

# SEASON OF FAKE NEWS

Marcos warns public about disinformation during election

MANILA, Phl — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. cautioned the public of fake news and disinformation as the campaign season heats up. In his vlog, Marcos urged Filipinos to be extra

FAKE NEWS page 21



## One Act of Kindness at a Time, *even on vacation*

Even on vacation, Bal Yujuico, a Lions Kapuso member lives up to the mission of Lions International of "serving the world in need, one act of kindness at a time." Bal and his high school friend Mona Liza Lim organized a feeding outreach for 250 children and 50 adult residents, providing lunch boxes and drinks.

## Canada and Phl close to inking defense pact

Canada and the Philippines are in the final stages of negotiating a pact to allow them to deploy troops on each other's soil, the Cana-

DEFENSE page 21



### Postcard

National library building along T.M. Kalaw st. Ermita Manila, circa.1960s

## 'Buy Canadian' mood rising, but keeping the trend alive won't be easy

Escalating trade tensions between Canada and the United States have ignited a new wave of Canadian patriotism, with consumers consciously choosing made-in-Canada products

BUYCANADIAN page 8

## The Non-Italian Fast Food Chain That Became Famous For Its Spaghetti

The Spaghetti Factory is a non-Italian chain, but the name is so obvious so, it's not this chain. When people think of

SPAGHETTI page 18

*"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade."* "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens-Anonymous

# Toronto Kapuso Lions holds a meeting



1



2



3



4

1. Manny Yanga, Chinky del Mar, Fe Paca-Taduran, Nudge Bicular listen to Phoebe Kagumba-Sibanda; 2. Birthday celebrants Edel Agbayani, Chinky Del Mar, Relly Pardinas; 3. Phoebe Kagumba-Sibanda congratulates Fe Paca-Taduran for membership key award; 4. Joel Famadico strikes a pose after being awrded a membership key award.



**Sheryl Dela Cruz**  
Financial Services Manager  
sheryl@villagenissan.com  
(647) 965-0906



25 South Unionville Ave, Markham ON, L3R 6B8  
www.markhaminfiniti.com | www.villagenissan.com

**Bad Credit? New Credit?  
Bankruptcy? Divorced?  
Credit Counseling?**

**NO PROBLEM!**

Kung good deal ang hinahanap ninyo, Sheryl at Emmanuel, ang tawagan niyo



Over 70 Brand-New INFINITI's In-Stock & Ready For Delivery



Over 70 Brand-New Nissan's In-Stock & Ready For Delivery



Over 30 Quality Pre-Owned Vehicles In-Stock & Ready For Delivery

\*For more information, see Sheryl & Emmanuel for full details.

## Honey Shot



Marge 20, is a 3rd year nursing student. Right now, she is woking part time at William Osler Hospital. She is the daughter of Jun and Angel.

Marge Angela Gumapac

### Priscilla Meirelles on relationship status with John Estrada: 'I'm at a point na pinaglalaman ko ang sarili ko'

Former beauty queen and actress Priscilla Meirelles has confirmed that she and actor John Estrada are still married, although she refused to answer if they were still staying together.

"Legally, we're still married," Priscilla said, when asked about her relationship status with actor John Estrada, during an interview for Fast Talk With Boy Abunda on GMA Network.

Priscilla answered whether she and John were still staying together: "Let's just stay that way. Legally, we're still married."

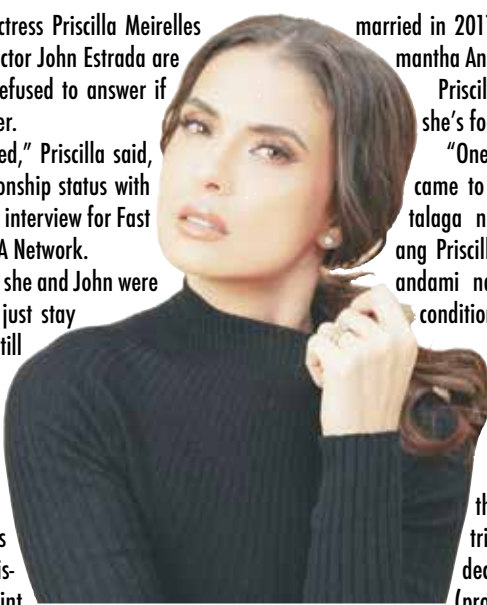
Reacting to John's statement that he was taking a break from her, Priscilla said, "I wasn't aware of that."

When asked if she was fighting for her marriage, Priscilla answered: "I'm at a point in my life na pinaglalaman ko ang sarili ko."

"Importante sa akin masaya ako. Importante sa akin, I have peace of mind. I went back to loving myself, which I lost for many years," she added. "I'm not blaming anyone. It's my fault that I got to the point where I was not loving myself anymore."

"Today, I can say, I have so much love because I love myself first. Of course, God, me, and I have so much love to share," the Brazilian beauty queen said.

In July 2024, rumors circulated that John and Priscilla had separated. John was allegedly in a relationship with another woman, whom he denied. John and Priscilla



married in 2011. They have a daughter Samantha Anechka who was born in 2012.

Priscilla, 41, also revealed that she's focused on staying healthy.

"One of the realizations that came to me was that kailangan ko talaga na bumalik sa dating ako, ang Priscilla, kasi through the process andami nangyari including a health condition that I had that was endometriosis.

"I decided to eliminate all foods that were not good for my body.

"When I had my problem, the cyst, dairy, and sugar trigger the issue, so I've also decided to take out all dairy (products) because it causes inflammation in a woman's body.

"I'm investing time in myself health-wise, you know, physical health and mental health. I have a wonderful relationship with my daughter, and whatever happens in terms of what my status is right now, all I can say is that technically, I'm still married," she said.

"I went back to loving myself, which was lost for many years. And I'm not blaming anyone; it's my fault that I got to a point where I was no longer loving myself. So today, I can say that, oh my gosh, I have so much love because I love myself first. Of course, God and I have so much love to share," Priscilla also said.

From Nurse to Star:

# Rhett Dela Cruz's Debut Concert is the Must-See Event of the Year

by Yona Harvey • [www.mabuhaycanada.org](http://www.mabuhaycanada.org)

Rhett Dela Cruz has spent years caring for others as a registered nurse, but at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 8, 2025, he's stepping into a different kind of spotlight at the People's Theatre for the Performing Arts in Markham, Ont.

The Toronto-based Filipino-Canadian artist is finally making his dream a reality—his very first solo concert.

After years of balancing patient care and his passion for music, Dela Cruz is ready to share his craft with the world.

"You know, this concert is something I've been wanting to do for a long time now," he said, his excitement palpable.

"People have been asking me for years to have my own solo concert, and now it's finally happening."

Set to take place in front of an 800-strong audience, the "Rhett Dela Cruz Hits and Heartbeats Concert" promises to be an unforgettable experience.

With a mix of original songs, Filipino classics, and modern hits, Dela Cruz's setlist ensures that everyone—Filipino and non-Filipino alike—can connect with his music.

"It's for everybody," he said. "I want people to know who Rhett Dela Cruz is through my music, my songs, my story."

The concert's production is no small feat. Dela Cruz has enlisted the help of experienced writer and director Viviene Dela Cruz to craft a show that blends music, storytelling, and high-energy performances.

From lighting to choreography, every



detail has been meticulously planned.

"When I saw the script and the concept, I even thought to myself, 'Can I just be part of the audience?'" he said.

"This concert is going to elevate the standards of all live shows and concerts in Toronto."

Beyond entertainment, Dela Cruz hopes to inspire other Filipino-Canadian artists and musicians.

Having immigrated to Canada at 16, he knows firsthand the struggle of balancing responsibilities while pursuing a passion.

"If I can do it, you guys can do it too," he said.

"Being a nurse is a stressful job, yet I have an outlet where I could still do my craft and my music."

Dela Cruz's musical style is a fusion of

**"If I can do it, you guys can do it too"**

OPM (Original Pilipino Music), pop, R&B, and alternative rock, all shaped by his experiences growing up

in Canada while staying deeply connected to his Filipino roots.

"My Filipino heritage plays a big role in my artistry," he explained.

"Filipinos really dig into lyrics, so I make sure my songs have a deeper meaning."

While it's his solo concert, Dela Cruz won't be taking the stage alone.

He's invited a lineup of talented Filipino-Canadian artists to join him, includ-



**Alyssa Grace**

ing Alyssa Grace, Emil Albania, and Raygee from FilCan Music, as well as rising stars Pearly Anne and Arielle Perez.

As for the most memorable moment in his career so far?

Dela Cruz points to two: first highlight is performing alongside OPM legends like Jose Mari Chan, Ice Seguerra, Michael Pangilinan, Parokya ni Edgar, Arthur Nery, and recently with BINI, Sharon Cuneta and Gabby Concepcion.

The second highlight of his career is the overwhelming success of his original song, "I'll Choose You," which hit over 12,000 streams on Spotify and Apple Music in just 30 days.

He said it shocked him to see people from all over the world listening to his song: that his music connects with many people.

With his debut concert just a week

RHETT page 14

## NYPAA Celebrates Silver Anniversary Milestone



By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

Under a wintery windy and cold chime, and with over 250 guests, the officers, members, and families of the North York York Pinoy Athletic Association (NYPAA) commemorated its silver anniversary on March 1, 2025. The successful milestone celebration in the evening was held at Sts. Peter and Paul Banquet Hall in Scarborough, Toronto, Ontario.

Among the prominent guests who delivered their respective greetings and remarks were Philippine Deputy Consul General Kerwin O. Tate, Federal Minister of Mental Health & Addictions and Member of Parliament for York Centre Ya'ara Saks, Member of Parliament for Scarborough Centre Salma Zahid, Member of Parliament for Scarborough North Shaun Chen, and long-time parent supporter-volunteer Tim Sinclair. In attendance also were NABA Commissioner Gani Gregorio, NABA Liaison Officer Edgar Tojino, and NABA Volleyball Commissioner Belinda Antonio.

Led by Sharonne Salanguit, NYPAA Chair, the Filipino-Canadian community sports organization gamely wel-

comed their guests, families, supporters, and volunteers to the memorable and meaningful event. Salanguit was aptly assisted by NYPAA Founders Vilma Tahsin, Roger Tarca, Bob San Juan and Ed Sotto. The "Magnificent Four" profoundly acknowledged the presence of community leaders and sports enthusiasts as well as thanked those solidly involved and engaged in the life and operation of their beloved NYPAA over the years.

The 2-hour program, ably emceed by Prince Dumagat, included the singing of national anthems, invocation by Brendaleta Agoncillo, slide presentation & video messages of NYPAA "alumni", song & dance performances by the K-Pop inspired Pink Ribbon, and the recognition with certificates to several teams and coaches by S. Salanguit since NYPAA's inception.

The highlights of the celebration centred on dancing, fellowship, friendly bantering, gifts & prize raffles, photo ops, and native sweet table helpings. It was definitely and distinctively a proud and happy gathering of amateur sports & basketball "funatics" & aficionados, coaches, players, parents, sponsors, organizers, and team leaders orchestrated by the NYPAA founders and officers. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

Serving Filipino-Canadian Communities through Arts and Cultural Heritage



# 19th

## FCT-VIBT

MAY | 16,17,18 | 2025  
Pan Am Sports-Scarborough

# The Filipino Centre

Toronto

Divisions:

2016	2015	2010	2007/06
2015	2012	2009	Men's
2014	2011	2008	Open

For inquiries to register, please contact:  
Philip: 647 267 9649 / FCT: 416 335 0485  
[pmbeloso@icloud.com](mailto:pmbeloso@icloud.com) / [filipinocentreinfo@gmail.com](mailto:filipinocentreinfo@gmail.com)  
*(limited slots available, first 60 teams will be accepted)*

Entree Fee: \$675 per team



ESTD 2007



## What will America be like after Trump?



### I hope America will still be prosperous

Trump wants all cars to be manufactured in the United States. Obviously, he wants the manufacturing there so that Americans will have jobs. If Americans will be producing those cars, how much salary are the companies willing to pay? Obviously, the unions will not want third world wages. Not that Canada pays third world wages but I am sure it is not as high as the American workers. If that is the case, that means, the cars will be more expensive. If they are, will the Americans buy them? If the American will not buy them, why will the American companies manufacture them? Will those American companies start building factories again or will they just sit it out until he finishes his term? What's the point of "Made in America" if nobody buys them. If the companies do not produce the American products because Americans don't want to buy expensive products, there will be no factories. No factories means no jobs. No jobs mean more Rustbelt cities. Think Detroit. Think Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Cleveland, Flint, Milwaukee, Rochester, and St. Louis.

After Trump's term, more Rustbelt cities

might be added to the list. He might turn America into Mexico. Don't think it cannot happen. Mexico was once a rich and powerful country and America was the poor country. The thought is scary. Imagine the USA as a third world country of 400 million people. Those border personnel that Trump forced us to hire and drones and helicopters that we bought might come handy in stopping them from coming here. Even Mexico might be thankful that Trump forced them to build the wall.

Are we going to require the Americans to get a visa to visit us?

Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne na nakatihaya. Upside down na nga ang mundo. 😊

### So, we got the tariff

We've been jumping through hoops for Trump, it was getting tiring. It was tempting to tell him, "just bring it on already," and let's deal with it. But we cannot do that. We have to suck up to the big giant head. We still have to protect the jobs here. Now, we have to buy items marked "Product of Canada" as a retaliation. But it doesn't mean it will be cheaper. Kahit paano, tataas rin ang price niyan. Canada will have to buy products from other countries. They may not be "the same price as that" from the United States but if we do not put a tariff on that product from that country, it might end up the same price after all. The United States we know it has changed. Whether it will be the same after Trump, we'll never know. We just have to live with it for now. 😊



# Canada's cuts to newcomer English language programs puts communities' well-being at risk

Natalia Balyasnikova  
Assistant Professor of Adult Education, York University, Canada

Hilary McGregor  
Masters Student, Development Studies, York University, Canada

Mercedes Veselka  
Masters Student, Faculty of Education, York University, Canada

The impact of of Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada's 2024-25 department plan, released about a year ago, are only now starting to become clear in cities across Canada.

Whether it's colleges in Vancouver, Lethbridge or Toronto, many federally funded English-language training programs are experiencing crushing funding cuts resulting in closures, layoffs and fewer classes available.

At risk is the future of Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) — a federally funded program that has been running since 1992.

Instead of further cutting funding to LINC, the government should expand the programming in recognition that learning a language is about much more than acquiring a discrete set of skills.

### Importance of language programs

The LINC program has 60 assessment sites across the country and has served roughly 50,000-60,000 learners per year.

Language learning programs expecting to receive the most significant cuts will be those focused on building employment skills and preparing learners for higher education.

Rather than the reducing barriers to newcomers' employment as promised, the changes will make it more difficult for newcomers to access the language learning programs needed for work and life.

Learning a language is about more than acquiring a set of skills. Members of the Halifax Newcomer Choir, which provides English language practice and community building opportunities for newcomers and locals, practices at St. Andrew's Church in Halifax, in December 2024. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darren Calabrese

### Immigration is central

The IRCC states "immigration is central to our future" and that its sustainable development strategy

remains committed to addressing the barriers to employment and social belonging that newcomers face.

While not without critique, LINC classes have an important function beyond helping newcomers acquire language skills.

Through these programs, newcomers build confidence to be able to advocate for themselves, develop a sense of citizenship, contribute to values of equality, respect and rights and access resources essential for life in Canada. All of these contribute to one's sense of belonging.

### Addressing connection, community

There is strong evidence that learning in groups reduces isolation, loneliness and feelings of unbelonging, and increases sense of community and connection for immigrants.

Research shows that learning activities that have goals beyond developing practical language skills such as drama and poetry are opportunities to build a sense of community, empowerment and belonging to facilitate intercultural dialogue.

They also contribute to the development of learners' resilience

and leadership.

### A vision for sustainability

Canada is often portrayed as a tolerant and welcoming country, a stronghold of multiculturalism and multilingualism. Canada has made promises to build a nation that is economically, socially and culturally prosperous.

To make this promise sustainable, it is essential to continue addressing the complex needs of newcomers, especially by ensuring access to inclusive and quality education throughout their lives.

IRCC's choice to cut funding is influenced by a short-term economic model that seems to forget that nearly 20 per cent of Canada's population are new permanent residents.

These residents should have access to learning offerings and intercultural socialization opportunities. These would ideally include offerings centred on critical conversations, discussions of shared experiences, visions for life in Canada and building allyships between new immigrants and long-time citizens. Such learning, socialization and relationship-building opportu-

nities could be made accessible through LINC.

### Social stratification concerns

By reducing funding available for English-language classes, the federal government is denying thousands of people their fundamental right to education. The current budget cuts will inevitably contribute to growing social stratification and increase the challenges faced by the already overwhelmed immigration and educational sectors.

A recent statement by TESL Ontario, the certification body for educators who teach English as another language in Ontario, urges the Canadian government to consider impacts on language teachers who face precarious employment and low pay, a concern shared by unions across the public sector.

Language learning programs are foundational to ensuring sustainable settlement in Canada. A truly sustainable development strategy would see the continued funding of English-language programs as essential to ensuring the continued economic and societal well-being of all people living in Canada.



# The Filipino Centre, Toronto to mark Silver Jubilee Milestone by Tony A. San Juan, OCT.



By Tony A. San Juan, OCT.

TORONTO - Proudly having achieved notable accomplishments and meaningful contributions in the life of the Filipino Canadian community in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), particularly in Toronto, the Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT) will celebrate its 25th founding anniversary. The community hub will host the commemorative event on April 5, 2025 (Saturday) from 6:00 to 12:00 pm

at the Scarborough Convention Centre, 20 Torham Place, Scarborough, Toronto, Ontario.

The Filipino Centre Toronto, formed in 1999 as a non-profit & volunteer-run entity, is purposefully serving Filipino-Canadian communities through unity-driving community-wide programs and initiatives with focus on the promotion and propagation of Filipino history, arts and culture within Canada's multicultural mosaic. It was established by a host of dedicated Filipino-Canadian professionals, community leaders, advocates, and heads of specific-interest associations with the full encourage-

ment and support of the Philippine diplomatic corps in Ottawa, Canada.

Currently led by President & CEO Mary Ann S. San Juan and Chairman of the Board Efren De Villa, the members of the FCT Executive Directorate are Tess Lumanlan-vice president, Wendy Arena-financial officer, Leo Mascarinas-information officer, and Board directors Philip Beloso, Frank Cruzet, Joy D'Acoust, Nenette De Villa, Faye Roncesvalles Edu-ave, Alvine Marasigan Flor, Mel Galeon, Judith Gonzales, Jerome Peralta, Nitz Rejdik, Jeanette Rosales, Steffie Stephens, and Priscilla Tumulak.

Several diplomatic & political dignitar-

ies, business & community leaders, special guests, FCT members and volunteers have been invited to attend and grace the formal gathering. The evening program includes ballroom & line dancing, dinner, entertainment, special remarks & greetings, networking & sharing, and usual "kumustahans & kantiyawans".

Encouraged to promote their products and services, leading community businesses were invited to sponsor or place their ads & greetings in the FCT Anniversary Souvenir Program. For further information, please contact filipinocentre-info@gmail.com or Tel. 416-335-0485. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT.)

## Dennis Trillo, Jennylyn Mercado bring real-life love to 'Everything About My Wife'

For celebrity couple Dennis Trillo and Jennylyn Mercado, marriage is both a daily choice and a lifelong commitment rather than merely a romantic fairytale.

The real-life husband and wife reunite on the big screen in their film, Everything About My Wife. Directed by Real S. Florido and written by Rona Co, the romantic comedy explores the marriage of Dom, played by Dennis, and Imo, Jennylyn's character, which appears perfect until they face the seven-year itch.

The plot shifts when Imo, feeling unfulfilled, begins to fall for Miguel (Sam Milby), a man who offers her the attention she desires.

For Jennylyn, this film marks her return to acting after a five-year break. Meanwhile, Dennis is eager to shift from intense dramas—having recently won the Best Actor award at the 2024 Metro Manila Film Festival for Green Bones—to a lighthearted romantic comedy.

