



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Good day! I am humbled, honored, and privileged to assume the role of President of the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of the Greater Washington, D.C. area. I’m deeply grateful to my predecessor, Cristina Sison, for her outstanding leadership and contributions to the Chamber and the Fil-Am community in general.

Just like any other institution, the strength and success of our projects rely on the dedication and commitment of each member. I strongly encourage everyone to continue to support our mission in the expansion of Filipino-American entrepreneurship and business development.

I look forward to continuing this important work in the future as we face greater challenges and opportunities.

Respectfully yours,

Michael San Juan
PACC-DC Interim President

FROM THE EDITOR

This edition is about giving thanks and recognizing the things that matter: Love, Family, Friends, Health, and Faith. Also in this issue is a reprinted article on Fil-Am empowerment from the PACC-DC column of the Manila Mail’s September 2021 issue.

Thank you to our volunteer writers who contributed articles to this issue. I’d also like to give a shoutout to all the members who shared their thoughts about what they are thankful for. More power to all of you!

As a health and wellness reminder, keep on with your annual medical and dental check-ups, get your vaccine and flu shots, eat healthy, and don’t forget to do daily physical activity. Continue to follow health protocols as mandated in your locality and exercise common sense when engaging in social events.

Please support our health and wellness summit on December 1-3: “I FILAMPowered!”

Olma Inocentes

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **PACC-DC Meet & Greet:
Virtual Speed Networking**
October 20
- **Kumustahan Sa Embassy:
Consular Matters**
October 26
- **Vaccination Clinic, PACC-DC
in partnership w/ Medspark**
November 6
- **I FILAMPOWERED, PACC-DC
Virtual Health & Wellness Summit in
collaboration with
Trainstation Philippines**
December 1-3

Please watch out for more announcements about our events!



PRESIDENT’S REPORT BY CRISTINA SISON

Welcome to the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce Metro DC and the greater Filipino American (Fil-Am) Community.

Our mission is to bring together the Fil-Am Business community in the DC, Maryland and Virginia area and our goal is to expand and strengthen Fil-Am entrepreneurship and business development activities in order to have a united Fil-Am Voice. One that is strong enough to be recognized and deemed influential to improve the lives of the Fil-Am community.

The goal to increase membership has been continuously realized. With the help of the best volunteers and officers, PACCDC has grown its membership from the single digit membership roll when I took over as president in 2018, to triple digits with at least a 1500 influence database on social media.

We have had numerous activities and events, notably our 25th anniversary fundraiser gala in 2018 benefitting Bantay Bata 163; our live business panel discussions, “Filipinas in Business” and “Fil-Am Men in Business,” and fundraiser “Life Is A Cabaret” with Arnaldo! Drag Chanteuse, benefitting disadvantaged children in 2019; and our well-received series of educational and informational webinars in 2020 and 2021 (in lieu of live events). Here’s a more detailed look back of our activities during my term. (Go to [URL](http://www.pacc-dc.org/past-events-list) – <http://www.pacc-dc.org/past-events-list>)

It is in the Chamber that I have truly discovered deep friendship, fun, and laughter while exploring business opportunities as a Fil-Am and contributing to a united Fil-Am Voice. The Fil-Am community tend to develop subgroups, usually based on the similarities in regional culture. We have 400 years of history in the US, so each Fil-Am is very different trying to connect and finding his/her voice.

I believe that the one that can truly unify the Fil-Am Community is the economic business opportunities to help improve the quality of life for Fil-Ams. We can find commonality as one ethnic minority recognizing our weaknesses but also maximizing our strengths

In order to have a strong economic environment for Fil-Ams, we also need to have a strong “bayanihan” community that is truly there to help each other succeed and grow. We are truly blessed to have leaders, business owners, educators, nurses, lawyers, other professionals and citizens who realize that we all share the responsibility of creating economic success and happiness within our community.

“It is in the Chamber that I have truly discovered deep friendship, fun, and laughter while exploring business opportunities as a Fil-Am and contributing to a united Fil-Am Voice.”

