-American high school senior students to apply for Dr. Ynaya Scholarship. Please see following pages for the requirements.

Completeness of submission is essential.

As we reflect on the year that has passed, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride for all that we've accomplished together.



Thanks to the dedication and passion of our volunteers, partners and supporters, we've made significant strides in advancing our mission and strengthening the bonds within our community. From the Dr. Ynaya Scholarship Program that helped senior students, to the Filipino Summer Camp that educated children of Filipino culture and tradition, to countless moments of connection and empowerment. Together, we've not only met our goals but exceeded them in ways that will leave a lasting impact.

The memories we've created, from shared moments of joy at our community events to the quiet, powerful acts of kindness that occur behind the scenes, are a testament to the heart and spirit of this organization. As we move forward, I am excited to build upon this momentum and continue work with the same passion and commitment that has defined this past year. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey.



From Dec 3-16, we have received donations from generous supporters amounting to

\$ 15,206.50

*Maraming Salamat Po!
Thank You Very Much!*

**Dr. Jess and Jasmine Alcid - Dr. Ramon Suatengco -
Leila Bucoy - Patty Parsons - Ester Tambor -
Christine Matus - Christine Lauguico - Dr. Louie and
Maryann Payumo - Bernadette Manansala -
Anna Batin - Dr. Mario Gallardo - Arlene Tan -
Dr. Angela and Dominic Pamintuan - Mary Lou Koppin -
Dr. Celine Villanueva - Anonymous - Will Perono -
Cate Suobiron - Elaine Cunanan - Malou Tupaz -
Dr. Dan and Lisa Martinez -
Plymouth Rock Assurance Foundation -
Martin and Alcid Foundation
Filipino-American Medical Society of Toms River, Inc.**



Filipino-American Community and Development Center of Ocean County, Inc. (FCDC)

presents

Dr. RENE YNAYA Scholarship 2025

A financial scholarship given to a graduating high school student attending a public or private school in Ocean County who will attend a 4-year college course.

Dr. Rene Ynaya was a cardiologist in Toms River who practiced his profession for over 50 years. He was a founding member of FCDC and FAMS (Filipino-American Medical Society) of Toms River.

Criteria/Requirements or Consideration

1. Open to FCDC/ FACES members or any Filipino-American students in Ocean County.
2. Student must be in good standing that demonstrates an interest in pursuing a 4-year college program.
3. Student must write an essay on why they have an interest in his/her chosen field (maximum of 350 words).
4. Student must submit a 3 year GPA in high school.
5. Student must submit 2 letters of recommendation from a teacher or influential adult in their lives (non-family member) as to why he/she deserves to receive the scholarship.
6. Student must submit a resume detailing extracurricular activities, years of membership and involvement in FCDC/FACES, and other volunteer/community services.
7. A photo must be attached.

Winners will receive \$2,000 and will be awarded at the end of the school year.

For questions/comments, please contact FCDC or email fcdcteam@gmail.com
Deadline of Submission: March 31,2025

FCDC Year-End Party



More photos on our FCDC Facebook site

FCDC Year-End Party



FCDC Board Meeting



More photos on our FCDC Facebook site

FCDC Board Meeting



FCDC Participates in Simbang Gabi



More photos on our FCDC Facebook site



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

by Jamie Mariano



Thank you all and God bless you!

We had another successful year of publishing FCDC Today. It is no easy feat to put out a newsletter on a monthly basis, with our personal lives, careers, special events, unexpected circumstances, and life in general keeping us busy day in and day out. FCDC Today is a labor of love with an editorial team and columnists who share their gifts and talents. Thank you to all those who sweat over the details of articles and the layout, who ensure that nothing is overlooked, and to those who, at times, have to do some damage control if an article or layout wasn't done correctly. As an editorial staff, we are still human and we aim for a perfect newsletter, but sometimes miss. Thank you all for your grace in this!

Dr. Ramon Suatengco brought it to my attention that I've been editing for about 10 years already. That's about 120 issues of FCDC Today! I was humbled by the revelation because I do take it for granted sometimes. It's just something I've been doing and enjoy, but I haven't really sat back and thought about what the newsletter truly means for our members and those who happen to come across FCDC Today on social media.

FCDC Today has successfully been published 120 times while I've been editor, not counting the many years it's been in publication before I assumed the role. So, hundreds of issues have been in circulation, and none of it could have been published if not for the Filipino Ocean County community. FCDC Today is dedicated to showcasing our fellow Filipinos and community contributions. If it weren't for our active members who give back, who participate in events, and are successful in school and their careers, our newsletter would be bare with very little to write about!

So, continue making a difference in Ocean County and abroad. Continue to put your best foot forward academically and professionally. Keep FCDC traditions alive by being actively involved and inviting new people to events. Bring new ideas to the table. FCDC Today will always proudly publish what our community is doing month after month.

Congratulations, FCDC family, on an exciting and incredibly successful 2024. I look forward to another year of sharing more accomplishments!





ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

by Ferlie Almonte
Speaker. Author. Life Coach.
De-cember De-molition

The year will soon come to an end. With the birth of a new year, what do people usually do? Yep! You hit the nail right on its head. We make New Year's Resolutions.

It's quite amusing that many items on our lists make a not-surprising comeback, year after year. Lose weight. Exercise regularly. Save money.

Why is it that many of us are horrible at keeping promises to those recurring new year's resolutions?

I refuse to de-fault to the "that's human nature" line of reasoning every De-cember when we reflect and evaluate our personal performance for the past year.

Here are some powerful tweaks we can apply to our lives that could change the trajectory of the years ahead:

De-fault: Mindset is powerful. Time to reframe the way we view life. Stop the blame game, and take control and responsibility for our actions and results.

De-liberate: What's our WHY? Clarity of our goals and intentions is crucial to creating a roadmap to where we want to go.

De-sign: We are the architect of the life we want. Our future. We create the blueprint.

De-liver: Be prepared to follow our GPS (Growth Prosperity Strategy) faithfully and tenaciously.


De-cline: Failure is not an option. Refuse to give in to disempowering beliefs and negative thoughts.

De-tour: Regularly evaluate our progress and relevance of our decisions.

Let us not be afraid to redirect our plans and courses of action, as needed. We will be Divinely guided.

Let us Conquer our demons and Be De-termined to make positive changes going forward to turn our New Year's Resolutions into Doable Permanent Solutions.

**What to do in De-cember?
De-clutter your space,
De-tach yourself from
toxic relationships,
De-lete what de-values
your worth and potential,
De-fine your purpose
De-sign your efforts to
creating the life you want,
and De-dicate your
energies to living the
joyful and meaningful life
YOU DE-SERVE ❤️**



Ferlie Almonte
Speaker. Author
Life Coach

Halo-Halo-Ween

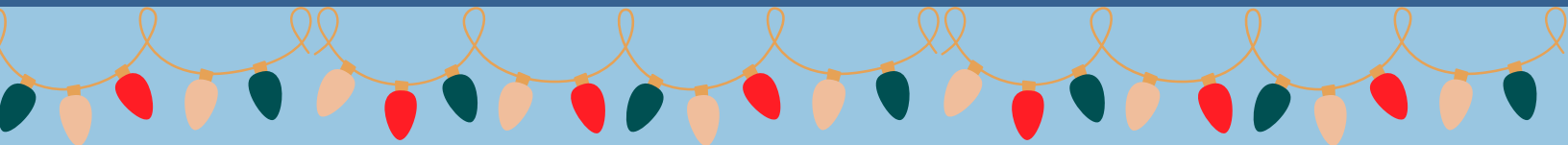
by Zachary Lichter

The Filipino Organization of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) held multiple events during the month of October in honor of Filipino-American History Month. One of the events was a fundraiser called “Halo-Halo-Ween,” which took place between October 22-25. The money that FOCUS raised went towards creating future events that they can hold during the course of the school year. During those four days, students had the opportunity to try halo-halo or mango juice served by the board members who were tabling in the Pryzbyla Center at Catholic University. While halo-halo is often enjoyed during the summer, I still enjoyed eating a summer treat that is always masarap.

As FOCUS was advertising “Halo-Halo-Ween” on their newsletter, I was surprised to learn a few days before that “halo-halo” meant “mix-mix” in English. I always thought that the word didn’t translate to anything and that the person who invented halo-halo just made the word up. But if you think about what is in halo-halo, it makes sense why it translates to “mix-mix” because there is coconut, ube ice cream, mung beans, jackfruit, and sometimes pinipig, which are pieces of rice all together in one cup. After reading several newsletters from FOCUS, I thought about how the dessert was created. My initial thought was that a 20th-century bartender at a resort in Boracay, an island in the Visayas region of the Philippines was trying to make a drink that would help satisfy the beachgoers, who were feeling overheated. But I learned later that the drink comes from a Japanese dessert called kakigori, which has beans, mongo milk and shaved ice.

When I went to “Halo-Halo-Ween” on October 22, 2024, on my way to class, the board member made my halo-halo with shaved ice, macapuno, red mung beans, red and green coconut jello, ube ice cream, and coconut milk. It was great to enjoy a Filipino dessert that brought back memories of my childhood. Growing up, I used to have halo-halo with my Lola, Nancy Ynaya, and my Lolo, the late Dr. Rene Ynaya, during the summer. It was a nice treat to enjoy during the summers when it was eighty degrees outside. No matter how old you are, halo-halo will always remain a comfort food to most Filipinos, a mystery to others, and an adventure depending on how you look at this dessert.





Paskong Pinoy

by Zachary Lichter

On December 4, 2024, FOCUS held an event with Catholic University's Center for Cultural Engagement (CCE) called, "Paskong Pinoy," inside the CCE office. The board members of FOCUS wanted people to enjoy a Filipino Christmas, which was the whole reason I went. Growing up, I never experienced any Filipino traditions during Christmas time because my Lola doesn't celebrate and my parents weren't too familiar with the Filipino traditions. But what was exciting about this event was that I got to see how Filipinos celebrate Christmas. Students had the opportunity to enjoy food from Jollibee and make a parol. A parol is a Filipino lantern made out of bamboo and Japanese paper that is shaped like a star. People put candles inside and hang them outside their front porch.