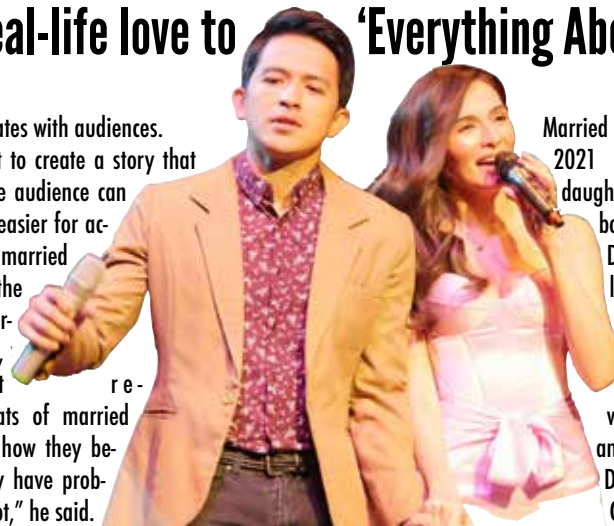
As a married couple, Jennylyn and Dennis discussed how their relationship impacted their performances. Dennis emphasized the importance of conveying a uni-

versal story that resonates with audiences.

"It's very important to create a story that is universal so that the audience can relate. That's why it's easier for actors like us to play a married couple, as our roles in the film are also as a married couple. In a way, we already know what really happens—the beats of married life, how they argue, how they become happy, how they have problems. So it helps us a lot," he said.

Jennylyn added that their familiarity with various scenarios in the film made the experience even more enjoyable.

"We are already familiar with the different scenes in the film. But what's important is that both of us enjoyed how we did each scene. It's a pleasure to work with Dennis," she said.



Married in November 2021 and parents to daughter Dylan Jayde, born in April 2022, Dennis and Jennylyn are also raising their teenage sons—Alex Jazz, Jennylyn's son with Patrick Garcia, and Calix Andreas, Dennis' son with Carlene Aguilar.

As their family continues to expand, the dynamics of their relationship have undergone a notable transformation. Dennis noted that, over time, they have developed a profound understanding of each other's personalities, which has shifted the conflict resolution process to one that primarily relies on effective communication and a solid foundation of mu-

tual respect. He further highlighted that this enhanced understanding has significantly improved their ability to navigate challenges together.

On her part, Jennylyn elaborated on their shared commitment to creating and nurturing a happy, positive home environment for their daughter Dylan. They are dedicated to fostering an atmosphere that is not only healthy but also filled with love and support, ensuring that their child has the best possible upbringing. Their combined efforts reflect their intention to maintain a joyful and caring space that encourages growth and happiness for their family.

In a separate interview, Jennylyn discussed how her definition of marriage has evolved, stating that they have always recognized it as a significant commitment—an ongoing choice they navigate together. She noted that their marriage has deepened this understanding. Dennis agreed, emphasizing that marriage is not just a concept for them but a tangible reality they must cherish and safeguard for their family.



# ACTION Honda

"WHERE CAR OWNERSHIP IS MADE EASY"

## Your Filipino friends, ready at your Service!

To all my kababayans, Feel free to contact me "bibili ka man o hindi." It is always a pleasure to talk to a kababayan.

**MABUHAY!** raphael@myactionhonda.com



**Rafael Nebres**  
General Manager



**Gani Gregorio**  
Asst. Sales Manager



**Jose Sarte**  
Service Manager



**Ronaldo Aquino**  
Assistant Service Manager



**Joseph Redoblado**  
Service Advisor



**Roland 'Regi' Geraldez**  
Sales and Leasing Consultant



**Ramon Bayani**  
Sales and Leasing Consultant



**Pio Regio**  
Senior Lot Attendant



**Don Luche**  
Accountant



**Ramon Miranda**  
Lot Attendant



**Marie Miranda**  
Service Appointment Coordinator



**Jeshiela Jordan**  
Accounts Receivable



**Terry Aquino**  
Cleanup Associate



Honda CR-V 2025



Honda Pilot 2025



Honda Accord 2025



Honda Civic 2025



Honda Passport 2025



Honda Odyssey 2025

### NEW & USED CAR SALES • CAR PARTS • BODY SHOP • CAR SERVICE

4334 Kingston Rd., Scarborough ON (south of Lawrence Ave. East) Tel. (416) 281-1234

# Agents charging Higher Fees for new Canadian Permanent Residency on Landing Program

This new Canadian immigration program is being heavily promoted by recruiters. Here's why that's causing concern

As the home care worker immigration program awaits details, some fear recruiters could take advantage of migrants desperate for permanent residence.

Jhoey Dulaca, an organizer with Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, is urging the Immigration Department to provide details of the new home care worker program as soon as possible.

It's bound to be one of the most appealing immigration programs for earning permanent residence in Canada.

The requirements, released to date, appear simple:

- Basic English skills at Canadian Language Benchmark Level 4 to understand instructions and have a conversation;
- The equivalent of a Canadian high school diploma;
- Recent and relevant work experience; and
- A full-time home care job offer.

However, while the home care worker immigration program, which the government promised would "improve support" for migrant caregivers, is still awaiting details, recruiters are stepping up to take on applicants to fill the spots, with some promising to connect them with employers.

Questions remain about the new program such as criteria for job offers and the expansion of home care work to organizations. Care workers must be part of planning how the new pilot program will be finalized and launched.

Teresa Gutierrez is a migrant caregiver

who has been in Canada for six years, but was denied permanent residency because of unfair education requirements, which have been reduced today. She met with Minister Marc Miller at a roundtable today and said,

"Today you listened to caregivers like us who fought for changes to language and education requirements - and you've improved the program. But it's too late for me. Soon I will be undocumented. So I am here to remind you. You promised regularization this Spring. It's June, and time is running out. I am reminding you to hear us, and give us regularization. I worked here in Canada for almost 6 years to take care of children. I left behind my own 5 kids just to let them have a better future. I know you're a parent too. Do you know how hard it is for us parents to see our children growing without us? I am not the only one. There are hundreds of thousands of us in the same situation. And you have the power to fix this. We are demanding a regularization that will make a way to be reunited with my family, to have a better job, and have the same rights as everybody else. Thousands across the country are watching to see what you will do. Will you deliver on your promise? Will you fight for and defend regularization?"

Jhoey Dulaca of Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, agrees, saying "We are welcoming and celebrating the news of permanent resident status on arrival. Canada must now move urgently to implement a regularization program for undocumented caregivers to ensure no one is left behind."

Genen Bagon, from Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers & Caregivers Rights, adds "Resilient foreign domestic workers, caregivers, and their long-time advocates



Jhoey Dulaca, an organizer with Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, is urging the Immigration Department to provide details of the new home care worker program as soon as possible.

have fought hard for recognition in Canada: if they are good enough to work, they are good enough to stay with permanent resident status upon arrival. Although the work is not over, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and IRCC Minister Marc Miller have come one step closer to hearing these decades-long calls for justice through these new pilots. We need regularization right now to ensure everyone is protected."

Advocates fear that predatory agents are going to take advantage of migrants desperate for permanent residence, and the money could be all for naught when the rules are unclear and misinformation abounds.

"The new pilot programs will grant permanent residence status to caregivers on arrival in Canada and allow them to pursue other jobs at any time," Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada posted last June on X, formerly known as Twitter.

But the Immigration Department is not the only one who has promoted the new home

care immigration programs that are meant to address the chronic shortages of caregivers to look after Canadian children and people who need care.

The Immigration Ministry posted a terse update on its website in January: "The new Home Care Worker Immigration Pilots will open on March 31, 2025. We'll provide more details shortly."

Meanwhile, recruitment agents here and abroad have been working hard to advertise the programs to migrants desperate to be in Canada permanently. Some are even promising job offers on social media.

"These recruiters are charging \$4,000 and \$5,000, aside from all the other fees."

While foreign caregivers welcome the government move to grant them permanent residence upon arrival, Dulaca said Ottawa needs to immediately provide details about eligibility criteria, application procedures, applicable job experience and what documents are required and accepted. Details should not be released only on the opening day.

The concern is echoed by MP Jenny Kwan, the NDP's immigration critic.

"There are serious concerns over the lack of any word from you on the details of such a program," Kwan (Vancouver East) wrote in a December letter to Miller. "There is fear that your government could go back on its promise and that the new PR Pathway for Caregivers may not be put in place at all."

Filipino caregiver Trixy Mapagpala belongs to different caregiver social media groups and gets confused by all the information out there about the new program. So she contacted about 10 immigration consultants in Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto, but all asked for fees up front, from \$3,000 to \$4,000, to prepare the applications.

Everyone in the caregiver community

is nervous and desperate, she said, and many have paid up because they fear they would be left behind.

"There's a lot of rumours about the (application) process," said Mapagpala, 41, who arrived Quebec in 2022 to look after three toddlers and now works in Calgary. "Some people are saying those inside Canada are excluded. I'm just confused."

"I'm making minimum wage and I still need to support my husband, two young children, parents and siblings back home. Even if it costs just \$100 or \$200, it's a big deal for me."

Under the 2024-2026 Immigration Levels Plan, the Immigration Department said Canada will admit more than 15,000 caregivers as permanent residents. However, it wouldn't say if there's a cap on the applications for the new program, or how the targeted 15,000 permanent residence spots will be split between addressing existing caregiver backlogs and the new program.

Dulaca urges the government not to limit the number of applications it will accept and not to send back the ones received after the cap is reached.

"Allowing all eligible care workers to apply will ensure that no one is excluded from the program simply because they were unable to apply (online) in the first few hours," she said. "Applications over the annual cap should be kept in the queue for the next year."

Mapagpala said an application cap is unfair to those who are eligible but can't secure a spot. It not only means longer family separation, but makes migrant caregivers who are already here more vulnerable to potential exploitation because they need employers to sponsor their work permits.

"I worry, what if I can't get into the queue because of the cap?" she said. "It's so stressful."

# Chito Miranda thankful for dismissal of complaint against wife Neri Naig

Parokya ni Edgar frontman Chito Miranda took to social media to express his gratitude towards everyone that made it possible for his wife Neri Naig-Miranda to be cleared from all the complaints thrown against her.



probable cause to indict her in the cases against the skincare company. "We are so thankful that she was eventually given the chance to defend herself, and her side of the story. Maraming maraming salamat po," Chito added. Chito maintained that people who know his wife can attest how "kind and trustworthy" she is on top of being a hard-working mother-- something that was used against her.

"Ang problema lang talaga minsan ay masyado syang mabait at matulongin, kaya madalas syang naabusos, at napapahamak. Pero kahit ganun, sobrang proud ako because Neri would always choose to be kind and fair, no matter how mean and unfair the world is, and kahit ano ang ibato sa kanyang mundo, her integrity, at ang kanyang mabuting pagkatao, will always be intact," he maintained.

"To those who chose to stand up and defend my wife, maraming salamat talaga," Chito ended.

It was back in 2024 when Neri was arrested over charges of estafa and alleged violation of the Securities Regulation Code. She was accused of persuading individuals to invest in a skin care company that is not authorized to solicit investments from the public as shared by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

"Mabuti nalang talaga na alam ni Lord ang buong katotohanan kaya never Nya pinabayaan si Neri. Sobrang blessed din kami dahil the people who matter knew the truth as well, and did everything they could to help and support her," Chito wrote.

On his Instagram account, the celebrity husband shared the official press release of their family's lawyer on the cases of Neri. All cases have been dismissed as there was no

THE MOST REQUESTED FILIPINO ARTIST IN TORONTO

ALL VIP CONCERT, DINNER & PHOTO-OP

JE MarkyHugh

THE KING OF RNB

# JAY R

MARCH 14, 2025 | 7PM

REMBRANDT BANQUET HALL

SPECIAL GUEST

## MICA JAVIER

SPONSORS

FOR TICKETS & SPONSORSHIP: 647-278-4374 | 647-203-0097 | +1 (416) 725-9045

Little Manila Confidential

# LMC

Delivering Filipino Stories • SINCE 1999

WWW.LMCONFIDENTIAL.COM  
EMAIL: josebaking@gmail.com

Jose "Joey" Baking

PUBLISHER & EDITOR

PUBLISHED BY: Match International Group

# HOW DID I GET THIS GIRL TO LOVE ME

by Oscar Igna

I first saw her in 1978 at the birthday party of a common friend. Both of us worked for EPZA (Export Processing

Months later, both of us enrolled in PUP, Bataan Branch, to continue our disrupted college studies and became

in a restricted area. After, more or less, two years, their Division and ours were merged into a Department. The merger

and poems), and copied some of my young rivals' strategies that I deemed nice and effective. Most importantly, I showered her with love and tried hard to make her read my sincere intention, until one day, she believed in my sincerity and fell in love with me. I could see it in her eyes though she was not yet admitting it. Sooner, I got her sweetest yes. I was ecstatic at that glorious moment and couldn't hide my feelings. I nearly jumped for joy!



Zone Authority) in Bataan. She was then a newly hired Clerk in the Intelligence Division while I was in my third year in the Police Division. I was attracted to her the moment I set my eyes on her but I figured out that she was too young for me. Nonetheless, it was not the age gap that mattered to me but the lopsided ratio or proportion of our ages. Hers was less than two-thirds of mine (18:29) so I chose to ignore the presence of this lovely girl as if she didn't exist. I didn't want to be labeled 'cradle snatcher' hehe.

classmates in one subject but we never talked to each other, just expressionless noddings whenever our eyes met.

After only a semester, I quit studying because of a conflict in my work schedule. Nonetheless, I could still see her at our workplace but we were not on speaking terms as we were not even friends.

After a few months, she disappeared from circulation. I later learned that she was assigned as an undercover agent and was reporting to their field office

virtually allowed me to see her again frequently. She was reassigned to a unit whose office was adjacent to ours.

My only edge over my rivals was my experience. I was good at making friends with people, but I wasn't sure if my techniques would also be effective for women several years younger than me. Sadly, no matter how I looked at my styles, they appeared to be 'baduy' and so antiquated that I almost abandoned them altogether. Nonetheless, I still applied some of my old-fashioned methods (sending flowers, chocolates, letters,

She admitted to me later that I already piqued her interest when we became classmates. I couldn't believe that an ordinary man like me could arouse the interest of a young girl notwithstanding our age gap, my not-so-good-looking appearance, and my having no impressive achievements. I never thought that I had that irresistible charm in me. Hahaha!

Now, we no longer mind our age gap and ratio. We are more interested in counting our happy years together with our children and grandchildren.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sometimes, you come across a story that touches your heart you just had to print it. I hope this one touches your heart too.

## Eugene Domingo thanks Vice Ganda for her renewed interest in showbiz: 'I was lost'

The comedy star for all seasons Eugene Domingo revealed on her YouTube channel that she had lost interest in show business as she focused on nourishing herself and finding life outside of the glitz and glamour.

During Domingo's sit-down interview with unkabogable box office superstar Vice Ganda for her vlog, she made sure to thank Vice for her newfound spark in entertainment while also mentioning the hit film "And The Breadwinner Is."

"[Lumayo] ako sa paggawa ng pelikula. I focused my attention to nurturing myself more. I studied and then I tried to find another life out of showbiz. I was able to enrich my true self," Domingo said. Recalling her lost interest, Domingo continued, "I think for a while I was lost. Saan na kaya? Ano na kaya ang gagawin ko? Hindi ako interesado masyado. Wala rin naman ako masyadong offer ng TV. Hindi rin naman ako tumatanggap ng pelikula. Walang na-offer na parang gusto ko. Parang lahat tumahimik — 'yung hunger ko to create, to connect, to discover something na puwede ko pang i-offer sa industry — and then your movie came along. I was so happy. I was so excited."

The award-winning actress revealed that they would video call each other and just look at one other without saying anything.

"He's very sweet. Ikaw talaga 'yung any time of the night, if you're comfortable with a person, tatawag siya kahit wala naman kayong pag-usapan. Minsan, hindi nga kami nag-usap. Tatawag lang kami sa isa't isa para lang mag-hi. Pagandahan lang kami at natutuwa ako doon sa friendship natin na it's beyond whatever it is that we have achieved in life," she said.

After describing their genuine friendship, Domingo lauded Vice for his strong connection with his fans and enthusiasm for the industry.

Domingo then told the unkabogable superstar that the work he does for his career is a true measure of an artist.

"Pareho tayong successful in our own design pero nung nakita ko kung paano mo hina-handle your fans, your career, kahit anong nangyari sa 'yo, lumagapak, na-bash, you're still here,



and for me, that is the true measure of a star, that's the true measure of an artist," she praised Vice.

She added, "'Yun ang sinasabi ko na madaling sumikat pero gaano ka katagal, gaano ka katibay." Domingo thanked Vice again for allowing her to rediscover the spark in her career that had previously been lost, referring to it as her "reborn" era.

"Na-affect mo ako. Nag-guest ako sa 'Showtime.' Sinamahan kita sa ilang promo tours mo. Na-affect mo ako. Vice, alam mo, nabuhay ako ulit. Na-appreciate ko 'yung calling natin. Na-appreciate ko 'yung love ng audience. Na-appreciate ko 'yung mga taong gumagasta para mapanood ka sa sine. 'Yung binigay sa akin na pagkakataon na tingnan mo na after all these years, they still want to see [me] in the movies, they still get [me]. Alam mo, na-appreciate ko dahil sa 'Breadwinner' so thank you. Nag-open ako ng vlog. Tinanggap ko lahat ng assignments without any question. Sige, gagawin ko 'yan. Yes, gagawin ko so busy ako ngayon. I have you to thank all these things that are happening to me right now. Thank you again. The 'Breadwinner' experience has brought me parang reborn. Katulad nung ginawa sa 'yo as an actor, nalagyan ka ng ibang dimension, layer," Domingo expressed.

Serving Filipino-Canadian Communities through Arts and Cultural Heritage

# 19th FCT-VIBT

MAY | 16, 17, 18 | 2025  
Pan Am Sports-Scarborough

## The Filipino Centre Toronto

**Divisions:**

2016	2015	2010	2007/06
2015	2012	2009	Men's
2014	2011	2008	Open

For inquiries to register, please contact:  
Philip: 647 267 9649 / FCT: 416 355 0485  
pmbeloso@icloud.com / filipinocentreinfo@gmail.com  
(Limited slots available, first 50 teams will be accepted)

**Entree Fee: \$675 per team**

**VICTORIA INVITATIONAL BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT**

ESTD 2007



# LM Confidential 25

# 'Buy Canadian' rising, but keeping the trend alive faces hurdles

BUY CANADIAN from page 1

as an act of economic self-preservation and national pride.

U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to impose tariffs on most Canadian and Mexican goods on March 4, after a month-long delay. This, along with Trump's calls to make Canada the 51st U.S. state, has prompted Canadians to rally around the so-called "Buy Canadian" movement.

Recent research indicates a significant number of Canadians are now showing a strong preference for domestic products, with many willing to modify their purchasing behaviours. One recent poll revealed 42 per cent of Canadians polled will "absolutely do everything" to avoid purchasing U.S. products. Eighty-eight per cent said they would buy a product promoted as "made in Canada."

Another poll found that 56 per cent of Canadians said they would stop buying a certain product altogether if there is no Canadian-made alternative.

While the "buy local" movement has deeper roots, often resurfacing during periods of economic tensions, the current surge stems from a desire to support homegrown brands and manufacturers they see as reflect-

ing their values.

## Buy Canadian movement challenges

While the Buy Canadian movement is gaining traction, actually sustaining it comes with notable challenges. Some experts caution that reducing reliance on U.S. imports is a gradual process contingent on consistent consumer commitment.

Two primary barriers stand in the way of this sustained change: the higher costs of Canadian-made goods, particularly during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, and the difficulty consumers face in identifying domestically produced items.

Addressing these two issues is crucial for the long-term viability of the Buy Canadian movement.

## Buying Canadian can be pricey

The first primary obstacle facing the Buy Canadian movement is the price disparity between domestic goods and their imported counterparts.

Canadian domestic goods often come with a higher price tag due to production costs, economies of scale, transportation and other economic factors. These factors make it difficult for local manufacturers to compete with cheaper foreign alternatives.

The ongoing cost-of-living crisis, which is driving up prices for goods and services across various sectors, is further intensifying the challenge. One of the biggest household expenses, the cost of groceries, remain particularly high, having jumped by 7.8 per cent in 2023 — its highest level in nearly 40 years.

Higher prices across almost all sectors has resulted in 71 per cent of Canadians naming the cost of living as a top domestic concern, making it the leading news story in the country in 2024.

While many consumers express a desire to support local businesses even if they are pricier, the reality of higher costs could make it difficult for consumers to consistently choose domestic products over more affordable foreign alternatives.