As a tribute to our adopted country, every Fil-Am should be empowered and celebrate Fil-Am History Month this October. Let us celebrate our history with this adopted country of ours that has truly been a land of opportunity.

My term as your President has ended. I was honored to work alongside our dedicated Board who all share the same vision and making PACC-DC succeed. My fellow members, I hope we all continue to play active roles in PACC-DC by taking advantage of all the privileges and responsibilities of a dedicated member. I encourage everyone to participate in the upcoming Chamber elections early next year 2022 and in all the Chamber’s future activities.

I am really thankful for all the volunteers who tirelessly believe in the mission of service to the community. Our baby steps of change will bear fruit in all aspects of our lives here in the US.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite all Fil-Ams and Asian Americans in the “I Fil-AMPowered” Health & Wellness Summit on Dec. 1-3, 2021. As we continue to recover from this pandemic, the summit will focus on the Mind, Body and Spirit. Summit attendee cost is \$25/day or \$60 for 3-day access. I promise it will be worth it.

Let’s help each other succeed and grow. Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn. I believe it’s time for the Fil- Ams to shine. Be proud of our heritage. Be proud to be Filipino American.

GIVING THANKS BY ALVIN BARNUEVO

18 months, wow! What a blur. COVID, BLM, Asian hate crimes, and of course politics. Life as we knew it, has all drastically changed. My name is Alvin Barnuevo. I was born and raised in the Virginia Beach area, and like most, have migrated up to the DMV area. I am new to the PACC-DC board serving as Vice President - Business Mentorship & Programs. My goal for the position is to give back as best I can. To give some background on myself, I have partnered with local name brands such as Duck Donuts and Egg Karne, and helped bring them to the DC area, as well as opening up businesses in my hometown of Virginia Beach. I wish I can say all my businesses were successful, but they were not. I have lost, but with each loss, I have learned, and I believe that is part of the journey.



Vice President—Business Mentorship & Programs, PACC-DC

"Stop lookin' at what you ain't got, and start being thankful for what you do got." - TI

I was asked to write a piece on giving thanks, no more than 750 words and to be somewhat personal. I have an engineering background, so raised as an introvert but so wanting to be that extrovert. So here we go, please excuse the typos and grammar.

What I am most thankful for, outside of the proverbial health for me, my family, and my closest friends, is the unprecedented break from the everyday grind. It only took a pandemic to self-assess who I am, accepting who I am, and building a path on who I want to become.

Before the new norm, I was on a road that had no end, no purpose and no vision. I was in the grind, every day, all day without turning off. I was so focused on correcting my wrongs instead of looking what I had in front of me.

It is different now. I have become more present in all aspects, spending more "real-time" with my kids, family, and revisiting long-time friendships. Time flies especially with your head down all the time. I have been working on myself to become a better person and enjoying being who I was before COVID and quite frankly before kids. I have no regrets, none at all.

I have always been a list type of person. That will never change. So, here goes...

I am thankful for:

- Realizing my kids are who they are; they are alike, different, and are better than me
- Ignoring the noise, believing in myself and prioritizing my needs
- Getting ID'd at 45
- Being accountable for my choices
- Finding passion again in food, music, and good stiff drinks
- Revisiting and questioning traditions, beliefs, and my personal perceptions
- Being hopeful but yet realistic
- Believing in love
- Being adventurous and the opportunity to travel to new places
- Not claiming ownership of white New Balances, cargo shorts or Crocs
- Being woke to the 2nd half of my life and realizing there is still so much I can offer
- Living a privileged life; lucky, grateful, and earned

FOCUS ON YOU

For any entrepreneur, be thankful for the journey. If I had to say something to my younger self, it would be that I will have more lows than highs. The key is minimizing risk. Be bold and focus on what you can control, and prioritize and define goals. Home runs are rare in business and there is nothing wrong with slow and steady. Figure out your path and use the traditions of your culture as a guide and not an instruction book.