Since parols are normally made of bamboo, the board members of FOCUS provided everyone with four pieces of dowel wood and rods. In order to shape the pieces of wood into a star, they gave everyone rubber bands. If you wanted to make your parol three dimensional, you took hot glue and glued four rods to another set of four pieces of wood shaped like a star. Students then took tissue paper and were able to decorate it in any color they want. They then finished making their parol by gluing the tissue paper to the wood with a glue stick and taking a scissor to cut off the extra paper.



While making a parol was interesting, it was also challenging. The board members of FOCUS didn't teach or demonstrate how to make a parol, which made me feel confused. I struggled tying the pieces of wood to the rubber bands and I wasn't able to make it three dimensional. The second star I made didn't line up with the first star, which made me decide to make it two dimensional, which is the one you see above. Despite my struggles making a parol, it taught me to be patient with myself and to not give up.





FAST Carnival: A Celebration of Filipino Culture

by Jacob Tejada-Chong

During my first semester at Stevens Institute of Technology, the Filipino Association of Stevens Tech (FAST) hosted its much-anticipated FAST Carnival, an event dedicated to showcasing the vibrancy and diversity of Filipino culture. Founded in 1988, FAST has been a cornerstone of the campus' cultural diversity, promoting and celebrating Filipino heritage. Held on campus, the FAST Carnival featured a variety of activities, food, and performances that attracted students from all backgrounds. Traditional Filipino games like luksong tinik (a jumping game requiring skill and teamwork) and a version of tumbang preso (a can-knocking game) brought a sense of familiar culture for Filipino students, while introducing others to the fun and interactive side of Filipino traditions and games. The event also included a food station offering dishes like adobo, lumpia, and pancit, giving attendees a delicious taste of Filipino cuisine.

What stood out most during the FAST Carnival was the lively and inclusive atmosphere that it fostered. Cultural performances, including traditional dances like tinikling and a modern fusion routine, captivated the audience and served as a bridge between past and present Filipino culture. Attendees were encouraged to participate in tinikling, challenging their dance and coordination skills, while creating moments of shared laughter and connection. FAST Carnival was not only entertaining, but also educational; each activity and performance was accompanied by brief explanations about its cultural significance. This ensured that everyone, regardless of their background, could meaningfully engage with Filipino traditions.

FAST Carnival exemplified the organization's mission to promote cultural awareness and inclusivity within the Stevens community. By blending entertainment with education, the event succeeded in fostering a sense of unity amongst attendees through cultural engagement. For me, the FAST Carnival was also a valuable learning and volunteering experience, requiring teamwork and effective communication to pull off such an event. The success of FAST Carnival highlighted the importance of cultural organizations in enriching campus life at Stevens Institute of Technology, offering opportunities for students to celebrate their heritage, while sharing it with others. Events like these continue to strengthen the bonds of the Stevens community, making it a more inclusive and culturally aware environment.

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FAST Carnival - order from left to right: Jacob Chong, Benedict Ryan Martinez (current FAST President), Julianna Batin (Freshman Rep), Ellaina Paton-og



FAST Carnival - order from left to right: Jacob Chong, Ellaina Paton-og, Juliana Batin (Freshman Rep) in front of FAST Carnival Sign



FAST Carnival - Ellaina Paton-og and Jacob Chong, with tumbang preso set up in the background



Barangay Event at TCNJ by CJ Castaneda



This early November, The College of New Jersey’s Filipino Students Association, Barkada, held their biggest event of the fall semester, Barangay! Barangay is a student-run event that is all about celebrating Filipino culture with food from our local Kusina Ni Inang in Hamilton, cultural performances choreographed by students such as Tinikling, Maglalatik, Bulaklakan, and Sakuting, external performances from companies like Defined Movement and Project D, and so many more festivities!

I’ve had the amazing opportunity to be this year’s Freshman Representative, meaning that not only do I get to represent my freshman class, but I get to work with Barkada’s Executive Board of students to plan meetings and events like this one! So not only did I have so much fun performing in this show, but I got to learn about the inner workings of creating an event like this one, working with the logistics and planning of the event!

Besides being able to perform like this again and being able to show my immense love and appreciation for my culture through celebration, what I loved the most was celebrating with such an amazingly talented and crazy fun community like the Filipinos and non-Filipinos alike at TCNJ. Barangay truly just felt like a few hours of pure love for Filipino culture, and it was definitely the most fun I’ve had in a long time!





Toy Drive

Please donate **NEW**, unwrapped toys for the children of Ocean County and for the Philippines.

Accepting Donation Through

Tuesday, JANUARY 28TH

Drop-off Location:

Little Kusina 1594 US-9, Toms River, NJ 08755

For more information: fcdcteam@gmail.com





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