## Is it really 'Made in Canada'?

The second major obstacle for the Buy Canadian movement lies in confusion over product labels. For many Canadians, identifying which products are truly

Canadian versus imported alternatives can be a challenging task.

A recent poll found that 42 per cent of Canadians believe grocery food products are made in Canada, while the actual number of products fully made in Canada is closer to 10 per cent.

Compounding matters further, understanding country of origin labelling can also be challenging. Labels such as "Made in Canada" and "Product of Canada" have specific definitions.

"Made in Canada" means the last substantial transformation of the good or service occurs in Canada but may contain up to 49 per cent imported ingredients, while "Product of Canada" means all, or nearly all, significant parts and processing are Canadian.

This nuanced labelling and similarity in wording can lead to confusion, making it difficult for consumers to make informed choices.

## Building on the Buy Canadian momentum

Canadian businesses and retailers have been responding to growing consumer demand for domestic products with concrete marketing strategies. For instance, Loblaw Companies, Canada's largest food retailer, has committed to "doubling down

on securing food grown and made" locally.

Grocery stores are also making it easier for consumers to identify local products. Several grocery chains have revamped their in-store displays by using shelf tags, stickers and end-of-aisle signage to clearly identify Canadian-made food items.

Retailers and brands are increasingly spotlighting domestic brands by rolling out targeted pricing deals. Major grocery chains have begun offering significant price reductions and exclusive promotions on items branded as "Made in Canada."

Additionally, Canadians are flocking to websites such as Madeinca.ca, which aim to demystify country of origin and labelling so shoppers can distinguish domestic products from imports.

Although maintaining this momentum may be challenging, consumers are eager to showcase their patriotism at the checkout. With businesses and policymakers actively improving product transparency and addressing cost concerns, the Buy Canadian movement is poised to gain further traction. After all, nothing embodies unity quite like a little patriotic shopping, the Canadian way.

## Alden Richards stops courting Kathryn Bernardo

Veteran showbiz reporter Ogie Diaz claimed that Alden Richards is no longer courting Kathryn Bernardo.

In Diaz's Showbiz Update channel on YouTube, the host said that Alden and Kathryn are now just good friends.

"All I know is, there is no longer any courtship that has continued. They are just like friends," Ogie said.

When asked by co-host Mama Loi if Daniel's visit to Kathryn's dressing room at ABS-CBN's last

Christmas Special has anything to do with it, Ogie answered: "It has nothing to do with that, 'yung pagdalaw ni DJ."

"Kasi, ang alam ko din, sabi ng ka-close ni Kathryn, eh parang kinausap lang daw ni Kathryn si DJ, pero walang hope na magkakabalikan," he added.

Ogie reported April last year that Alden is already courting Kathryn.

"Naniligaw na itong si Alden kay Kathryn at makikita naman iyan sa kanilang body lan-

guage," Ogie said.

"What you see is what you get, so that's what we got," he added.

## Ahtisa Manalo bows out of politics to pursue Miss Universe Philippines crown

Beauty queen Ahtisa Manalo withdrew her candidacy for municipal councilor of Candelaria, Quezon, to focus on her bid for the Miss Universe Philippines 2024 title.

Ahtisa announced her decision on Tuesday, Feb. 25, through her mother, Elsie, at a press conference organized by the Suayan-Maliwanag Leaders Manalo political party.

"I am officially withdrawing my candidacy as municipal councilor of Candelaria. This was not an easy decision. I was given an incredible opportunity to represent not just myself but also our beloved town as I compete in Miss Universe Philippines once again," she said in a statement.

She then apologized to her supporters for the sudden change of plans but emphasized her desire to bring pride to Candelaria in a different way.

Despite stepping away from politics, Manalo vowed to carry the name of Candelaria with her on the national stage.

"I hope I can still count on your support and prayers as I aim to make our town proud on the national stage," she said.

Ahtisa is making her return to the Miss Universe Philippines stage and is currently representing the province of Quezon.

## Eugene Torre succeeds in business and charity by Yujico Bal Cricket

It was a pleasure to meet Iloilo City's Eugene Torre, the Filipino Chess Grandmaster during my feeding children project Aware, Share and Care outreach yesterday.

In a nutshell, I asked him what are the valuable things in life he learned



Eugene Torre getting ready for his opening gambit with Bobby Fischer

from being an international celebrity, the only one to beat the then reigning world chess champion Anatoly Karpov and being Bobby Fischer's second in the 1992 match against Boris Spassky in Yugoslavia. As vice president of a real estate company he used his skills of tactics and business strategies in chess with his clients or customers.

"Every business solution should



be a product of careful analysis - I wish I have the tape to rewind and share it to all my chess fanatics," he relates to me while I prepare to the opening prayer of my program.

Being a member of the Toronto Kapuso Lions, I have great respect to one like him who makes a difference to the lives of many impoverished children and at the same time



honed a successful career.

As well he also established the Eugene Torre Chess Foundation and Chess Center in order to produce champions from among the hidden talents in the Philippines.

He makes sure he walks with the children and some mornings and attend to feeding projects, his benevolence truly admirable.

JDL PRESENTS  
Disney FROZEN JR.  
TICKETS \$20  
CITY PLAYHOUSE THEATRE  
#101-1000 NEW WESTMINSTER DRIVE THORNHILL  
ENCORE PRESENTATION  
MARCH 9, 2025  
3:00 PM (MATINEE)  
6:30 PM (EVENING)  
MUSIC & LYRICS BY KRISTEN ANDERSON-LOPEZ & ROBERT LOPEZ  
BOOK BY JEDDIFER LEE  
BASED ON THE DISNEY FILM WRITTEN BY JEDDIFER LEE AND DIRECTED BY CHRIS BUCK AND JEDDIFER LEE  
FOR BOX OFFICE AND TICKET INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT  
HTTPS://TICKETS.CITYPLAYHOUSE.CA  
THE CITY PLAYHOUSE THEATRE IS FULLY WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE. WHEN BOOKING YOUR TICKETS, PLEASE INFORM THE BOX OFFICE IF YOU REQUIRE WHEELCHAIR SEATING OR ANY OTHER SPECIAL SEATING ARRANGEMENT.  
MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL  
Disney's Frozen Jr. is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized materials are supplied by Music Theatre International, New York, NY 212-541-4664 mtshows.com



# OPM icon Celeste Legaspi shares Stories behind her hits

Behind every song is a story that is either based on real-life events or pure imagination creatively put together by the composer complemented with a perfect melody.

Seasoned singer, actress and film and theater producer Celeste Legaspi shared some interesting tales of her Original Pilipino Music (OPM) classic hits like Saranggola ni Pepe, Mamang Sorbetero and Gaano Ko Ikaw Kamahal when she sat down for "The Talk" segment of "Fast Talk with Boy Abunda."

Celeste is indubitably one of the country's top singers, having produced albums and singles that reached gold and platinum marks in the '70s and '80s. Her vocal prowess won her trophies and recognitions from various award-giving bodies.

According to the OPM icon, Saranggola ni Pepe was written by her husband Nonoy Gallardo, culled from their experience during Martial Law.

"My husband wrote lyrics talking about

how he felt about the times that we were living in," began Celeste, the daughter of National Artist for Visual Arts Cesar Legaspi and Vitaliana Kalugdan. "Meron din siyang environmental concerns doon sa song na 'yun, but he put everything in a childlike situation."

"Eddie Munji, si Lakay, was the one who arranged it. He was asking Nonoy, 'How do I approach this song? Hindi ko maintindihan 'yung lyrics.' Nonoy told him to only use a ukelele. That's why the arrangement is like that," she added.

No one expected Saranggola ni Pepe to hit



Seasoned singer, actress and film and theater producer Celeste Legaspi says Saranggola ni Pepe was written by her husband Nonoy Gallardo culled from their experience during Martial Law, while Mamang Sorbetero was composed by Jose Mari Chan which turned out to be a hit as well. Celeste affirms that it was the beauty of the song and the beauty of the lyrics that made Gaano Ko Ikaw Kamahal a hit.

it big because Celeste revealed they were pushing for another beautiful song written by Ernani Cuenco "but the DJs were so intrigued by the title (Saranggola ni Pepe), so they started playing it over and over again until it became a hit."

Meanwhile, not many people know that Mamang Sorbetero was composed by Jose Mari Chan, which turned out to be a hit as well. The song was written right after Celeste transferred to another recording company, which requested her to do another song similar to Saranggola ni Pepe.

"You know, Mamang Sorbetero, there's a 'budots' version. It's used in all Zumba classes, probably in the entire Metro Manila."

What came as a big surprise for the singer-actress was when Gaano Ko Ikaw Kamahal, equally turned out so successful. The song was composed by Ernani Cuenco and Levi Celerio.

"That was a surprise hit for me. I didn't

expect it because that was in the same album where Saranggola ni Pepe and Tuliro (were included).

"Saranggola ni Pepe was already a hit. So, I said to myself, 'Siguro 'yun na ang hit nung album na 'yun. Then about a year later, I would be performing for parties and I would be requested to do Gaano Ko Ikaw Kamahal, and I would ask the audience, 'How do you know that song?' and they told me that it's been played. 'Yun pala, it became a hit that I didn't even know.'"

Celeste affirmed that it was the beauty of the song and the beauty of the lyrics that made Gaano Ko Ikaw Kamahal a hit.

Asked if there are singers, especially in today's generation, whom she finds impressive, Celeste declared that some of them are very good.

"Stell of SB19 is absolutely fabulous. Napakagaling niya," she remarked. "And Julie Anne San Jose is very, very good. She's excellent."

Celeste also has nothing but good words for young actors.

"I just got to work with a lot of young people in a series and everybody was focused, committed and disciplined."



## Herlene Budol says working with Rob Gomez anew could spell trouble

Herlene Budol reiterated that she is not keen on working again with her "Magandang Dilag" leading man Rob Gomez, saying she does not want to be embroiled in yet another controversy with him.



In a "Your Honor" podcast on Saturday, March 1, Budol was asked by host Buboy Villar if the beauty queen-turned-actress is open to the idea of reuniting with Gomez for a project.

But the texting scandal that involved Budol and Gomez is still fresh in her mind, especially the fact that the actor failed to speak up when bashers accused them of having an affair.

"Si Rob Gomez. Ayun nga, kasi nagka-issue kami tapos hindi lang ako napagtanggol. Siguro alam niya kung bakit ayaw ko na siya makatrabaho pero 'yun. Siguro siya lang (Rob Gomez. We had an issue before and he didn't stand up for me. I guess he knows why I do not want to work with him anymore. I guess it's just him)," she said in response.

The actress further explained that she just wants to protect herself from another possible issue, noting that she had a hard time defending herself at the height of her text scandal with Gomez.

"Kung siya 'yung tatanungin, feel ko rin naman ayaw [na] niya. Iwas gulo lang din para iwas issue. Pagod na pagod na talaga ako sa mga binabatong [issue sa'kin], alam mo 'yung hirap na ipagtanggol sarili mo. T'as wala pang nagtatanggol sa'yo. Edi ilulunok ko na lang ang masasakit na salita. Alam din naman niya siguro 'yun," she said.

(If he would ever be asked about the same thing, I feel like he doesn't want to work with me either. I'm just protecting myself from a possible issue. I got really tired of defending myself from the issues thrown against me. You know I had a hard time protecting myself. No one even defended me. I would rather accept these hurtful remarks. I'm sure he knows that.)

Budol's remarks echoed those of her previous statement during the media con of "Binibining Marikit," saying she had to seek therapy while dealing with the aftermath of her text controversy with Gomez.

"Nagpa-doktor... nagpa-psychiatrist na po ako para mas ma-pro-

cess ko siya nang maayos, na bakit may mga gan'ung klaseng tao na kailangan kang hilahin pababa kapag alam nilang itinataas ka ng Panginoon (I asked the help of a doctor, a psychiatrist, to help me process this properly. I wondered why there are people who wanted to drag you down knowing that the Lord is raising you up)?" she said.

Budol and Gomez were embroiled in a controversy where screenshots of their intimate conversations were leaked on the latter's social media accounts in December 2023, where the actor said his pages were hacked. Gomez's texts with fellow beauty queen-turned-actress Bianca Manalo circulated as well.

### Belle on doing film without Donny: It's growth

Kapamilya actress-singer Belle Mariano is reportedly set to collaborate with blockbuster director Cathy Garcia-Sampana on a full-length feature film.

The two recently met alongside ABS-CBN Films executives to discuss the project. Belle expressed both excitement and nerves about the film, which she revealed will feature a stellar cast, including those she has never worked before.

"Ako po kinakabahan ako. All I can say is this is gonna be a star-studded film, I'm gonna be with artists who I really look up to in the industry and working with Direk again, it's really such an honor because I know every step of the way, I will learn from Direk and with other artists as well," Belle shared.

This marks the third time Belle and direk Cathy will be working together, with the latter having previously played a role in some of the actress' projects alongside her perennial on-screen partner, Donny Pangilinan.

Direk Cathy is best known for directing three of the highest-grossing Filipino films of all time — "Hello, Love, Again," "Hello, Love, Goodbye" and "The Hows of Us."

"Sabi niya, never pa niyang nakatrabaho 'yung ibang makakatrabaho niya dito. So, it excites me paano kaya 'yung dynamics on set. Ngayon na mas batikan na 'yung mga katrabaho niya, tignan natin kung lalapit-lapit pa siya... doon na siya sa mga



batikan na lalapit at hihingi ng tips," the filmmaker said.

The young actress agreed, acknowledging the challenges and growth this project will bring, "I feel like, in everything that I do, as much as I can I try to enlighten myself with things I don't know yet. And I try to learn more, this is gonna be an unusual set-up."

Belle also shared her thoughts about working without her reel partner for the first time.

"I've been working with Donny for so long and this is the first time that I'm doing a film on my own and I would say it's growth. Something scary but I'm really excited for it."





# Joey Baking The Socialist

## Is it Spring already?

Just when we thought we would get away with winter without picking a shovel, comes February with a blast on the 12th, followed by another one on the 15th and ending late evening of the 16th.

Anyway, thankfully, the beginning of February was like a lamb as I managed to deliver my newspaper on the 7th. On the business side, Lola Sally is now Lola Asty on Kingston Road, just across Action Honda.

Just when I thought the month of January was going to be peaceful and quiet on the party circuit, it turns out to be a busy one. February is turning out to be a lonely one with only a few events happening.

February seemed to be a slow month compared to January.

On February 7, the Filipino Centre, Toronto (FCT) held a fundraising meet

and greet for Filipino MP Rechie Valdez. It was a well-attended evening and managed to raise close to \$10,000.

I wish her all the luck.

As I write this, the Liberals seem to be ahead on the polls with the thought that Mark Carney will be their new leader. MP Salma Zahid also arrived and they both announced that they are endorsing former Governor of Bank of Canada Mark Carney for leader.

On February 15 when it was snowing hard, it was Josie De Leon (JDL) School of performing Arts held "Love Notes; a Night of Student Concert" at Xinflix Auditorium. Thankfully, it was not that far from my house, so I went.

"Why did you not predict the weather when you scheduled this show two months ago," I jokingly asked JDL founder Josie de Leon when I arrived.

"I know right," she said.

"By March, the worst of the winter would be over. The snow would thaw, the rivers begin to run and the world would wake into itself again." NEIL GAIMAN



ABOVE, MP Rechie Valdez (4TH FROM LEFT) poses with supporters - from left Frank Cruzet, Theresa Lumanlan, Corie Coutts, Nitz Rejdik, Philip Beloso, and Judith Gonzales - who held a fundraiser for her at The Filipino Centre Toronto.

Anyway, it was nice to go out of the house, despite the weather. Otherwise, it will just be depressing just waiting for the snow to stop, doing nothing if I stayed home.

On February 21, I attended the Toronto Kapuso Lions Club meeting at Agincourt Community Centre. It is refreshing to attend an organization where the focus is of helping make the world a better place, one step at a time. I might as well attend the meeting because I was there already at the centre to do advance voting for

the provincial election.

The next day, My friend Fe asked me to accompany her to do advance voting also. Her voting centre is at Ellemsere Community Centre. She said she did not receive her voter card.

"I did not receive mine until a day before the advance voting was supposed to start," I said.

It seems to be late for a voter card.

When Fe told the staff at the voting centre that she did not receive her voter card, they told her a lot of

SOCIALLIST page 12

## LOOK: Miss Teen Philippines Canada First Runner-up visits her Maternal Hometown, Aringay

Aringay, La Union – Miss Chai-leen Frances Zarate Ong, Miss Teen Philippines Canada's First Runner-Up had a homecoming in her maternal Municipality - Aringay, La Union. She and her team her team visited Aringay on February 5, 2025 to meet with Mayor Benjamin O. Sibuma and her staff and the Municipal Council led by Vice-Mayor Isabel D. Diaz. The courtesy call not only served as touching base for her hometown but also served as a platform to discuss to visit the potential tourism spots in Aringay that she will promote when she goes back to Canada. She visited her home barangays, Sto. Rosario East and San Antonio. She had also a photoshoot in the heritage sites of the Centennial Tunnel in Poblacion and the Agricultural Heritage Site which



is the Gallano Rice Terraces.

Ms. Ong, happily informed Mayor Sibuma that she wants to share her vision of empowerment and growth among the youth and highlight Aringay's beauty in diversity. Mayor Sibuma on the other hand, enthusiastically embraced the potential of Ms. Teen Philippines Canada First Runner-Up vision for the youth. Ms. Ong hopes not

only to make a real difference in promoting La Union culture to Canada but to the world.

Ms. Teen Philippines Canada First Runner-Up was welcomed by her local counterparts, Miss Jezelle Luyang, First-Runner Up Miss Teen Culture Aringay 2024 and Mr. Anthony Ruden Mangaoang, Jr., Mr. Teen Culture Aringay 2024. It was a sight to

MISS TEEN page 11



## UMAC explains why your boxes are getting delayed

### Announcement

To Our Dear UMAC Customers:

We write to inform you, our valued customers, that the Bureau of Customs ("BOC") has implemented a full examination policy of containers with balikbayan boxes coming from Canada due to the discovery of illegal drugs in some balikbayan boxes sent from Canada. The BOC has also implemented a random

checking of balikbayan box containers from other countries due to the growing prevalence of the balikbayan box industry being used by criminal elements as the means to transport illegal drugs.

As a result of the full examination policy, affected containers will inevitably encounter delays in the release and delivery of the cleared balikbayan boxes contained therein. Kindly rest assured that we shall reach out to those of our customers whose balikbayan boxes will encounter delay so

that they may be informed immediately of any updates on the release and delivery of their balikbayan boxes. As we make our security processes stricter in the acceptance of balikbayan boxes to be shipped to the Philippines, please also know that UMAC is committed firmly in taking all necessary measures to observe its stringent security and quality regulations to ensure that the integrity of cleared balikbayan boxes shall be protected fully.

We take this opportunity to remind

the senders of balikbayan boxes that the Philippines implements strictly its laws on the prohibition of illegal drugs, and that any person who participates in their entry into the country shall be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

ATTY. ARISTEO O. CARIÑO  
Director and Legal Counsel  
UMAC Forwarders Express, Inc.  
#AOSKapusoOverload

# LOOK: Miss Teen Philippines Canada First Runner-up visits her Maternal Hometown, Aringay

MISS TEEN from page 10

behold the meeting of culture unique in

being an Aringayeno and in their aim to make a positive impact in the society.

Chaileen is the daughter of Ms. Aileen Dulay Zarate-Ong of Sto. Rosario East

and Mr. Richard Ong of San Juan, La Union.



## Belle reaches out to Robi after alleged threat from DonBelle fan

Siniguro ni Belle Mariano na walang dapat ikabahala ang Kapamilya TV host na si Robi Domingo pagdating sa tunay na fans ng aktres.

Ito ay matapos makatanggap si Robi ng pagbabanta mula sa nagpakilalang fan ng DonBelle, ang uniname ng loveteam ni Belle at ni Donny Pangilinan.

Nitong Huwebes, February 27, 2025, nagtungo si Robi sa tanggapan ng Cyber-crime Division ng National Bureau of Inves-

tigation (NBI) upang ireklamo ang isang netizen na nagbanta umano sa kanya.

Nag-ugat ang pagbabanta ng netizen nang mag-post sa Instagram si Robi ng mga larawan at video na kuha sa photo shoot at taping ng Pilipinas Got Talent (PGT) Season 7, noong February 22.