"The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

Change things if you do not like it, stop complaining; internalizing issues should never be an option. The cliché life is short, holds very true. Treat every day as your last.

In summary, I am thankful but more grateful that I survived it all, and what I believe came out of it is a better entrepreneur, father, and overall better person.

WHAT I AM THANKFUL FOR BY PACC-DC MEMBERS

Rose Armour, Forever Lolita

"I am grateful for God's blessings, especially the gifts of faith, life, family and friendship."

Marielle Kabin, Travelwise International

"I am thankful for the struggles and trials 2020 brought into my life for it made the victories in 2021 that much sweeter. I've had to learn to approach life with a growth mindset. By continuing to seek support and empowerment from my community, I was able to gain the strength to remain hopeful for the future."

Cristina Sison, Sison Homes

"I am thankful for learning from mistakes. If we never made mistakes, we wouldn't learn much, so it is one of those things we should be thankful for."

Robert Llames, Smart Development Institute

I am always thankful for all the people around me who make me whole and to God for all my blessings.

Thrina Lim, Wilson Elser, LLP

"I am thankful to God for letting me and my loved ones wake up every morning and for our good health. I am thankful that both my husband and I still have jobs amidst the pandemic and that we are able to provide for our children. I am thankful for family and friends, and sharing good times together while creating memories."

Alvin Barnuevo, SK8 House VB

"What I am most thankful for, outside of the proverbial health for me, my family, and my closest friends, is the unprecedented break from the everyday grind. It only took a pandemic to self-assess who I am, accepting who I am, and building a path on who I want to become."

Ken Apple, Compassion Builds

"Thankful every day for another day to enjoy God's Cre-

ation. From the blue sky and big sun to the air we breathe and the food we eat, every day's a Good Day!"

Rodney Salinas, National Director, HUNGRY

"I am thankful for my fellow board members and friends who offer their support to each other in our respective businesses on a continued basis."

Adjo Gonzalez, AHG Direct Products and Services, Inc.

"I'm thankful for God giving me good health and surrounding me with a great home and business family."

Maia Carey, The WorX by Maia

"I am grateful for being alive and having joy in my home and my business. I'm super blessed to serve TeamWorX's life changing fitness community."

Olma Inocentes, The OMLLI Group, LLC

"I am thankful for family, friends, life experiences, opportunities and each day of good health. I am thankful that I can still make mistakes and learn from them. I am thankful for having loved and being loved in return."

Matthew Veland, MassMutual

"I'm grateful for this fall weather. The upcoming holidays mean more time with family and close friends. Plus, football's back!"

Mike San Juan, MedsPack

"Thankful for the gift of life and the opportunity to serve the community towards a covid-free environment."

Kristoff Inocentes, KAJI Design Studio

"I am grateful for my loving family, my amazing friends, and for every day that we have with each other."

"Gratitude is one of the sweet shortcuts to finding peace of mind and happiness inside. No matter what is going on outside of us, there is always something we could be grateful for."

— Barry Neil Kaufman

HOLIDAY PLANNING

BY MAIA PAGLINAWAN CARNEY

Are you planning on gaining a bunch of weight this holiday season?

Of course not! No one plans for that. It just...sort of happens.

Want to avoid those holiday pounds? Stay trim this holiday season with these 3 steps:

1. Re-Focus

This holiday season try to re-focus your attention away from food and back on to what's really important — friends, family, giving, and traditions. Stay focused on the reason for the season rather than the plate full of hors d'oeuvres in front of you.

2. Be Strategic

It's important to use strategy when approaching the many celebrations held this time of year. Do not arrive at the party hungry. Instead, eat a small low-calorie snack ahead of time to prevent overeating.

Another idea is to chew gum before and after a meal, so you won't be tempted to overindulge in appetizers and desserts.

Also, find room in your busy holiday schedule for exercise. This will help you fight off the extra weight trying to attach itself to your midsection and rear.

3. Moderation

Enjoy the goodness of the season, but in moderation. Trim calories where you can by limiting your trimmings - cheeses, gravy, sauces, creams, and nuts.

Also, be sure to limit the amount of alcoholic beverages you drink. While you may not know it, they're filled with calories, too. Try alternating an alcoholic drink with a non-alcoholic drink.

Remember that exercise is a huge part of the equation when it comes to achieving weight loss.

I am passionate about seeing my clients achieve results—without wasting time, energy and effort on mistakes. Text 540-421-8527 or email maia@theworxbymaia.com today to get started on my best available program.

For the past 10 years, TeamWorX has been a life changing fitness community. We are located in Alexandria, VA and offer classes virtual and on-demand!



I FIL-AMPOWERED BY OLMA INOCENTES

Originally published in the Manila Mail, September 2021 issue

Previously, we floated the idea of a Filipino Town in the likes of Chinatown and Koreatown. What an amazing goal for us, right?! In this article, I'd like to explore how we, as Fil-Ams, can work towards that goal.

We begin by EMPOWERING ourselves through personal growth and knowledge. To start our journey of personal growth, we first focus on our health and wellness. At the same time, we increase and fortify our knowledge by discovering or re-discovering our Philippine heritage.

Focus on Health and Wellness

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” While wellness is more than health. It is a personal lifestyle choice that brings one to “the optimal state of health” and “expressed as a positive approach to living.”

When we say, “health and wellness”, therefore, what comes to mind, at the risk of being too simplistic, is the over-all state of well-being of the mind, body and spirit, thus paving the way for personal growth.

Mind

“Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.” Many factors exert influence over and affect our mental health, including biological (genes and brain chemistry), environmental, family history and life experiences. Thus, how one reacts to conflicts at home or work, relationship issues, happy or sad moments, or making life decisions vary from individual to individual.

Developing a positive mindset and maintaining emotional wellness will help us cope with our daily lives. Here are some tips on how to do just that:

- Connect with others to the extent your comfort zone allows under current health advisories.
- Get sufficient sleep.
- Help others and remember your good deeds.
- Do mental exercises.
- Get professional help if needed.

Body

Your body is your temple. You were born with it, and you will die with it. You owe it to yourself to maintain the best level of physical well-being that you can attain. “Most importantly, physical wellness is about discovering what healthy habits make you feel better and suit your lifestyle and level of mobility and fitness.”

Developing awareness, cultivating motivations and committing to yourself are important factors on your road to physical health. Here are some tips to help you on your way:

- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Increase physical activity.
- Drink enough water.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule.
- Commit to a tobacco-free lifestyle.

Spirit

Developing spiritual wellness may mean different things to different people. In the most fundamental level, it speaks to our inner being that is looking to discover meaning and purpose in our existence, “while also developing an appreciation for life and connection with something larger than yourself in the universe”. Spiritual wellness may provide us with “the power and capability to make our decisions and choices easier, ground us during periods of change and give us the resiliency to survive with grace and inner peace in the face of adversity. Having a spiritual element in our lives may even help us heal when suffering from a physical or mental condition.”

Try these tips to enhance your spiritual wellness:

- Set aside regular reflection time.
- Assess your values.
- Meditate and find your connection with nature and the universe.
- Go on a spiritual pilgrimage.
- Develop self-respect and respect for others.

Discover Your Philippine Heritage

Aside from maybe knowing that the Philippines was under Spanish rule and later under American rule, and is composed of more than 7,100 islands, what else do you know about the country you have a connection with?

Value System and Traditions

Family is central to the culture. There is no other social unit more important than family, such that unlike other cultures, it is not unusual for adult children even with their own families, to still be living with their parents. And close family ties include even extended family.

We are known as a religious and courteous people. Respect for elders is ingrained from an early age by the use of the words “po” and “opo” when speaking with the elderly or greeting them with the words and action “mano po”, done by taking the elder’s hand, bowing and placing it on their forehead.

Even for those who grew up away from the Philippines, Filipino values and traditions would have been taught by your elders or learned through example,



The OMLLI Group, LLC and Gold & Green, LLC

and some may even have stuck, like celebrating Noche Buena on Christmas Eve, or throwing a debut party complete with cotillon dance for your daughter's 18th birthday, or a "pamanhikan" to seek the hand of a daughter in marriage.