Dito ay kasama niya ang bagong judges ng programa na sina Donny at Kathryn Bernardo.

Noong February 21, isinapubliko ng ABS-

CBN ang pagbabalik ng PGT, at sa edisyong ito ay si Robi ang magsisilbing host kasama si Melai Cantiveros.

Sina Kathryn at Donny naman ay makakasama nina Eugene Domingo at Mr. Freddie "FMG" Garcia, former president ng Kapamilya network mula 1997 hanggang 2003, bilang judges.

Sa comments section ng post ni Robi ay may isang netizen ang nag-iwan ng komento na may tonong pagbabanta laban sa TV

host.

Ayon sa netizen, kung sakalipng agtambalin sina Kathryn at Donny sa Pilipinas

Got Talent, sigiguraduhin daw ng netizen na maba-bash nang husto si Robi ng mga tagahanga ng DonBelle.



*Kung good deal ang hinahanap ninyo, Harold Guarin ang tawagan n'yo...*



**HAROLD GUARIN**  
Fleet & Leasing Manager  
New & Used Sales  
haroldg@roadsport.com



940 Ellesmere Rd. (NE Kennedy) Toronto Ontario M1P 2W8

**416-291-9501**

[www.roadsport.com](http://www.roadsport.com)

Bad Credit? New Credit? Bankruptcy?  
Divorced? Credit Counseling?

**NO PROBLEM!!!**

Come In And See More  
Choices Of Vehicles



\*\*2021 Nissan Versa 1.6 S  
FROM \$ 15,290



\*\*2017 Honda HR-V LX  
FROM \$ 15,990



\*\*2017 Hyundai Ioniq Electric Limited  
FROM \$ 16,990



\*\*2020 Nissan Kicks SR  
FROM \$ 17,886

Call Harold for Appointment  
**416-578-7351**



**HONDA**

See Harold for details \*\*All vehicles are plus \$10.00 omvic fee and HST, Licensing and \$40.00 gas extra. WHILE SUPPLIES LAST. PRICES MAY CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.



**NEED A CAR?** TAWAG KA LANG KABAYAN!

**EMMANUEL "MANNY" YANGA**  **416-858-0616**

**SOCIALIST** page 19

people did not. She voted.

Afterwards, we went to Burger's Priest.

On February 27, I went with Fe,

Juliet Cayetano and Judith Gonzales to JC banquet hall where they booked the hall for Toronto Kapuso Lions club June 6 gala. We then had lunch at Di An Vietnamese restaurant at Chartwell Centre at Brimley and Hunting-

wood. It's a new cozy restaurant with delicious food. For your information, the menu does not feature a single seafood dish. I was looking for it. So was Chinky del Mar.

On March 1, Toronto Kapuso Lions Ellen Galorport held a dinner - dance to warm the cold night with a theme of disco. It was attended by close friends and guest who want to dance the cold night away.



FCT holds a fundraiser for MP Rechie Valdez

# JDL LOVE NOTES: A Night of Music Student Concert

It is quite surprising hearing young talents singing adult songs by young ones who are not even in their teens yet, or just starting in their teens?

Daniella Sambrana sings love story, then Unstoppable. Justin sings a Lady Gaga - Bruno Mars COL-

LAB song Die with a smile and Don't you want me the way I want you by Rose' and Bruno Mars.

Charlotte sings Greatest love of all and Love Story by Taylor Swift

Annika sings Someone like me by Adele.

Kathryn sings "Dito ka lang sa puso ko" and "From the start" by Laufe. It has that nostalgic tempo to it, a jazzy breezy song.

Bella sings "Maybe this time" Gail sings "I'm alive" by Celine Dion.

Aky sings "Love in the Dark" by Adele is a heart-felt ballad from her 2015 album 25. The song is about the painful realization that a relationship has run its course, even though love and care still exist. Adele's emotional delivery, combined with the melancholic piano melody, makes it a deeply moving track.

Afterwards, Aky's second song is "I Feel Pretty" from West Side Story and "Unpretty" by TLC. It was a Glee mashup and was performed by Rachel Berry (Lea Michele) and Quinn Fabray (Dianna Agron).

Marvin sings "Die with a Smile."

Andrea sings "The climb" by Miley Cyrus.

The next one is a pleasant shocker. Who would think that this diminutive young girl, not even in her teens is going to perform a Tagalog song that was sang by Regine Velazquez and also by Morissette? Not only that, she also did the birit notes. Audrey Tak sings "Pangarap ko'y ibigin ka and hit the birit notes and got the loudest cheers from the audience.

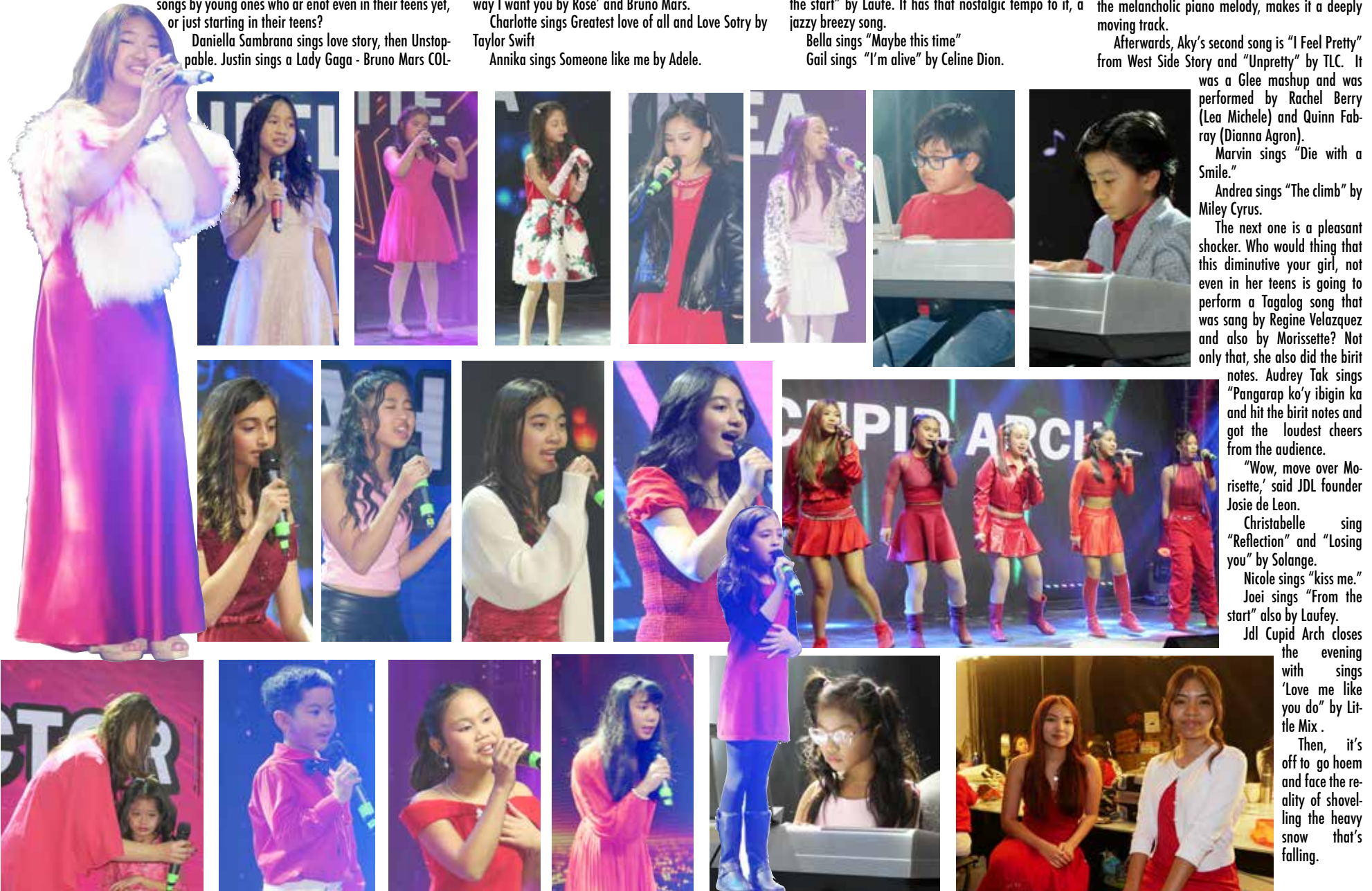
"Wow, move over Morissette," said JDL founder Josie de Leon.

Christabelle sing "Reflection" and "Losing you" by Solange.

Nicole sings "kiss me." Joi sings "From the start" also by Laufey.

Jdl Cupid Arch closes the evening with sings "Love me like you do" by Little Mix.

Then, it's off to go home and face the reality of shoveling the heavy snow that's falling.





**Sheryl Dela Cruz**  
Financial Services Manager  
sheryl@villagenissan.com  
(647) 965-0906



25 South Unionville Ave, Markham ON, L3R 6B8  
www.markhaminfiniti.com | www.villagenissan.com

**Bad Credit? New Credit?  
Bankruptcy? Divorced?  
Credit Counseling?**

**NO PROBLEM!**

**Kung good deal ang hinahanap ninyo, Sheryl at Emmanuel, ang tawagan niyo**



Over 70 Brand-New INFINITI's In-Stock & Ready For Delivery

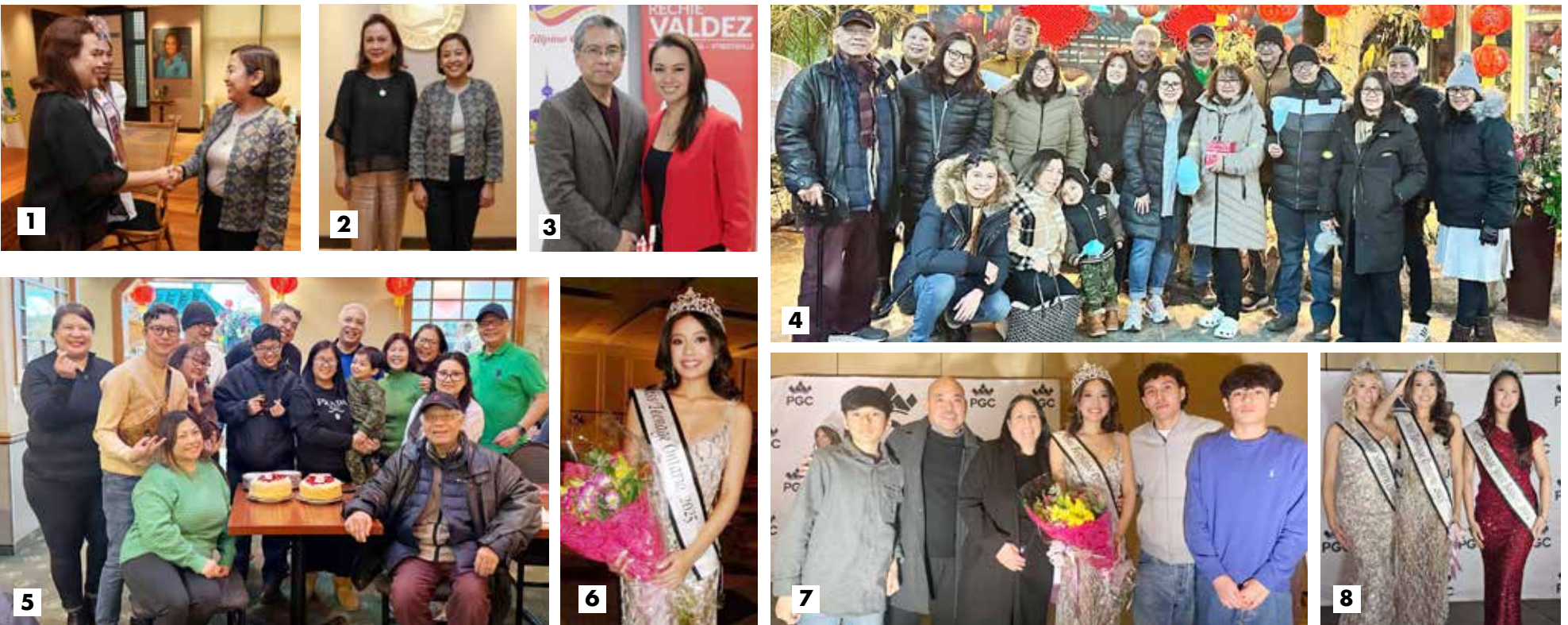


Over 70 Brand-New Nissan's In-Stock & Ready For Delivery



Over 30 Quality Pre-Owned Vehicles In-Stock & Ready For Delivery

\*For more information, see Sheryl & Emmanuel for full details.



1-2 PCCF President Rosemer Enverga pays a courtesy visit to Mayor Abby Binay-Campos at Makati City Hall, Philippines; 3. Publisher Joey Baking pose with MP rechie Valdez at a fundraiser; 4. The San Juan & Acuna Family members welcome their cousins from the Philippines on February 20, 2025; 5. A Gettogether of the San Juan & Acuna Family in Toronto; 6. Chloe Sabatin wins Miss Teen Ontario 2025; 7. Chloe Sabatin with family; 8. Chloe Sabatin with other beauties

## PCCF makes an appearance at All-Out Sundays

Having fun while helping others!

The Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) beauties together with Rosemer Enverga had an unforgettable experience at the live taping of GMA Pinoy TV's All-Out Sundays! The ladies including Alyssia-Miss Philippines Canada 2024, Kirstine-Miss Teen Philippines Canada 2024, Greatchen-Mrs Philippines Canada 2024, Brianna-Little Miss Philippines Canada 2024 together with runners-up Chaileen and Hannah



soaked in all the excitement! Special shout-out to Kapuso Heartthrobs Anton Vincon and Michael Sager (in photos). For more info, e-mail PhilippineCanadianFoundation@gmail.com, visit: www.philippinecanadianfoundation.com

**ABOUT PCCF**  
The Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF) is a non-profit organization who's mission is to promote the arts, culture and heritage of Filipino culture. PCCF is the proud organizer of events like the Pinoy Fiesta and Trade Show sa Toronto and Pageants with a Cause. PCCF was founded by the late Senator Tobias C. Enverga Jr., the first Canadian of Filipino descent elected in the City of Toronto and the first Canadian of Filipino descent to be appointed the Senate. Our motto, "Having fun, while helping others!" For more info, e-mail PhilippineCanadianFoundation@gmail.com, visit: www.philippinecanadianfoundation.com





### Gabbi Garcia reveals she auditioned for PBB: 'I wanted to join and I was curious'

Kapuso actress Gabbi Garcia experienced a full-circle moment as she was introduced as one of the hosts of the Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Collab Edition, joining Bianca Gonzalez, Robi Domingo, and others.



During the grand media conference at the Dolphy Theater in ABS-CBN on March 1, Gabbi shared her experience auditioning for a well-known reality show. "I auditioned for PBB Teens Season 4, so ang nangyari noon. I've been a big fan of PBB and I grew up watching it to the point na nagpapalaam ako sa parent ko if I can extend to watch the whole episode. So when they announced it on the TV na pwede mag audition kaya niyaya ko na yung mommy ko. (I auditioned for PBB Teens Season 4, and I have been a fan of the show for as long as I can remember. I grew up watching it and was so invested that I would ask my parents if I could stay up to watch the entire episode. When they announced on TV that auditions were open, I immediately went to my mom to express my interest)," Gabbi said.

"I auditioned for PBB Teens Season 4, so ang nangyari noon. I've been a big fan of PBB and I grew up watching it to the point na nagpapalaam ako sa parent ko if I can extend to watch the whole episode. So when they announced it on the TV na pwede mag audition kaya niyaya ko na yung mommy ko. (I auditioned for PBB Teens Season 4, and I have been a fan of the show for as long as I can remember. I grew up watching it and was so invested that I would ask my parents if I could stay up to watch the entire episode. When they announced on TV that auditions were open, I immediately went to my mom to express my interest)," Gabbi said.

Gabbi stated that she was one of the 5,000 auditionees waiting in line for a chance to enter the PBB house.

"So I lined up, it was 5,000 auditionees, and I was number 3,900 something. I was there from 9 a.m. to 5 a.m. the next day. Ganun siya intense. I had to go to school the next day, kaya pinapagalitan na ako ng mommy ko. (I lined up with 5,000 auditionees, and I was number 3,900 something. I was there from 9 a.m. to 5 a.m. the next day. It was such an intense experience, and I had to go to school the following day. My mom was really upset about it)," Gabbi said.

Despite her struggles, Gabbi advanced past the first audition screening, but unfortunately, she was

not called for the second part. "I was really eager to join and, as a kid, I was so curious to see what was happening inside the house. Fortunately, I got accepted during the first screening. However, for the second screening, it took place inside Kuya's house, and unfortunately, I wasn't able to get in after that. (I was really eager to join and, as a kid, I was so curious to see what was happening inside the house. Luckily, I got to attend the first screening. However, during the second screening, it was held at my big brother's house, and unfortunately, I wasn't

able to enter after that)," she said. Although Gabbi did not enter the Big Brother house, she expresses her happiness and humility in being one of the show's hosts.

"Today marks a significant full-circle moment for me. I auditioned many years ago, and now I stand before you as a host. I am humbled and grateful for this opportunity," Gabbi said.

### Tom Rodriguez shares glimpse of partner, baby

Kapuso actor Tom Rodriguez shared a glimpse of his son and his partner on social media.

Tom posted a photo on his Instagram Story of a woman carrying a child on a beach. "Full (hearts)," he captioned the post.

The actor revealed last November that he is now a father to a baby boy. He confirmed the



news in an interview with TV5's MJ Marfori, who asked the actor for a life update since returning to showbiz following a hiatus. The interview was after a media conference for his upcoming show "Huwag Mo 'Kong Iwan."

"Great, I have a new source of inspiration, I'm a new dad to a very happy, healthy baby boy," Tom announced. "He's four months old and I've never experienced happiness at this level, he's my constant source of inspiration right now."

Tom said he recalls saying he's getting older but the birth of his son has him feeling differently, younger and more vibrant.



Toronto Kapuso Lions joins a disco night to relax.

RHETT from page 3

away, Dela Cruz is feeling a mix of nerves and excitement, but one thing is certain—this is just the beginning of an amazing career.



RIGHT, Arielle Perez  
FAR RIGHT, Pearly Elarde

**UMAC**  
Forwarder Express Inc.

**LOYALTY Rewards**

**SEND 9 BALIKBAYAN BOXES AND THE 10TH BOX IS FREE**

416-298-8622  
WWW.UMACTORONTO.CA

# THE FILIPINO CENTRE, TORONTO

4395 Shepard Avenue East TELEPHONE: 416-335-0485

## Join our WEEKLY WEDNESDAY PAINTING CLASS • 11AM-3PM



# Doing Charity work while on Vacation

by Yujuico Bal Cricket

In the heart of Manila's South Cemetery, where thousands of families live amidst adversity, a beacon of hope shines through. Mona Liza Lim, a high school friend joined me in organizing a feeding

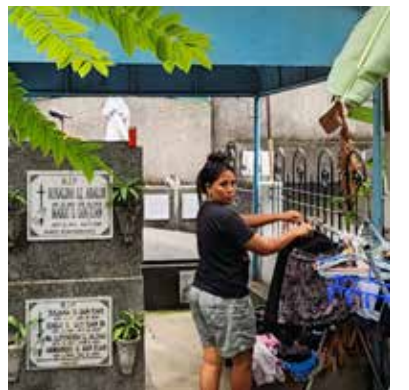
outreach for 250 children and 50 adult residents, providing lunch boxes and drinks.

Witnessing the resilience of these families, despite living in challenging condi-

tions near Trump Tower, was a powerful reminder of our collective potential for positive change. The innocent eyes of the children sparked tears of compassion, and a mother's introduction to her son, brave-

ly living with cerebral palsy, inspired me to offer support. Together, we can work towards a brighter future, where every individual has access to basic necessities and

CHARITY page 23



# Charo Santos-Concio shares words of wisdom for BINI amid 'burnout' concerns



Former ABS-CBN president and CEO Charo Santos-Concio offered some pieces of advice to the Nation's Girl Group BINI during a podcast interview, addressing concerns about the members' schedule and possible burnout.

When asked about reports and concerns regarding BINI's possible exhaustion from their packed schedules, the veteran actress and former "Maalaala Mo Kaya" host mentioned the importance of balance, communication and self-care.

"I trust that the management team of BINI is looking after the well-being of their talents. You know at the end of the day, it's really striking a balance. It's finding that balance. It's not one or the other because life goes on," explained Charo.

"Hindi pwedeng iwanan ang trabaho, so you have to be good at juggling things and know what's most urgent," she added.

"When you have a job, hindi mo pwedeng sabihin na iwanan ko 'yung trabaho ko. You have to be good at juggling things. You just have to know what is most urgent to you. It's the urgency, 'yun 'yung hanapin mo."

She also stressed that practicing open communication can help, saying, "Communication is key. If you're distant, that's a formula for failure. But for as long as

you're distant, patay. That's a formula for failure. You may be absent for a while because of the demands of your job but for as long as there's open communication, and you make your children feel that you're always there no matter what — it will calm them down," the media executive added.

Further reacting to "burnout" concerns, Charo offered a motivating perspective: "Totoo naman. That's the price of success. But you're on your way to perhaps creating that global audience. So kung ako, I'll look for the tools to make sure that I will not burn out.

"I have to help myself, 'di ba? (Kasi) nandito na o trinabaho ko na 'to, ilang taon na ako nagpagod, ngayon ka pa ba gi-give-up? Parang hindi," she remarked.

Charo reiterated that while exhaustion and anxiety are bound to happen in their career, an "empowered woman" must prioritize her well-being and manage what is within her control.

She encouraged the members and other young artists to prioritize self-care, saying, "Sometimes, it's a change of mindset but yes, make sure you have good sleep, you demand that from your handlers. Make sure you're fed well. Make sure you do talk therapy when you're anx-

ious about something. "These are young girls. they're going through self doubts, fears — acknowledge all of those things. Don't run away but seek help. 'Pag kailangan mo ng tulong, 'wag kang mahiyang humingi ng tulong. 'Yan ang sasabihin ko sa mga kabataan."

Finally, she posed a question — one that every young artist today might find worth reflecting on: "But, of course, at the end of the day, what do you want in life?"

BINI recently kicked off their "Grand BINiverse" world tour with a sold-out concert at the Philippine Arena in Bocaue, Bulacan, becoming the first local act to do so.

This was followed by the release of their EP "BINiverse" which includes their newest hit song, "Blink Twice."

"Pinoy Big Brother: Gen 11" Big Winner Sofia "Fyang" Smith has learned to embrace being the center of internet frenzy phrase, "Nasaan si Fyang?" which did not only gain the attention of fans but celebrities as well.

"Happy po ako na hinahanap ako. Pero ngayon nandito na po ako. I'm here at MOA, mag-peperform. So I hope nandito rin sila sa labas," she laughingly told reporters at her first ever brand endorsement.

The phrase stemmed

## Fyang Smith on viral 'Nasaan si Fyang' memes, rising stardom: 'Nandito na po ako'



from netizens' comments endlessly looking for Smith on social media, specifically in events where her fellow "PBB" stars Rain Celmar, Kolette Madelo and Kai Martinola were present, but she's not.

The expression extended even to the events that are not anyhow related to Smith, including the time where the Gutierrez family held their Christmas Party in December.

In the Feb. 6 episode of "It's Showtime," Vice Ganda alongside his fellow hosts expressed their confusion on the viral "Nasaan si Fyang?" remark.

"Di ko talaga ma-gets 'yon kung bakit pati sa video ni Beyonce hinahanap nila si Fyang. Video ni Beyonce 'yung pinapanood ko tapos nakalagay, 'Nasaan si Fyang?' Mahal ko si Fyang pero hindi ko rin talaga maintindihan," said Vice Ganda laughingly.

"Araw-araw rin hinahanap sakin si Fyang. Hindi pa kami nag-kakakilala," added host Bela Padilla.

Meanwhile, despite only being in the limelight for less than a year, Smith shared that she is now getting used to the fame.

"Unti-unti na po akong nasasanay. Mataagal na po since lumabas ako ng Pinoy Big Brother house. Up until now, very overwhelming 'yung mga supporter," she said.

Now that "PBB" is set to have its new edition as a collaboration between ABS-CBN and GMA, the 18-year-old shared advice to the future housemates of the reality show.

"Papayag po ako [kung ma-invite] as guest housemate. My tips for them siguro is huwag sila matakot ipakita kung sino sila, kasi doon sila mamahalin ng tao," she stated.

# CELL-MASTER

## SALES - REPAIR - INSTALL

IN FRONT OF FOOD COURT  
1550 S. Gateway Rd.  
Mississauga ON  
L5W 5J1

647-469-9889  
3JS.CELLMASTER@GMAIL.COM



# Dr. Patrick Alcedo on Philippine Folk Dance,

the Filipino Diaspora in Canada, and the Upcoming Film Showcase at York with Yuri Frolov

as a catalyst for social change? Professor Patrick Alcedo from York University's School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design (AMPD), explores this question in his feature-length documentary, *A Will To Dream*.

The film offers a moving exploration of the struggles

faced by underprivileged youth in the Philippines who study dance while confronting issues such as teenage pregnancy, illegal drugs, precarity of labour and the challenges of inconsistent governmental support in poverty alleviation.

These themes are closely tied to Alcedo's approach as he teaches in AMPD's Dance program, where he challenges students to push the limits of performance art.

"I invite my students to critically examine their own status in life and their lived realities, whether they come from a place of privilege or the margins," says Alcedo. "I then encourage them to use performance—dance, in my case—as a tool to simultaneously comment on inequalities and intervene in ways that create positive change in the communities they are part of or have chosen to engage with."

Mixing traditional and modern elements is at the core of Alcedo's work. In the "Philippine Folk Dance and Culture" course, he blends traditional dances with the real-life experiences of Filipino dance practitioners.

"One of the most powerful ways to retell these lives is through documentary films. Over the years, my films have been shaped by these narratives, folding them in as partners in my teaching of Philippine folk dances."

Alcedo encourages his students to step beyond traditional academic boundaries by integrating diverse forms of expression. He believes that combining physical performance with writing, visuals and sound creates a richer, more layered understanding of complex social issues. Abstract:



In this interview, Dr. Patrick Alcedo, a professor at York University and an expert in dance ethnography, discusses his research on Philippine folk dance, its role in maintaining cultural identity, and its evolution within the Filipino diaspora in Canada. He also talks about his film *A Will to Dream*, which will be screened on March 5 at 7pm at York University during Echoes of Southeast Asia: A Film Showcase.

YF: Could you share a bit about your background, research, and education?

PA: I'm Dr. Patrick Alcedo, a professor in the Department of Dance, Theatre, and Performance at York University. I was born and raised in the Philippines and moved to the United States at the age of 24 to pursue my PhD in Dance History and Theory and Dance History at the University of California, Riverside. I specialize in dance ethnography and documentary filmmaking, focusing on Philippine folk dance and its global interpretations. Growing up as a performer of Philippine folk dance has significantly shaped both my academic and artistic pursuits. My work bridges performance, history, and cultural identity.

YF: Fascinating! Could you tell us about your research projects, including your dissertation and later works?

PA: My research has always revolved around Philippine dance

as a lens for understanding broader socio-cultural issues. My dissertation focused on the Ati-Atihan Festival, a unique Catholic and Indigenous event in my hometown. I examined this cultural phenomenon to understand the questions of nationalism, gender, and global mimicry. Later, I expanded my studies to Philippine folk dance as a medium for diasporic identity formation. I've also conducted research in various communities outside the Philippines, particularly in Canada, where I analyze how cultural performances evolve when practiced by migrant communities. I've been fortunate to receive multiple grants, including the Early Researcher Award from the Government of Ontario, which has enabled me to produce and direct more than ten films to date and organize live perfor-

ies a Spanish-influenced Catholic dance, and the next, they are enacting fluid movements from Muslim communities in the southern Philippines. Such rapid transformation not only highlights the Philippines' rich history but also requires immense cultural sensitivity and respect for the traditions being represented.

YF: The Filipino diaspora is extensive and influential. What insights do you have on its presence in Canada?

PA: Filipinos are among the fastest-growing immigrant communities in Canada, with over a million living here. Migration is driven largely by economic factors, and the country has become a global leader in supplying skilled workers, especially in some healthcare



Filipino dancers. Source: Patrick Alcedo

mances celebrating these cultural expressions.

YF: That's impressive! What's an interesting fact about Filipino traditional dance that might surprise people?

PA: It's incredible diversity. A single performance can showcase Christianized dances, Muslim influences, and Indigenous traditions, with dancers constantly shifting roles and costumes. One moment, a performer embod-

occupations. The Philippines is the world's top exporter of nurses, and you'll find Filipino professionals in various sectors. As for my area of expertise, one can find three Philippine folk dance groups in the Greater Toronto Area alone, showing how strongly cultural traditions remain tied to identity even across generations and continents. I have conducted research in various parts of Canada, including Victoria, where I worked with the Bayanihan Center, observing how Filipino Canadians sustain their heritage

FOLK DANCE page 22

## Miguel Tanfelix on longevity, love and supporting his mom's online fame

Miguel Tanfelix first caught the public's attention when he was a cute-as-a-button five-year-old who joined "StarStruck Kids" in 2004 and was later crowned its First Prince.

You joined the first edition of "StarStruck Kids" when you were 5. Did you already want to become an actor at that young age? What was your motivation? Who were your idols?

"I really wanted to be an 'artista' ever since I joined 'Starstruck Kids.' I even told my mom when I saw the plug on TV that I wanted to join that artista search. I was fortunate enough to be part of that show and be among the finalists."

It's been 21 years since then and you are now 26 years old and still very much in-demand as an actor. What has this journey of more than two decades been like?

"Nothing comes easy in show business. If you really want to become an actor, you should be willing to sacrifice and go through a tedious process. The workshops and the experiences from one project to another helped me a lot to have the discipline and dedication to my craft as an actor and performer."

How did you convince your mom, "Mommy Grace Tanfelix," to have her own TikTok account? Do you help her with the content? How is she handling her popularity?

"I didn't have to do a lot of convincing for her to have her own TikTok and other social media accounts. She really liked posting even back then. So when she learned how to shoot videos, I taught her some techniques. But I'd rather say that I help conceptualize some of her content and produce it. Sometimes, we'd prank each other while doing her posts. I also help her with the equipment that she needs to buy to make the videos more appealing."

You have been in a relationship with Ysabel Ortega for two years now. How do you help each other with your respective careers? What do you both like doing together to unwind and destress? Describe what you like about Ysabel.

"First of all, there is mutual respect for each other's career. We like to travel and have long drives to unwind and destress. Of course, we also like to eat a lot. At this point in our relationship, I think I can say that we have matured on how we deal and relate with each other. I like how Ysabel supports me in general, but at the same time, she also teaches me how to deal with the challenges I go through. She is a breath of fresh air whenever I am feeling down."



What challenges did you have to go through to be where you are now?

"For me, I am never contented with what I do. I always see the need to improve and level up my acting. I challenge myself to do roles that I am not comfortable with. Like in 'Mga Batang Riles,' I never imagined myself doing stunts and action scenes. That was a big challenge for me 'coz my build is not for an action star."

You took a film course recently. Is this in preparation for behind-the-scenes work like directing or writing?

"Yes, definitely. I would like to be able to direct a show or a film in the future. Sometimes, production allows me to do my own camera work in 'All Out Sundays.' I've also tried to direct some videos for school and for some of my endorsements and fortunately, they liked what I did."

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?

"Maybe 10 years from now I will still be in this business and hopefully be better and more successful. I want to have my own house and invest in some businesses before I settle down. I also want to prepare myself to be a family man — a good husband and dad to my future wife and kids."

## Bea Borres reveals practical approach to spending her money

Lifestyle content creator Bea Borres sets the record straight on her spending habits, placing her priorities in practical over unnecessary splurges.

She begins her post with: "Some people bili an iPhone but in reality, they make utang just to buy one then ang hirap pa singilin."

"And tbh, I've been asked so many times why I don't always get the latest one."

To address these questions, Bea reveals her current iPhone 15 was sponsored by Globe.

The 22-year-old internet celebrity explains that she had no immediate plans to upgrade because her previous phone was still in perfect working condition.

She writes (published as is): "I get why people ask, though cuz I'm a lifestyle creator, and I know a lot of you see my life as magastos/expensive."

"And yeah, while that's true in some ways, I'm still practical enough to know that I don't need to upgrade just 'cause there's a new one or spend just to keep up

with trends."

Bea goes on to stress the importance of financial stability over material possessions, reminding her followers that "flexing a luxury lifestyle means nothing if it comes at the expense of financial stability."

She continues, "Phones depreciate, but investments, skills, and experiences appreciate over time."

While Bea acknowledges that if someone can afford luxuries without compromising their financial health to "go for it," her mindset for practicality always comes first. She claims: "ALSO skl can i just say i've been actually keeping my condo bills under 1,500 pesos a month like i don't use the aircon talaga every night."

"Siguro in one month i only on the aircon like 5 times or everytime i have a visitor even my yayas are surprised. 😊"

Bea's no-nonsense take on luxury spending hit home for many.

And everyone is impressed and admires her practicality.





# Toronto Kapuso Lions Club recently helps to bring joy and empowerment to children with disabilities.



ible work being done to support children and families at the hospital.

Toronto Kapuso Lions Club is proud to support Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital "Capes for Kids" fundraiser 2025!

Let's support our fellow TKLC Superhero Alexandra Hope Wheeler!

Together, we're unleashing our inner superheroes to help children and youth with disabilities access life-changing care, therapy, and support.

We hope to hit our \$2,000 goal this Capes for Kids week (February 28 - March 7, 2025).

Your donations will:

- ♥ Help kids move, explore, and play through therapy and specialized programs.
- ♥ Drive research to improve care, develop assistive tech, and break barriers.
- ♥ Build a more accessible and inclusive world for kids and youth with disabilities.

CAPES page 23

Members of the Toronto Kapuso Lions Club recently visited the Holland Bloorview Rehabilitation Hospital to support the "Cape for Kids" project, an initiative that aims to bring joy and empowerment to children with disabilities.

The visit was inspired by Alexandra Wheeler, the TKLC's superhero, whose passion and dedication led the club to collaborate with the hospital by raising over \$1500.

During the visit, members were deeply moved and amazed to learn about the hospital's groundbreaking vision as a leader in global research, development, and innovation in pediatric rehabilitation. It was a humbling experience for all involved to contribute to such an impactful project, and the club members left feeling inspired by the incred-

## How Michael Sager handles netizens criticizing his acting

Maganda ang pasok ng taong 2025 kay Michael Sager, 22, na leading man ni Jillian Ward GMA-7 primetime series na My Ilonggo Girl.

Si Michael ay co-managed artist ng Sparkle, ang talent management arm ng GMA, at ng Cornerstone Entertainment, ang talent management company ni Erickson Raymundo.



"It's an important reminder to really be thankful for this," saad ni Michael sa oportunidad na binigay ng Kapuso Network.

"I thank the Lord every day, and I'm grateful and I don't want to take it for granted. Unexpected itong My Ilonggo Girl, but masaya ako.

"And for me, it's just a reminder to really give it my all kasi sayang ang opportunity. I mean, the network entrusted me with such a big project, partner ko pa si Jill."

Sa kabilang banda, aminado si Michael na nakakaranas rin siya ng kritisismo sa kanyang pag-arte.

"Siguro that's something I'm very careful about kasi yung acting ko, iyon yung ginagawa ko, iyon yung craft ko.

"So, I don't really take it in such a negative light. I just look at what I have to look at and accept..."

"Sinabi din ni Sir Erickson sa akin, yung manager ko sa Cornerstone, he said, 'When you look at bashers, para hindi ka ma-stress, yung nababasa mo, if important talaga, it will reach you.'

"And that really affected me. Kasi siguro minsan madadala ka, e."

Hindi naman daw maiiwasan na minsan ay magsaktan siya dahil tao lang daw siya.

Pero diin ni Michael: "So ako, kung may criticism, yes. And then positive na lang para mas magtuloy-tuloy na lang yung energy."

**JDDL GOES DISNEY**

**SATURDAY, JULY 26**  
**CITY PLAYHOUSE THEATRE**  
**102-1000 NEW WESTMINSTER DR.**  
**THORNHILL, ONTARIO**

**JDDL PRESENTS**  
**Disney FROZEN JR.**

**TICKETS \$20**

**ENCORE PRESENTATION**  
**MARCH 9, 2025**  
 3:00 PM (MATINEE)  
 6:30 PM (EVENING)

**MUSIC & LYRICS BY KRISTEN ANDERSON-LOPEZ & ROBERT LOPEZ**  
**BOOK BY JENNIFER LEE**

**BASED ON THE DISNEY FILM WRITTEN BY JENNIFER LEE AND DIRECTED BY CHRIS BUCK AND JENNIFER LEE**

**FOR BOX OFFICE AND TICKET INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT**  
**HTTPS://TICKETS.CITYPLAYHOUSE.CA**

**CITY PLAYHOUSE THEATRE**  
 #101-1000 NEW WESTMINSTER DRIVE  
 THORNHILL

**MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL**  
 Disney's Frozen JR. is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized materials are supplied by Music Theatre International, New York, NY 212-541-4684 mtishows.com

# Drew Barrymore praises arroz caldo made by Filipino chef Pilar Valdes: 'It has so much flavor'

Filipina chef Pilar Valdes has put the spotlight on Philippine cuisine after she made Drew Barrymore try arroz caldo.

The dish became the center of attention in a recent episode of *The Drew Barrymore Show* after Valdes shared with the Hollywood actress her recipe for the rice porridge, which she regards as something "very meaningful" to her.

"It's near and dear to my heart," Pilar said. "This is all about home and story and when they busted out, like, a birth, any celebration, any sort of gathering, they do this because with just a cup of rice, when it's done, it feeds like a battalion of people and that's how we Filipinos roll."

Barrymore couldn't help but admire the creamy texture of the dish while stirring the pot, "Oh my god, look at that broth."

"This is just like hug-in-a-bowl territory. It's really, really beautiful, that smell is so incredible," Pilar said.

"My mom makes this for me when I'm sick, and I don't live at home anymore, I've been gone for 24 years so now my husband Gabe makes this for me when I'm sick. She taught him how to make it," she continued.

The celebrity chef then showed the audience some of the ingredients that she uses to make arroz caldo, which include scallions, a bit of fish sauce, fried garlic, citrus lime, lemon, and a jammy egg.

"This is dynamite. This is so beautiful," Drew gushed.



"It has so much flavor. You have to taste it to believe it, it looks so beautiful, but wait until it's in your mouth, you're gonna freak out."

Sharing the clip on her Instagram account, Pilar highlighted how "thrilled" she is to share recipes from the Philippines.

"A few quick tips: coat your rice in the rendered fat before adding the broth, season it once at the beginning and don't forget the toppings!" she advised.

Pilar is a New York-based chef and the co-founder of Kickshaw Cookery, a private chef and catering company. Her skills in cooking eventually captivated Drew, who has since hired her to not only become a senior cu-

linary contributor for her talk show but also her personal chef.

The television host now sees Pilar as one of her dearest friends, as she shared in a 2021 episode of her program.

"Pilar and I almost literally spend every day together, and we love food, we love laughter, and we love traveling the globe," Drew said.

Pilar meanwhile said, "My relationship with Drew is really very, very loving, and we communicate in a very odd way. All our love notes to each other are doggy-eared recipes and photos of food on Instagram."

## 'Moved to tears': Sharon Cuneta back to small-medium size after losing weight

Actress Sharon Cuneta posted her most recent photo this week that showed her leaner physique after shedding the "ugly extra weight."

The actress said that she could not believe that she had lost the weight after struggling with it for years.

Sharon said she is now back to size 6 to 8, or small to medium, a fact that she is happy about because she can now shop for the clothes she had been wanting to wear

for the first time in over 20 years.

"When I tried on clothes for my new wardrobe, I was moved to tears because I still couldn't believe I had finally lost all that ugly extra weight!" Sharon wrote on Instagram.



She revealed that she went up to size 24 years ago, and it made her panic because her health suffered.

With her remarkable weight loss journey, which she also opened up about back in Febru-

ary, Sharon said she is not done yet and is aiming at doing "just a few more."

"It's been nine years of losing weight, gaining weight again, being happy and inspired, feeling disappointed and frustrated. So I finally decided to step it up and lose the last several pounds this year," Sharon wrote in February.

Back then, she revealed that she subscribed to a popular Egg Diet for weight loss, which can result to the loss of 10 kilograms in 10 days, as proposed by YouTube content creator Versatile Vicky. Sharon cautioned her fans to seek their physician's advice before embarking on any kind of diet for weight loss.



# Pistahan sa Toronto 2025

## In Celebration of our Filipino Heritage.

**The Filipino Centre, Toronto**  
 Sunday, June 1, 2025 • 10:00 am - 6:00 pm •  
 4395 Sheppard Avenue East, Toronto ON M1S 1T8

### Arts & Culture. Food. Music & Dancing

SPAGHETTI from page 1

chain restaurant spaghetti, Olive Garden comes to mind also, with long since fallen corporations such as Buca di Beppo also holding space in the memories of many. However, there is a non-Italian fast food chain on the block that is pulling to the forefront with spaghetti in ways that many did not expect.

It's a Filipino chain.

Meet Jollibee, a fast food chain that originated in the Philippines and is now known for its fried chicken and fighting for a slice of the market with KFC, Popeyes, Chik-fil-A, and Church's among others.

While Filipino and Italian food may not necessarily be a combination that first comes to mind, Jollibee is actually quite famous, or infamous, depending on your taste, for its unique spaghetti. What sets it apart from the competition is simple: The chain's spaghetti sauce is noticeably sweet. Sweet spaghetti sauce may sound counterintuitive, but it is a flavor profile that is actually common in the Philippines. Spaghetti dishes can be commonly found at a variety of Asian fast food chains, including Hong Kong's Cafe de Coral. However, Jollibee's slightly sweet spaghetti is the first to really make it big in the rest of the world.

While Filipinos love the taste of Filipino spaghetti, not everyone is on board.



LEFT, PM Justin Trudeau with FV Foods owner Mel Galeon. PM Justin like adobo but he is not a fan of Jollibee spaghetti (RIGHT).



In 2021, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in a talk with television personality Melissa Greló during the virtual celebration of Filipino Heritage Month, Trudeau said it is important to maintain diversity in the government so that different sectors, like the Filipino community in Canada, will be well represented in critical aspects of governance.

"If you bring people together with all sorts of different backgrounds, all sorts of different stories, and put them to the same problem, the solutions are not just gonna be deeper, more thoughtful, more creative, more interesting, but they'll also have a bigger chance of being relevant to a broader range of people who want to solve these challenges," Trudeau said.

The Filipino Heritage Month is celebrated every June in Canada, borne out of a proposal in 2016 that would allow the country to acknowledge the Filipino community's contributions to society.

In a light moment during the interview, Trudeau admitted that his favorite Filipino dish is chicken adobo — and that his wife, Sophie Grégoire Trudeau has tried to cook it before.

"And I have to admit I got to go Jollibee from time to time, both in Manila but especially in Winnipeg, and that spaghetti stuff I don't quite understand. But the mango pie and everything else was just amazing," he added.

I believe that's a diplomatic way of saying he doesn't like it.

## What makes Jollibee's Jolly Spaghetti special

Initially founded in 1975, Jollibee actually started as an ice cream business. However, hot meals were introduced a few years later and the idea stuck, turning the chain into the fast food corporation that is recognized internationally today. Jollibee is known for two dishes: fried chicken and spaghetti, which it calls Chickenjoy and Jolly Spaghetti. The combination is already unusual, but the spaghetti specifically became the target of worldwide fascination due to its unique flavor profile. Internet foodies flocked to the nearest Jollibee to try the sweet-style spaghetti sauce, complete with ground beef and hotdog chunks. The result is a spaghetti sauce with a taste and texture that cannot be found elsewhere.

A big part of what made Jolly Spaghetti successful outside of Asia is that it appealed to the Western palate while still being a new spin on a classic dish. When paired with recognized dishes including Jollibee's Chickenjoy fried chicken or its delicious fast food mashed potatoes, it's easy to see why Jollibee continues to expand throughout the world.

Like it or note, Jollibee spaghetti has become iconic that whenever one makes a sweet spaghetti with hotdog, they call it Jollibee spaghetti.



# FAMILY DENTISTRY

## DR. V. SANTIAGO & ASSOCIATES

Call us to book your appointment

**416-967-9272**

Rosedale Medical Clinic  
(Across Sherbourne TTC Station)  
600 Sherbourne St. - Suite 307  
Toronto  
dr.vslu@bellnet.ca

We offer complete dental care & are accepting new patients.

**General Dentistry:**

- Dr. Victoria Santiago
- Dr. Joy Y. Ho
- Dr. Amy Fan
- Dr. Jennifer Chen
- Dr. Damian Yung
- Dr. Myra Caballero

**Registered Dental Hygienist:**

- Raymond Echavez
- Gayle Baylon

**Specialty Dentistry:**

- Dr. Ali Adibfar  
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon
- Dr. Abbasali Hassanali  
Periodontist

## Sam Milby in tears, talks about split with Catriona Gray

Sam Milby broke down in tears as he spoke about his breakup with ex-fiancée Catriona Gray, a matter that still pains him months after reports of their split first surfaced.

In an interview with Boy Abunda, which aired on Monday, March 3, Milby was asked directly about his relationship with the Miss Universe 2018 titleholder, but the actor declined to discuss their eventual breakup, saying he still “doesn’t feel comfortable” disclosing any details.

“It’s hard to talk about [‘yung] breakup namin. It’s something I didn’t want to talk about. I did an interview with MJ Felipe which everyone knows about, and it was mainly to clear ‘yung issue. It’s so sad because, with social media, people just want to connect and believe so many things na walang katotohanan (that are not true),” he said.

With his voice breaking, Milby shared that what made the breakup all the more difficult was the fact that they had gotten engaged, and that their wedding did not happen.

“[It wasn’t just about us being] boyfriend and girlfriend. We were



engaged. And to have that not push through, it’s been really rough, honestly,” he said as he started to cry.

“It’s a hard subject I still don’t want to talk about. If people think that it’s been easy for me, it hasn’t. Sorry,” he further explained in between sobs.

The actor-singer also admitted that he has a hard time moving on from their split since there was “so much love and respect” between them.

“I don’t want to go into details. The more you talk about any issue, mas maraming bala ang tao na pwedeng gamitin (there are many things that can be used) against you. There’s no point. [There was] so much love and respect that it hasn’t been easy [moving on],” he said.

Asked if he is “still at the point of trying to fix things” between them, he said this was something he could answer at the moment.

**No third party**

The actor-singer also denied that third-party allegations hounding him and singer Moira dela Torre, reiterating that this was not the cause of his breakup with Gray.

“I felt the need to clear the issue that there was no third party and ‘yung sinasabi na si (and the claims that) Moira [Dela Torre] ang third party. I wanted to make that clear but it’s something I didn’t want to talk about” he said. “Sa’min ni Cat, we’ve been private about our relationship. Out of respect sa kanya (for her), I still don’t feel comfortable talking about our relationship.”

During the interview, the “Everything About My Wife” star was asked if Dela Torre was indeed the third party in his split, to which he denied. He also confirmed that the singer-songwriter is not his friend anymore, echoing his previous remarks from his interview with Felipe.

Milby confirmed his split in February 2025 but kept mum about the reason behind their split. The ex-partners, who announced their engagement in February 2023, were supposed to get married sometime in 2024.

## Ruru Madrid to Bianca Umali: “Ikaw ang buhay ko.”

Isang madamdaming mensahe ang ibinahagi ni Ruru Madrid, 27, sa Instagram para sa ika-25 kaarawan ng kanyang longtime girlfriend na si Bianca Umali.

Ipinagdiwang ni Bianca ang kanyang 25th birthday March 2, 2025.

Ang Kapuso actress din daw ang nagbibigay-liwanag sa kanyang buhay at ang pangarap niyang makasama habambuhay.

“At habang buhay kong ipagpapasalamat sa Ama na ikaw ang ibinigay Niya sa akin.

“Napakapalad ko dahil ikaw ang kasama ko sa buhay—ang babaeng pinakamamahal ko, iniidolo ko, at pinangarap kong makasama magpakailanman.”

Saad ni Ruru: “Pangako ko, iingat ko ang puso mo gaya ng kung paano mo iningatan at minahal ang akin.

“Sa’kin ka lang, at ako’y sa’yo, hindi lang ngayon kundi sa habang panahon.

“Magkasama nating tutuparin ang lahat ng pangarap natin, dahil walang imposible basta magkasama tayo.

“Mahal na mahal kita, higit pa sa kaya kong ipakita o iparamdam. Ikaw ang buhay ko. [heart emoji]”

**RURU MADRID, BIANCA UMALI, AND THE SEVEN-YEAR ITCH THEORY**

Nasa tamang edad na sina Ruru at Bianca upa-



ng mag-asawa.

In fact, napag-uusapan na raw nila paminsan-minsan ang pagpapakasal ngayong magpipitong-taon na ang relasyon nila sa July 2025.

At hindi rin naniniwala si Ruru sa seven-year itch, ang pamahiing ginagamit upang ilarawan ang panahon, sa ika-pitong taon, kung saan nagkakaroon ng pagbabago sa nararamdaman ng dalawang magkarelasyon.

May paniniwalang marami sa magkarelasyon ang hindi nakakatawid sa yugtong ito.

Pero hindi naniniwala si Ruru rito.

Kuwento ng MMFF 2024 best supporting actor sa panayam ng PEP.ph (Philippine Entertainment Portal) at showbiz scribe na si Allan Diones nitong nakaraang January 2025, “Ako kasi, personally, hindi ako naniniwala kasi, for me kasi, nakasulat na yan.

“Talagang kung kayo para isa’t isa, kayo talaga.

“And for me, basta malinaw sa aming dalawa yung suporta na ibinigay namin at yung pagmamahal na binibigay namin sa isa’t isa, kahit sino pang pumigil, kahit na anumang tukso, pag-subok, kasi talagang dadaan at dadaan po yan.

“Pero naniniwala ako na basta nagtutulungan kaming dalawa na mag-work yung relationship, lahat kakayarin.”

**TRISTARS - JERFLOW**

THE MOST REQUESTED FILIPINO ARTIST IN TORONTO

THE KING OF RNB

**JAY R**

MARCH 14, 2025 | 7PM

REMBRANDT BANQUET HALL

**TRISTARS - LORENZ**

THE MOST REQUESTED FILIPINO ARTIST IN TORONTO

THE KING OF RNB

**JAY R**

MARCH 14, 2025 | 7PM

REMBRANDT BANQUET HALL

**HERE, THERE and EVERYWHERE**  
**UMAC**  
 FORWARDERS EXPRESS INC.  
*A Company with a History... And a Track Record!!!*

*Padalahan ng kahon sa Pilipinas*  
**416-298-8622**

416-298-8622  
 umactoronto@yahoo.ca  
 www.umactoronto.com

515 Milner Avenue, Unit-9  
 Scarborough, Ontario M1B 2K4

# AMPD Professor Patrick Alcedo's A Will To Dream Merges Dance with Documentary Storytelling

FOLK DANCE from page 16

through music, dance, and community gatherings.

YF: That's really insightful. Let's talk about York's upcoming film showcase. What can you tell us about A Will to Dream?

PA: As I'm its director, this project is very personal to me. It took nearly five years to complete, with filming in Manila over multiple visits. The documentary follows Luther, a ballet dancer who gave up his U.S. Green Card to return to the Philippines and teach underprivileged children. His story is a powerful testament to the role of dance as a positive transformative force. The film explores themes of sacrifice, community, and the resilience of the human spirit. It also interweaves the stories of five of his students, illustrating how dance offers an escape from poverty, keeps young people away from vices, and fosters a sense of self-worth and belonging. The title, A Will to Dream, captures the determination of these individuals to pursue their aspirations despite the challenges they face.

YF: What other films will be showcased during the event?

PA: On the first day, a short film will be screened alongside mine. According to its synopsis, the film focuses on "addressing queer and trans friendship in the diaspora, Filipinx masculinities, and everyday enactments of transgenerational care." It's a thought-provoking piece that examines



A Will to Dream poster. Source: Patrick Alcedo. gender and relationships within Filipino society. The second day will feature several short films curated from the Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival, all highlighting complex Southeast Asian identities. These films provide a platform for underrepresented voices and encourage discussions on identity, migration, and belonging.

YF: That sounds incredible. What are some future Southeast Asia-related initiatives at the York Center for Asian Research?

PA: One of our flagship academic initiatives to do Southeast Asia-focused research through our Philippine Studies Group. For example, we are hosting a talk by Filipino journalists who are the recipients of the Marshall McLuhan Fellowship for excellence in journalism. This Febru-

ary 26, 2024 fellow Pia Ranada of Rapper Philippines will give a talk at York titled, "Community Building and Journalism in the Context of AI and Big Tech in the Philippines." The focus on AI's and Big Tech's impact on journalism will be a particularly relevant topic to Philippine

Studies and the larger Southeast Asian Studies given the current media landscape. Our Philippine Studies Group is housed at the York Centre for Asian Research. We aim to make this center a hub for Southeast Asian Studies, but a significant challenge is the lack of dedicated study groups for other countries in the region. While the Philippines has an established academic presence, other Southeast Asian nations are underrepresented at York. We hope to broaden our research scope to ensure a more comprehensive representation of the region.

YF: Speaking of challenges, how have funding cuts and restrictions on international students affected your programs?

PA: Unfortunately, some programs, including those affiliated with the York Center for Asian Research, have been temporarily suspended due to financial challenges York University, along with other post-secondary institutions, are facing now. Universities are prioritizing larger programs with higher student numbers, putting programs focused on Southeast Asia and its diaspora at risk. Southeast Asian Studies in Canada are already underfunded, and these cuts make it even more difficult to sustain academic initiatives. One potential solution would

**"One of the most powerful ways to retell these lives is through documentary films."**

be increasing international student enrollment or securing targeted funding, but current policies make this difficult. Without institutional support, Area Studies programs face an uncertain future. We need stronger advocacy for the importance of these programs in fostering global understanding and intercultural dialogue.

YF: That's concerning, but let's hope for the best. Thank you for sharing your insights!

PA: Thank you! I appreciate the opportunity to discuss these important topics.

**MACKY'S LECHON HOUSE ISLAW**

#5 N.S. Amoranto Ave.  
 (Formerly Ralino St.) La Loma Q.C.  
 Landline: 028-283-9401 • Mobile: (0916) 237-2800  
 FACEBOOK PAGE: Macky's Lechon House - ISLAW

Good for:  
 Paksiw na Lechon, Pritong Lechon, Adobong Lechon, Crispy Sisig, Singang na Lechon, Nilangang Lechon

**Frozen Lechon**

We deliver! Right To Your Doorstep.  
 Order now..call us at  
**09162372800**  
 or  
**02 8-2839401**  
 Ask for Macky or Monica..

*When in Metro Manila, this is the lechon to get!*

## Canada and Philippines are in final negotiations for defense pact to boost joint military exercises

Canada and the Philippines are in the final stages of negotiating a key defense pact that would allow their forces to hold larger military drills, said the Canadian ambassador to Manila while raising concerns over China's "provocative and unlawful actions" in the region.

DEFENSE from page 1

Canadian envoy to Manila said. The defense pact would also allow their forces to hold larger military drills, said the Canadian ambassador to Manila while raising concerns over China's "provocative and unlawful actions" in the region.

"I'm glad to hear that there is a strong intention on both sides to deepen and strengthen the relationships by forging new milestones in our defence relations to culminate, perhaps, with the Visiting Forces Agreement," Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said in a statement.

Teodoro didn't say what form or shape a possible VFA with

Canada will take, but an existing VFA that the Philippines has with the United States allows the rotation of thousands of American troops in and out of the Philippines for war drills and exercises.

The memorandum, the defence ministry said, would jumpstart cooperation between the defence and military establishments of both countries on military education, training exchanges, information sharing, peacekeeping operations and disaster response.

Canada has been reinforcing its military presence in the Indo-Pacific region and has committed to help promote the rule of law and expand trade and in-



vestment.

That dovetails with Philippine efforts under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to broaden defense ties with friendly countries to bolster his country's external defense as it faces an increasingly assertive China in the disputed waters.

Canadian Ambassador David Hartman said last February 7 that his country and the Philippines were "in the final stages of the negotiations of our status of forces visiting agreement that

will enable us to have even more substantive participation in joint and multilateral training exercises and operations with the Philippines and allies here in the region."

Hartman spoke before Philippine national security officials, foreign ambassadors and defense

attaches aboard the HMCS Ottawa, a Royal Canadian Navy Halifax-class frigate on a port visit to Manila. The vessel will take part in a joint exercise off the Philippines next week, he said.

"We are in the final stages of negotiating the agreement which will enable us to have deeper cooperation and more substantive participation in training to build capacity," Canada's ambassador to Manila, David Hartman, said in a statement to AFP.

"We are hopeful that the signing and ratification of the agreement by both governments can be expected before the end of 2025," he added.

The Philippine military has staged multinational patrols and drills since last year with counterparts from the U.S., Japan, France, Australia and Canada, including in the South China Sea, infuriating China.

In an apparent response, China said it conducted air and sea combat patrols on the same day. Although no confrontations were reported, the Philippine military said three Chinese navy ships tailed the four-nation maneuvers off the western coast of the Philippines.

Manila already has similar visiting forces agreements with the United States and Japan, and is in separate talks over defense pacts with France and New Zealand in the face of China's growing assertion of claims to the South China Sea.

## What Vilma taught Lucky about politics

"With all honesty, we just don't want to entertain that. We are here to serve and people will judge us. That's all."

Vilma Santos-Recto gave her thoughts on political dynasties.

Vilma is eyeing to return as Batangas governor while her sons Luis "Lucky" Manzano and Ryan Christian Santos-Recto are aiming for Batangas vice-governor and Batangas 6th district representative positions, respectively.

"We simply submit ourselves to the electoral process and we just want to serve every Batangueño. Kung saan mapunta ang pangarap namin sa paglilingkod, kung saan namin gustong ilagay ang puso namin, it depends on the voter," added Lucky.

"My brother said it perfectly," echoed Ryan. "We're here to be of service to the people and ultimately the choice will always be theirs. That's about it."

Vilma shared that it was she who convinced Lucky to throw his hat into the political ring.



"He just said one thing, now that he has a family, it's about time that he will give his life, baka pwede niyang mapalaki ang ser-

bisyo sa mamayang Pilipino. I will be needing you," the Star for All Seasons recalled telling Lucky.

Lucky, on the other hand, admitted that several of his endorsement deals dropped following his declaration of candidacy. He also just wrapped up taping the finale episode of the game show "Rainbow Rumble."

"To be honest, a lot of my endorsements didn't renew. It's like that when I thought of filing my candidacy. That's one of the things that Gov. Vi said nung unang usapan pa

lang namin," revealed Lucky.

"We were eating, and she said, 'Anak, I know the industry. Believe me, the moment you make the announcement, whether you believe it or not, even your endorsements will disappear, and they will back out.'"

Three or four of his endorsements have already pulled out, furthered Lucky.

"I said, 'I understand that.' My income, of course, gets affected. Gov. Vi told me, which I also felt, 'Simula't sapol anak, you'll have fewer commercials and endorsements, but you'll sleep better because because you will help a lot of people.'"

At the same time, Lucky "felt sad" because of its financial impact. "You know me, I grew up in the (showbiz) industry. There are brands whose trust in me lampas five years. We had a long partnership. But I fully understand why.

"Hindi naman 'to trip-trip lang. There are certain legalities from the company that should be followed. Their endorser can't be a candidate."

## A love team reborn

It looks like the love team of Star Magic artists Anthony Jennings and Maris Racal has more than just survived the controversy that rocked their love team last December. In a remarkable display of resilience, their latest collaboration, the Netflix Original film "Sosyal Climbers," has shot up the Top 10 list since its release on Feb. 27. Following their successful partnership in past projects, Jennings and Racal — also known as the "MaThon" loveteam — are now the headliners of a mature rom-com in the Netflix Original, "Sosyal Climbers."

"We hired an acting coach before making the movie. Even though it's a comedy, we wanted to approach it in a fresh way because we were excited about the project. We agreed that giving it our best effort was essential, which is why we decided to work



with an acting coach," Racal explained.

The themes explored in "Sosyal Climbers" are deeply rooted in real-life struggles, making it more than just a lighthearted comedy. It tackles the financial difficulties many young couples face today in

the Philippines.

"We really tried to embody a couple dealing with real financial problems because I feel like many young couples today go through that with so many issues happening in our country, like low salary rates," Racal noted.

Looking back, Racal said it was through those experiences she came to value authenticity. "I eventually learned just to be myself, and that's when people will start to appreciate you and love you for who you are."

FAKE NEWS from page 1

vigilant when consuming information, particularly from social media.

"Intrigues and mudslinging come hand in hand with campaigns and fake news is everywhere. That's why, our citizens must be careful," he said in Filipino.

"As we said, the new Filipinos know how to distinguish between right and wrong information. So, now that fake news and disinformation are widespread, we should be extra careful about what we read online," he added.

Marcos, who has been actively supporting his administration's Alyansa Para sa Bagong Pilipinas candidates for the Senate, described the campaign trail as an opportunity to personally interact with people.

"One of the things I enjoy



about the campaign rallies we go to is that I get to see those who support us," the President said.

"They are real people, real Filipinos, they are not keyboard warriors, trolls — they are real people. We shook hands, talked and checked on them," he added.

The President also stressed that the testimonies of ordinary Filipinos about government projects and programs cannot be faked.

"Another thing that can't

be faked is the testimonies of our fellow Filipinos regarding government projects and programs," Marcos said.

He stressed that those genuine experiences showcase the tangible improvements brought by government efforts and it was heartwarming to hear citizens express gratitude for the services rendered to them.

Marcos reminded the public that fake news exists year-round, but assured that it will not derail the government's commitment to serving Filipinos.

"Whether it's campaign season or not, fake news will always be there. But whether it's campaign season or not, nothing will stop the government's service to the people," he said, vowing to further strengthen what his administration has started to improve the lives of Filipinos.

**JDL PRESENTS**

**Disney FROZEN JR.**

**TICKETS \$20**

**CITY PLAYHOUSE THEATRE**  
#101-1000 NEW WESTMINSTER DRIVE THORNHILL

**ENCORE PRESENTATION**  
**MARCH 9, 2025**  
3:00 PM (MATINEE)  
6:30 PM (EVENING)

MUSIC & LYRICS BY  
KRISTEN ANDERSON-LOPEZ & ROBERT LOPEZ

BOOK BY  
JENNIFER LEE

BASED ON THE DISNEY FILM WRITTEN BY JENNIFER LEE  
AND DIRECTED BY CHRIS BUCK AND JENNIFER LEE

**FOR BOX OFFICE AND TICKET INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT**  
[HTTPS://TICKETS.CITYPLAYHOUSE.CA](https://tickets.cityplayhouse.ca)

THE CITY PLAYHOUSE THEATRE IS FULLY WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE. WHEN BOOKING YOUR TICKETS, PLEASE INFORM THE BOX OFFICE IF YOU REQUIRE WHEELCHAIR SEATING OR ANY OTHER SPECIAL SEATING ARRANGEMENT.

Disney's Frozen Jr. is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized materials are supplied by Music Theatre International, New York, NY 212-541-4684 mtishows.com

### A Young Musical Prodigy:

# The Rise of Arielle Perez

by Shawn Grant

**T**hrough Arielle’s music, you can hear the heartbeat of a generation, pulsing with creativity and hope.

Arielle Perez is a musical prodigy who began her singing career at a young age with talent and musical excellence. This 18-year-old, Filipino-Canadian singer has made an impact within the entertainment sector through her God-gifted expertise in storytelling with music.

Perez was born on January 15, 2007, and brought up in Ontario, Canada. She started her journey in childhood and at the age of just 7, she earned the title of “Little Miss Philippines Canada 2014.” This was the first achievement that opened doors for her in the entertainment world. She got opportunities to appear on several Filipino TV reality shows, where her love for music and performance shone in the sky as a rising star.

Arielle’s musical career has been influenced by her family members (father and grandfather) who were renowned singers during their time. They introduced her to the world of music and instilled in her a love for singing and piano. Their guidance and empowerment built a strong foundation for her career.

Arielle has received several recognition and awards till today. She appeared in the World Championships of Performing Arts (WCOPA), an international competition to showcase her talent. Arielle won four awards in singing, songwriting, acting,

and musical accompaniment and became a multi-medalist. This victory solidified her reputation as an exceptional artist and proved her ability to shine on an international stage.

She attracted audiences with her top performances consistently. During the Government of Canada’s Asian Heritage Month Celebration in Ottawa, she performed the Canadian national anthem in English and French in 2023. In this event, she gained recognition from several members of parliament, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. It was a proud moment and a significant achievement for Arielle in her journey as a cultural ambassador representing the Filipino-Canadian community.

The experience outclassed the performance itself which exemplified a profound significance. It empowered Arielle to showcase her talent on a national level and connect with a diverse community of Asian descent artists across Canada to celebrate the richness of cultural heritage and the beauty of artistic expression.

As a Solo Artist, she influenced multiple stages and the music scene across Canada. She has worked on the same stage with industry-leading performers, including BINI, SB19, Moira Dela Torre, and Ben&Ben as a Front-Act performer for High-Profile Filipino Celebrity concerts. The energy from the crowd was electrifying, and during one of her songs, the audience raised their flashlights and sang along. It was a mesmerizing experience that made her feel like she was



her which became a guiding force in her musical path and led her to write a song “Without You” as a tribute to him. This song was her first release. This experience not only helped her cope with grief but also honored his grandfather’s legacy.

Arielle’s music reflects her emotions, pop, R&B, soulful melodies, and personal experiences during her live performances as a singer-songwriter. Her songs, like “Beyond Your Tears” and “Broken Pieces” reflected her personal growth and captured audiences’ attention. Her YouTube channel features a range of covers and original songs and performances. Her rendition of Amy Winehouse’s “Valerie” during the Jaya and Jay-R Concert showcases her vocal prowess and stage presence.

One of Arielle’s achievements in 2024 was her first headlining concert, “With Love, Elle.” This sold-out event was a testament to her growing fanbase and the impact of her music. The concert celebrated her artistic journey and marked a new chapter in her career that reinforced her status as a star in the music landscape.

Arielle has a spirit to give back to underprivileged communities beyond her musical accomplishments. She provided school supplies and food to children in her parents’ hometowns in Batangas which demonstrated her kindness and commitment to making a difference. She extended her philanthropic efforts post-2024 concert by donating classroom materials to Gasang

shining in the sky like stars.

This simple yet profound gesture left a lasting impact on her life which always reminds her of the important role an opener plays in shaping the audience’s overall experience. Her way of engaging with audiences and delivering rocking performances has made her a soulful performer at major events. She was invited as a guest performer at the Taste of Manila Festival, with 10K+ attendees, in Toronto.

Arielle’s musical journey is deeply personal and full of challenges. The loss of her grandfather was a difficult experience for

ARIELLE page 23

## Kaladkaren denies breakup rumors with husband Luke Wrightson

“Ako pa rin po si Mrs. Jervi Wrightson.”

Ito ang nakangitiing pagpapakilala ni Kaladkaren a.k.a Jervi Wrightson sa extro ng TV5 primetime newcast na Frontline Pilipinas ngayong Biyernes, February 28, 2025.

Sa gitna ito ng usap-usapang hiwalay na sila ng asawa niyang si Luke Wrightson.

**KALADKAREN FINALLY SPEAKS UP ABOUT BREAKUP RUMORS WITH LUKE**

Sa nalalabing minuto bago matapos ang Frontline Pilipinas ay nagdesisyon si Kaladkaren na magsalita tungkol sa naiintriga nilang relasyon ni Luke.

Dito ay pinabulaanan niya ang kumakalat na espekulasyong hiwalay na sila.

Ayon kay Kaladkaren, katulad ng ibang mag-asawa ay dumaraan din sila sa mga pagsubok, ngunit sa huli ay pinipili raw nila ang pag-



mamahal nila sa isa’t isa.

Saad niya: “Lilinawin ko lang po yung issue tungkol sa amin ni Luke.

“You know, our marriage is not perfect.

“Katulad ng ibang couples, siyempre may misunderstandings, mayroong challenges.

“And hindi rin po nakakatulong na minsan hindi kami magkasama because Luke is working abroad.

“But for thirteen years, sinubok na po kami ng panahon at araw-araw pinipili po naming mahalín ang isa’t isa.”  
Diin pa ni Kaladkaren: “So, kami pa rin po. We’re still

together.

“Wala po kaming problema ni Luke. Masaya po kaming mag-asawa.

“Katunayan nga, umuwi siya ng Pilipinas, kakarating lang kaninang tanghali.”

## Candid CAMERA



Next week, magdadala ako ng lambanog.

Jeanette Rosales gets coffee during the Wednesday painting class at The Filipino Centre, Toronto.

THE MOST REQUESTED FILIPINO ARTIST IN TORONTO

ALL VIP CONCERT, DINNER & PHOTO-OP

MH MarkyHugh

THE KING OF RNB

JAY R

MARCH 14, 2025 | 7PM

REMBRANDT BANQUET HALL

SPECIAL GUEST MICA JAVIER

SPONSORS

CJ, I+I POWER DANCE FITNESS, MARIAN, JAENA ALANO, MUSCIE HEALTH CLINIC, GMA, LIFETV, NEWS TV, CONFIDENTIAL, AV, TRISTARS, PEARLY WINE, ELLA, MONE, CLUB, LIFE, MORE

FOR TICKETS & SPONSORSHIP: 647-278-4374 | 647-203-0097 | +1 (416) 726-9045

# Rhian Ramos reacts to Sam Verzosa-Isko Moreno word war

Bago pa man opsyal na magsimula ang kampanya para sa local elections ngayong 2025, mainit na ang patutsadahan ng dalawang kandidato bilang mayor ng Maynila – sina Isko Moreno at Sam Verzosa.

Sa isang speaking engagement ni Isko ay pinarunggitan nitong "pabida" ang isa sa katunggali niya.

Kinuwestiyon din ni Isko ang pamimigay ng di niya pinangalanang katunggali ng mga de lata at bigas sa mga taga-Maynila.

Tinanong din ng dating alkalde ng Maynila kung nasaan daw ang katunggali niya nung panahon ng pandemiya.

Hindi man pinangalanan ay marami ang naniniwalang ang pinatatamaan ni Isko ay walang iba kundi si Sam.

Hindi naman ito pinalampas ni Sam.

Sa pamamagitan ng kanyang social media accounts ay naglabas ng mga "resibo" si Sam para patunayang mali ang mga paratang sa kanya ni Isko.

Kabilang dito ang video nila ni Isko kung saan nagbigay ng donasyon at tulong ang Frontrow International, ang kompanyang pagmamay-ari ni Sam, sa mga naninirahan sa Maynila nung kasagsagan ng pandemya nung 2020.

Si Isko ang nakaupo noong mayor ng Maynila.

### RHIAN RAMOS ON ISKO-SAM ISSUE

Nakapanayam ang girlfriend ni Sam na si Rhian Ramos sa mediacon ng magazine-lifestyle show na Where in Manila na



ginanap sa Winford Resort and Casino Manila, noong February 27, 2025.

Tinanong namin ang Kapuso actress kung anong payo ang ibinigay niya kay Sam sa umiinit na patutsadahan nito at ni Isko.

Saad ni Rhian: "Ako, if there's something that I will tell him, 'Alam kong people will mention your name and say things directly to you.

"Pero honestly, because you are a public persona, don't take it personally.

"Kasi kung hindi ka nila personal na kilala, ibig sabihin hindi ka nila kilala.

"Hindi ikaw yung dini-describe nila. Yung konspeto nila ng ikaw, hindi ikaw talaga yun."

Pagpapatuloy ng actress-TV host: "Dahil lumaki ako sa showbiz, nasanay na ako na if may mam-bash man or they have negative things to say, I also don't take it personally.

"Kasi, unless personal mong kilala talaga yung tao na yun, it means they are not saying it about you.

"They are not inventing the concept of Rhian na mayroon sila sa utak nila, yun ang dini-describe nila na tao.

"Sinasabi ko, walang tao na makakapag-define sa iyo except ikaw. Hindi sila ang magsasabi kung sino ka, ikaw lang ang puwedeng magsabi nun."



# Hunk Shot

Lance, 16, wants to be a policeman, or a real estate agent, according to his parents Jun and Angel. But right now, he's busy being a youtuber.

## Lance Angelo Gumapac

### CHARITY from page 15

a dignified life.

Leading the community in prayer before the meal was a poignant reminder of our shared humanity, and the children's voices praying for Jesus embodied the spirit of hope and unity. I left the south cemetery with the urge to drum up more support for the unfortunate.

God bless them.

My Toronto Kapuso Lion Vest waves on high for them



### CAPES from page 17

Let's unite for a great cause and create a lasting impact! ❤️ Donate today and be a real-life superhero!



For Donations please direct to this website. <https://fundraise.capesforkids.ca/.../torontokapusolionsc...#>



# The Rise of Arielle Perez

### ARIELLE from page 22

Elementary School to ensure that students had sufficient resources for a better education.

Another challenge she has overcome is the comparison to other artists within the industry. She has struggled with self-doubts and the pressures of living up to expectations which is common to young performers. However, she learned to embrace her unique artistry and trust in her journey through resilience and self-discovery. She wants to tell to other young artists that authenticity and perseverance are key to success.

Arielle has big dreams for the future. One day she will perform on global stages, collaborate with top producers, and create music that touches listeners' hearts. She is a rising star and an artist whose journey is only just beginning. Every performance by Arielle is a reminder that true artistry is a combination of talent, vision, and raw emotion.



# Happy 18th Birthday Arielle Perez





# FAMILY DENTISTRY

## DR. V. SANTIAGO & ASSOCIATES



We offer complete dental care  
& are accepting new patients.

### General Dentistry:

Dr. Victoria Santiago

Dr. Joy Y. Ho

Dr. Amy Fan

Dr. Jennifer Chen

Dr. Damian Yung

Dr. Myra Caballero



### Specialty Dentistry:

Dr. Ali Adibfar

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon

Dr. Abbasali Hassanali

Periodontist

### Registered Dental Hygienist:

Raymond Echavez

Gayle Baylon

Call us to book your appointment

# 416-967-9272

Rosedale Medical Clinic

(Across Sherbourne TTC Station)

600 Sherbourne St. - Suite 307

Toronto

[dr.vslu@bellnet.ca](mailto:dr.vslu@bellnet.ca)



Website now live  
[thefamilydentistry.ca](http://thefamilydentistry.ca)







# ACTION Honda

"WHERE CAR OWNERSHIP IS MADE EASY"

## Your Filipino friends, ready at your Service!

To all my kababayans, Feel free to contact me "bibili ka man o hindi." It is always a pleasure to talk to a kababayan. **MABUHAY!** raphael@myactionhonda.com



**Rafael Nebres**  
General Manager



**Gani Gregorio**  
Asst. Sales Manager



**Jose Sarte**  
Service Manager



**Ronaldo Aquino**  
Assistant Service Manager



**Joseph Redoblado**  
Service Advisor



**Roland "Regi" Giraldez**  
Sales and Leasing Consultant



**Ramon Bayani**  
Sales and Leasing Consultant



**Pio Regio**  
Senior Lot Attendant



**Don Luche**  
Accountant



**Ramon Miranda**  
Lot Attendant



**Marie Miranda**  
Service Appointment Coordinator



**Cherie Viernes**  
Accounting Assistant



**Terry Aquino**  
Cleanup Associate



Honda CR-V 2024



Honda Pilot 2024



Honda Accord 2024



Honda Civic 2024



Honda Passport 2024



Honda Odyssey 2024

## NEW & USED CAR SALES • CAR PARTS • BODY SHOP • CAR SERVICE

4334 Kingston Rd., Scarborough ON (south of Lawrence Ave. East) Tel. (416) 281-1234

## When theatre titas converge

Philippine theater does not live on musicals alone, even if appearances may make it seem so. Chesie Galvez-Cariño has been writing witty, and pithy, comedic dramas that often revolve around a milieu she's very familiar with - that of society women, the women who lunch, and the Titas of Manila. Her theater company, Theatre Titas, is known for producing dramatic plays, and finding original material that's both entertaining and illuminating.



The cast of 'Deadma'

Come March 29, a twin bill of two short plays under the working title of *Dedma*, will start its run at the Mirror Studio Theater 2 (2nd floor) at Kalayaan Avenue, Makati, until the 13th of April. Five performances on the weekend, with matinees on Saturday and Sunday. Book your tickets at TEEQ.Live. The twin bill consists of *Let's Do Lunch* and *The Foxtrot*, both from Chesie's pen.

I had the opportunity to watch a preview of *Let's Do Lunch* last year; and it's a hilarious, then touching, dissertation on friendship when there's a whiff of scandal. It examines how deep (or shallow) friendship goes among these social circles, and explores the primal urge of saving face, and hanging out with the right people. Issa Litton reprises her role from the preview I watched, and she's now cast with Naths Everett and Ash Nicanor. Trust me, you do not want to miss this; as you'll

laugh, you'll tear, you'll sympathize, and be moved by the material. Maribel Legarda directs.

Then there's *The Foxtrot*, where a society maven and her DI (dance instructor) lock horns right before they enter a dance competition. JC Santos will portray the DI, and it's a nostalgic return to the stage for Jackie Lou Blanco as the doña benefactress. Former Ballet Philippines Artistic Director Paul Alexander Morales takes on the directing chores for this one.

I always enjoy watching Issa shift from hosting to acting, and for many, Jackie Lou Blanco's appearance in the second play will be of interest. So book your seats early, and be treated to home-grown original material, drama with strong shafts of humor.

Enjoy plays that reflect on us and may remind us of people we know or be an unexpected mirror to our inner workings. A matinee and evening performance on Sunday, March 29, kicks off the run.

### James Reid hopes fans happy for him, ex-girlfriend Nadine Lustre and their new partners

CELEBRITIES unfollowing each other

on social media has become a veritable tell-tale sign that either as a couple, they have put a bitter end to their relationship or as buddies, they have tossed their friendship out of the window, worse, into the trash bin.

Former couple Nadine Lustre and James Reid have recently been added to this growing list.

A latest peek into Nadine's Instagram account — particularly on her following

Diaz, James lamented that: "It has been a difficult year for both Issa and me, and I'm sure also for Nadine. Some people simply refuse to move on."

What the singer-actor exactly cannot grasp is the fact that to this day, Issa has been caught in the crosshairs of netizens accusing her as the third party to his romantic dalliance with Nadine.

"Enough of all the noise, all the bashing as it makes me feel depressed for Issa," James

groaned.

He wishes some people refrained from passing the buck to Issa — simply because he and Nadine were no longer a couple since 2020.



It is James Reid's ultimate wish that people see him and Nadine Lustre happy with their respective partners — him with Issa Pressman (left photo) and her with Christophe Bariou. PHOTOS FROM INSTAGRAM/JAMES, NADINE

list — no longer contains the names of James and his girlfriend Issa Pressman. James still follows Nadine on Instagram, though.

Nadine's unfollowing James runs counter to the latter's statement September of last year that there existed no beef — let alone bad blood — between him and his ex-girlfriend.

However, in a recent vlog interview by talent manager and content creator Ogie

had been no overlapping of sorts. Issa came into the picture where there was already closure to what Nadine and I had back then. That being so, why put the blame on Issa?" James furthered.

It's the multi-slashie's ultimate wish that people see him and Nadine happily ensconced with their respective partners: the latter to Christophe Bariou.


"Only then do I believe these people will give us all some peace of mind."

In his dreams.

# Little Manila Lm confidential

Thinking about real estate? Buying... Selling... Investing...  
**USAP TAYO!** Call for a free and confidential discussion.

*Joy* S. D'Aoust  
REALTOR®

647-500-5397   
(500 - K•E•Y•S)

[www.joyathomerealty.com](http://www.joyathomerealty.com)

**MLS**  
MULTIPLE LISTING SERVICE®

**JOY AT HOME**  
REALTY

**R**  
REALTOR®

Right At Home  
Realty Brokerage, Inc.

## Jonathan Manalo is most streamed Filipino songwriter-producer, earns 7.9 billion streams across multiple platforms

**Only Filipino in the Top 150 music producers list that includes Max Martin, Jack Antonoff**

The music of Jonathan Manalo has earned a combined 7.9 billion streams across multiple platforms, according to verified music credit platform Muso.AI, making him the most streamed Filipino songwriter-producer to date.

The head of ABS-CBN Music operations, content, and creative is honored to bring pride to the country as the only Filipino on the list of the top 150 global music producers, which includes Max Martin and Jack Antonoff. According to Muso, which tracks streams from Audiomack, Soundcloud, Spotify, and YouTube, he is also at the top 0.1 percent of global songwriters.

"I am truly grateful to be among world-renowned producers who have made music appreciated by audiences across different platforms," he said. "Patunay ito na kaya nating mga Pinoy na ibida ang musikang Pilipino sa buong mundo."

According to Muso, the OPM hitmaker has also already garnered 15.5 billion combined views for his music on Instagram reels, TikTok, and YouTube shorts.

Jonathan wished that his latest milestone would inspire artists to fearlessly keep creating new music. "We are experiencing a record high volume of fresh music output from young music creatives of today."

Known for writing and producing OPM hits such as "Gusto Ko Nang Bumitaw," "Pagbigyang Muli," "Patuloy Ang

Pangrap," and "Pinoy Ako," Jonathan's contribution to the Philippine music scene spans various genres and artists, with over 800 recordings, multi-platinum albums, and numerous hits.



He has also produced collaborations with established acts like Gary Valenciano, Regine Velasquez, Erik Santos, Kyla, Gloc-9, Ebe Dancel, and Rico Blanco. He has mentored groups BGYO and BINI and rising songwriters like Angela Ken and Jeremy G. He has likewise worked

on landmark projects with Moira, Yeng Constantino, Ben&Ben, Sarah Geronimo, and SB19.

Jonathan's music is known for relatable storytelling that resonates with music fans. At the same time, some of his most popular works celebrate culture and pride, such as "Kabataang Pinoy," "Sikat Ang Pinoy," and "Tara Tena," his entry to the 2001 Himig Handog songwriting competition which won the grand prize.

Some of his greatest hits will be featured in the upcoming "Delia D: A musical featuring the songs of Jonathan Manalo" by Full House Theater Company, which will run from April 25 to June 8 at the Newport Performing Arts Theater.

**'My Ilonggo Girl' breaks online records with shocking twists and unmatched drama**

GMA Public Affairs' rom-com mini-se-

ries, *My Ilonggo Girl*, has taken the nation by storm, captivating audiences both on television and online.

Since its premiere on Jan. 13, the series has consistently dominated ratings and amassed 970 million views across digital platforms.

It remains the most-watched program on GMA Network's YouTube channel, solidifying its place as a winning series on both on-air and digital platforms.

Starring the Star of the New Generation, Jillian Ward, *My Ilonggo Girl* continues to break records, fueled by her undeniable chemistry with Michael Sager. Their on-screen pairing — dubbed "Mic-Jill" — has become one of the most popular in recent years.

The compelling storyline, which initially showcased Jillian in a dual role as the humble Ilongga, Tata, and the glamorous actress, Venice, has deeply resonated with audiences nationwide.

Recent episodes have taken viewers on an emotional rollercoaster, unveiling shocking betrayals and unexpected twists. With Venice's dramatic return—now portrayed by Myrtle Sarrosa—Tata's life is thrown into chaos. One of the biggest revelations came when Margaret (Andrea Del Rosario) finally exposed the real culprit behind her late son Vincent's stolen watch: their maid, Sharon. With the help of Julius (Geo Mhanna) and crucial evidence, Tata's innocence is proven at last.

But just as the truth surfaces, new dangers emerge. Desperate to hide her and Venice's failed schemes against Tata, Vivian (Teresa Loyzaga) escalates her devious plots. In a jaw-dropping turn of events, Margaret is poisoned at Nay Gwapa's (Arlene Muhlach) canteen, setting the stage



for another dramatic showdown. Tata soon finds herself at the center of yet another accusation. Nay Gwapa takes the blame to protect her

daughter, leading Tata to fight for her mother's freedom. However, Francis' family remains unconvinced of Nay Gwapa's innocence, setting up a fierce battle for justice.

Beyond its gripping narrative, *My Ilonggo Girl* has set new standards for Philippine drama, blending romance, intrigue, and cultural storytelling. The series has dominated television ratings and become a digital sensation, garnering millions of views per episode across platforms like TikTok and GMA Network's YouTube channel. Fans can expect even more jaw-dropping revelations and intense drama as the story unfolds.



## NEED A CAR?

EMMANUEL "MANNY" YANGA

TAWAG KA LANG KABAYAN!



416-858-0616

Kung good deal ang hinahanap ninyo, Harold Guarin ang tawagan n'yo...



**HAROLD GUARIN**  
Fleet & Leasing Manager  
New & Used Sales  
haroldg@roadsport.com

**ROADSPORT LTD.**

940 Ellesmere Rd. (NE Kennedy) Toronto Ontario M1P 2W8

**416-291-9501**

[www.roadsport.com](http://www.roadsport.com)

Bad Credit? New Credit? Bankruptcy?  
Divorced? Credit Counseling?

**NO PROBLEM!!!**

Come In And See More  
Choices Of Vehicles



\*\*2021 Nissan Versa 1.6 S  
FROM \$ 15,290



\*\*2017 Honda HR-V LX  
FROM \$ 15,990



\*\*2017 Hyundai Ioniq Electric Limited  
FROM \$ 16,990



\*\*2020 Nissan Kicks SR  
FROM \$ 17,886

Call Harold for Appointment  
**416-578-7351**

**CarProof**  
VEHICLE HISTORY REPORTS

**HONDA Certified**  
Used Vehicles

**BEST PRICED DEALER**  
AWARD WINNER 2020

**BEST PRICED DEALER**  
AWARD WINNER 2021



**HONDA**

See Harold for details \*\*All vehicles are plus \$10.00 omvic fee and HST, Licensing and \$40.00 gas extra. WHILE SUPPLIES LAST. PRICES MAY CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

## AFTER CONTESTANT 'UNKNOWLEDGEABLE' ABOUT COMELEC 'It's Showtime' hosts lament educational crisis in PH



(From left) "It's Showtime" hosts Ogie Alcasid, Vice Ganda and Kim Chiu. Image: Facebook/Kim Chiu

The "It's Showtime" hosts expressed concern over the "systemic and educational problem" in the Philippines, which was apparently highlighted after a show contestant admitted being unknowledgeable about the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

It can be recalled that during the Feb. 28 episode of the noontime show, Heart Aquino, one of the contestants of the "Sexy Babe" segment, was asked to give a message to the Comelec.

Aquino answered that she was unfamiliar with the government agency – a response that the show hosts found "bothersome."

During the "It's Showtime" episode on Monday, March 3, the TV hosts – led by Vice Ganda – then spoke about their realizations after the finale of their "Sexy Babe" segment.

"Dalawang bagay ang na-realize ko –napakarami talagang magagandang nilalang sa Pilipinas. 'Yung pangalawa, may systemic and educational problem sa Pilipinas. May educational crisis sa Pilipinas na dapat natin i-address," Vice Ganda said.

Jugs Jugueta nodded in agreement, "I think we have to find the right balance, parang maganda at matalino."

Vice Ganda stressed that the public should be alarmed and ask the necessary questions: "Saan kaya nagsisimula 'yung educational crisis sa Pilipinas? Sino ang naapektuhan nito? Ano ang dapat nating gawin, at paano kaya dapat natin ito harapin? Ito ba ay dapat pagtawanan lang natin? Ito ba ay dapat pagchikahan lang natin sa Twitter nang one day then tapos na?"

### Temperature check

Karylle shared the same sentiment as she pointed out how the instance with the segment contestant gave a temperature check on the youth.

"'Yung malaman mo 'yung totoong temperatura ng mga kabataan ngayon, na hindi pala alam ng karamihan yung Comelec, ang sakit. Hindi ko alam kung anong gulat 'yung naramdaman ko," she stated.

Vice Ganda further underscored that the youths make up a huge percentage of voters, and lamented how a part of the group might be uninformed. Ogie Alcasid stressed that aside from the youth, parents should also be informed as voters.

"May mga bagay kagaya no'n na napakahalaga na dapat may pakialam tayo," Amy Perez added.

Vice Ganda chimed in, "Even Comelec, dapat ma-alarm din ang Comelec na baka kailangan meron din silang gawin na pagdi-disseminate ng impormasyon – the government in general."

"Kaya siya tinawag na systemic kasi hindi lang isa, kundi marami ang may kinalaman," he continued. "Lahat tayo bahagi ng krisis na ito."

After unanimously agreeing that they should have more educational content, the hosts then went to have a quiz bee about Philippine history among the studio audience.

Meanwhile, the Comelec said it extended an invitation to Aquino to their event to brief her about the duties of the poll body.

"We fully understand her," Comelec Chairman George Erwin Garcia said. "It is our solemn duty to explain who we are and what we are doing."

"It is our failure," he added. "We have to immediately rectify."

### Katrina Halili admits missing kontrabida roles

Kahit anong role ang ibinibigay sa kanya, tila aprubado sa publiko ang pag-arte ng Kapuso actress na si Katrina Halili.

Unang nakilala si Katrina sa pagganap ng kontrabida roles, pero kapansin-pansin sa mga teleseryeng ginagawa niya recently na siya naman ang inaapi.

Sa kanyang latest project na Mommy Dearest, na nagsimulang umere sa GMA Afternoon Prime noong Lunes, February 24, 2025, ay api-apihan na naman ang role niya.

Saad ni Katrina: "Okay naman ako kung ano yung binibigay sa akin na role. Tinatanggap ko naman."

"Kasi, normally, binibigay sa akin dati kontrabida."

"Tapos nag-wish ako na mabigyan naman ako ng mabait."

"Nabigyan ako Prima Donnas, Unica Hija. Tapos ito [Mommy Dearest]. Tapos naisip ko, 'Puwede naman ako bumalik sa kontrabida.'

"Yun naman, kinakausap ko yung sarili ko."

"Kaka-miss din, kasi nakakapagod umiyak ha."

"Tsaka, parang nagulat lang ako na parang, 'Waaah! Talagang na-stuck ako dito, ha.'

"Parang happy naman ako."

"Kasi ibig sabihin, nagtitiwala sila, di ba?"

### KONTRABIDA ROLE OR BIDA ROLE?

Nag-alangan pa raw noon si Katrina kung tatanggapin ba niya ang mabait na role sa telebisyon dahil, ayon sa kanyang mga kaibigan, ay hindi bagay sa kanya.

"Yun naman yung goal ko, na kinakatakot ko."

"Kasi yung una akong binigyan ng mabait, kahit yung mga kaibigan ko, sabihin sa akin, 'E, bagay ba sa yo ang ganyan?'"

"Yung parang nairita sila. Nairita sila na, 'Ba't ganyan? E, mas bagay sa yo yung ano, dapat ganito yung suot mo, ganyan ka, ganyan ka.'

"So, parang yun yung challenge sa akin na, 'Ano, ba't paano na?'"

"Maniwala kaya sila, e, mga kaibigan ko mismo ayaw."

Pagpapatuloy ni Katrina: "Pero ngayon naman, okay na naman."

"And pati reporters ha, before. Yung Prima, unang-una ako binigyan ng mabait. Ayaw nila maniwala."

"Dyuskupo, sana maniwala naman sila."

"Pero mukha namang naniwala, di ba? Kasi pangatlo ko na ito."

Pero saan ba mas comfortable si Katrina: sa kontrabida o bida role?

Sagot niya: "Mas comfortable? Um, ito kasi medyo ilang taon na ako dito, e."

"Medyo, hindi ko na nga alam kung comfortable pa rin ako magmaldita, e."

"Hindi ko alam, hindi ko po alam, parehas na gusto kong gawin."

"Pero kung comfortable, hindi ko alam kung ano na, kung saan na yung mas comfortable."

Nakausap ng PEP.ph (Philippine Entertainment Portal) at ilan pang press si Katrina sa media junket ng Mommy Dearest sa GMA Network Center nitong nakaraang linggo.

Kasama ni Katrina na humarap sa press ang co-stars niya sa teleserye na sina Camille Prats, Shayne Sava, at Dion Ignacio.



## Charo Santos on embracing acting again: It's a grace from God

For someone who has worn multiple hats in a career that began in the beauty pageant scene, ventured onto the big screen, rose to the boardroom and circled back to acting, Charo Santos-Concio has never stopped evolving.

Even after stepping away from her leadership role as ABS-CBN president and CEO, Charo, 69, remains deeply engaged in the ever-changing media landscape. She has been stepping into new opportunities in storytelling and even public service.

In a Women's Month-themed conversation on our podcast Meet the Press on The Pod Network (available on Spotify), Charo shared reflections on her time as a media executive, on the current industry collaborations and her renewed passion for acting.

To recall, during her tenure as ABS-CBN's top exec, the battle for TV ratings was at its fiercest. Rivalries between networks were at an all-time high. But for her, the most memorable moments were not really the fights for supremacy but the resilience of her team.

Charo continues to take acting lessons, including the Meisner technique under Scott Trost, director of the Meisner Institute.

"It used to be very, very competitive, and rightly so, 'di ba? In the environment of business, that is inevitable. If there's no competition, there's no excitement. People tend to be complacent if there's no competition," she said.

"But the most memorable for me was when we lost our ratings in Mega Manila. That's when we really focused on our strength, which was narrative, drama. Andyan na yung 'May Bukas Pa,' 'Tayong Dalawa' — I mean, talagang nagsunod-sunod na siya.

was rating high 40s then. Those were really, what can I say, fulfilling years for the organization, for the production people, for the creatives and the artists, and I guess most especially for the employees. Talagang may pride ka na Kapamilya ka and they were working for ABS-CBN. Those were really glorious years."

Industry's survival

Since ABS-CBN's transition from broadcast company to content company after the franchise non-renewal, the industry has seen more collaborations between former competitors. For Charo, this shift is necessary to ensure the survival of Philippine entertainment.

"It's great! It's an opportunity for us to learn from each other. Sa akin, yun ang pinakamahalaga. It's also an opportunity for our actors to be able to work with actors from other studios. Naiiba yung landscape, naiiba yung timpla. Meron kang bagong binibigay sa audience mo," said Charo, who was appointed as ABS-CBN board member last year.

"As a whole, really, it's about working together for the industry. You know, the industry is very challenged, and this is a good sign that producers and different studios are coming together to work with each other. I think for a bigger reason, for a bigger purpose — making sure that the industry stays alive."

She also acknowledged the uncertainty of the entertainment landscape.

"Until I retired, it was 'Ang Probinsyano,' which



"With the evolution of streaming apps, we don't really know where linear viewing will really go. We don't really know where theatrical viewing will go. Therefore, I think it's incumbent for every member of the industry to come together and help each other.

Magtulungan to make sure that the industry stays alive," Charo stressed.

"Beyond staying alive, I think we should even look towards making something for the global audience. Because ako, I believe in Filipino talent, I believe in Filipino creativity. Hindi lang tayo nabibigyan ng pagkakataon, and you know, maybe this is the right chance and the right opportunity for the industry to come together and really make something for the global audience."

"Wag na maging parochial and into cliques anymore. The industry — naghihinga-eh, kailangan nating buhayin."

With leading man Dingdong Dantes in the Irene Villamor film 'Only We Know,' which is slated for release in June.

Acting again

Before Charo became a household name in the broadcast industry and a towering figure in the entertainment sector, she was an actress, discovered by the National Artist Lino Brocka from the Baron Travel Girl pageant.

"My nanay, ang hilig i-join ako sa mga pageants. Alam mo naman sa probinsya, lahat magkakakilala so hindi maka-hindi sa mga... 'Uy, yung anak mo gawin nating Reina Elena,' or 'Yung anak mo pa-join naman ng Miss Calapan (Oriental Mindoro),' hanggang nakarating sa Manila," she recalled.

"Well, a friend asked me to join the Baron Travel Girl pageant, and by that time, medyo sanay na ako. But 'di ako umabot sa (the likes of) Binibining Pilipinas because my father was very conservative and he didn't want me to parade in a bathing suit. Baron Travel was the first and last time I joined a (national) pageant."

It was at that pageant where Brocka first noticed her, leading to her first-ever film "Itim" (1976), the directorial debut of Mike de Leon.

After years away from acting, she found her way back through filmmaker Lav Diaz.

"In my last year at ABS-CBN, Lav Diaz was in Star Cinema making a pitch. So I met him for the first time, and after I retired, he was the first one who came forward with an offer. And intuitive kasi ako na tao — when my heart jumps on something, wala eh, it just flows. You know, dumadalo lang siya. 'Di ko siya masyado pinag-iisipan. I don't overthink things anymore. I go with what my heart says," she explained.

The offer was the title role in the 2016 black-and-white drama "Ang Babaeng Humayo" that was selected to compete at the 73rd Venice International Film Festival, where it won the Golden Lion.

"I felt good about 'Ang Babaeng Humayo,' the concept, the narrative, and then there was no looking back. Parang, 'Okay 'to ha.' In my heart, ang sigurado ako, hindi ako magkukulang sa bahay after my retirement.

"That I returned to acting — it's a grace from God. It came at the right time. I could have waited one or two years. Maybe the producers didn't think I would be interested, but Lav Diaz came, the project came, 'Ang Babaeng Humayo,' and after that, nasundan naman, sa awa ng Diyos. And now, I'm also preparing for another movie. Yay!"

New roles

Charo's next starring role is in "Only We Know" opposite Dingdong Dantes, which is scheduled for release in June.

"It's a romantic friendship story. It's really kilig. You know, hindi ako mahihiya magsabi sa inyo na, 'Naku, manonood kayo, kikilig kayo.' Looking at the cast or looking at the pairing, you might conclude right away that it's a May-December love affair. But you'll be surprised. But I cannot say much. I don't want to preempt the experience for you," she said of the film directed by Irene Villamor.

"Before we got to film the movie, it was offered to me six years ago. Six years ago, I said yes to the narrative. It's the story pitch. I said yes to the story pitch. But after that, the pandemic (happened). Dingdong got very busy and he did 'Rewind.'

"In fact, there was a point when I said, 'You know, it's okay ha. Dingdong might be having second thoughts pairing with me, especially with his super box-office success of 'Rewind,' 'di ba, with wife Marian (Rivera).' So sabi ko, okay lang, ma-intindihan ko naman. But no, he kept to his word and said, 'No, I really want to work with you.' So, okay naman. Happy naman!"

She also teased another movie project with "Firefly" and "Green Bones" director Zig Dulay, set to be filmed in San Vicente, Palawan. "I'm really so happy. I want to work with young directors," said the "FPJ's Batang Quiapo" actress.

Beyond acting, Charo has also embraced another unexpected role — as a reservist for the Philippine Air Force. She's been taking part in the socio-civic activities of the military.

"Kokonti lang sundalo natin, mas maraming reservists. The reservists are there to help in times of calamities and natural disasters, rescue work. We do medical and dental missions, it's a lot of public service really," she said.

For years, she wanted to become a reservist, but the pandemic delayed her plans.

"Gusto ko na talaga mag-reservist, kaya lang na-pandemic naman ako. But when I finished my filming with Dingdong, I decided, this is it. Pasok na ako."

Her decision to join the reserve force is motivated by "something deeper, something more internal."

"I've always been fascinated with military stories. If you noticed, some of the teleseryes in ABS-CBN, mga sundalo ang bida, 'di ba? Then, meron na akong mga research material. Ang dami kong research material. I studied the code of honor of the Philippine Military Academy. So producer pa lang ako, fascinated na ako. What is it like to become a soldier? What makes a young man a soldier? — that was always in my mind," she shared.

Charo said she has always wondered what drives young men and women to risk their lives in service to the country.

"Yun ang gusto ko na experience, yun ang gusto kong daanan. Yun ang gusto kong ma-intindihan. Ano ang nangyayari sa isang batang lalake at batang babae para masabi, 'Yes, I'm ready to put my life on the line and serve my country.'"

## FAMILY DENTISTRY DR. V. SANTIAGO & ASSOCIATES



We offer complete dental care & are accepting new patients.

### General Dentistry:

Dr. Victoria Santiago

Dr. Joy Y. Ho

Dr. Amy Fan

Dr. Jennifer Chen

Dr. Damian Yung

Dr. Myra Caballero

### Specialty Dentistry:

Dr. Ali Adibfar

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon

Dr. Abbasali Hassanali

Periodontist

### Registered Dental Hygienist:

Raymond Echavez

Gayle Baylon

Call us to book your appointment

**416-967-9272**

Rosedale Medical Clinic

(Across Sherbourne TTC Station)

600 Sherbourne St. - Suite 307

Toronto

dr.vslu@bellnet.ca

Website now live  
thefamilydentistry.ca