There are so many traditions, like the Bayanihan, the town Fiestas, the Harana, Ninong and Ninang, to name a few. Interesting, unique and yes, maybe even considered weird in the modern world – but all worth knowing, preserving and handed down.

Language

Do you know how to speak the national language, Filipino, or Tagalog, as it is more commonly called? What about Cebuano, Ilocano, Waray-Waray, Kapampangan or Bicolano? Yes, these are actual languages and we have quite a few of them spoken in the different regions of the country - over 180, in fact.

Famous Filipinos, Historical Figures and Unsung Heroes

You may know some Filipinos through the news or social media like Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Corazon Aquino, Lea Salonga, Rodrigo Duterte, or Manny Pacquiao. You may have learned about historical figures like Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, or Emilio Aguinaldo. But do you know about Gabriela Silang (1731-1763), a guerilla fighter who assumed leadership of rebel troops after her husband's assassination under Spanish regime; Lt. Gen. Artemio Ricarte (1866-1945), known as the Father of the Philippine Army; Teresa Magbanua (1868-1947), known as the Visayan Joan of Arc; or Capt. Jose Cabalfin Calugas, Sr. (1907-1998), the first Filipino soldier awarded the Medal of Honor during World War II?

What about your own family's history? You may have a famous distant relative, or an unsung hero in your bloodline, and maybe some funny or educational anecdotes you can pass on to your children and grandchildren.

Myths and Legends

Then there's our rich and colorful legends and myths. You may have heard of Aswang, Tikbalang, Diwata, Kapre and Manananggal. But there's also Santelmo, mysterious balls of light most often reported in the Sierra Madre Mountains; Sarangay, the Philippine version of the minotaur; Bungisngis, a forest-dwelling one-eyed giant said to be constantly laughing; and Bal Bal, a scavenger-monster who prey on corpses. There's a whole universe of these Philippine mythical creatures and we only know a fraction of them.

Cuisine

And, of course, not to forget the FOOD! We have popular dishes like adobo, kaldereta, kare-kare, sinigang, lechon, sisig and so much more. Fried crickets or balut anyone? For the sweet tooth, there's leche flan, halo-halo, puto, ube halaya and silvanas. Oh, I'm salivating as I write! Whether traditional dishes from the different regions or family recipes handed down for generations – learn how to cook or bake them! And while you're at it, try eating with your hands, the Kamayan way.

There's so much more to learn – architecture, performing arts, literature, regional festivals, cinema, mass media and sports. Aren't you curious yet?

Here are ways to forge a stronger connection with your Philippine roots and help strengthen the bonds for the younger generations by sharing the knowledge and encouraging them to learn more about their heritage:

- Get to know Philippine history and geography.
- Take a deep dive in Philippine culture with all your senses: eat the food, listen to folk music, learn folk dances, read and watch Filipino books and movies, learn the language or speak it more often.
- Go on an ancestral pilgrimage: go and see for yourself what the country has to offer; touch the soil; eat native food; breathe the air; visit important places, especially those with ties to your family, and maybe find where your ancestors are buried to give thanks and honor them.
- Recall what you learned about the Philippines while growing up and ask your elders about family histories.
- Join a Fil-Am or Filipino organization like the PACC-DC.

Throw your own Pinoy Party, maybe even costume-themed and wear traditional Filipino attire, with Filipino food, music (Karaoke time!), games like sungka and sipa, and discuss Philippine traditions.

Stand Proud and United

Health and wellness are the cornerstones of personal growth which, together with knowledge of our heritage, become our tools to empower ourselves and claim our identity as Fil-Ams - to stand proud and own it.

As we identify more with our fellow Fil-Ams, we can start moving forward as a united group, showing a united front, and striving to attain a united goal. Like our own Filipino Town.

Final note. Provided below is a list of PACC-DC members in the health and wellness industry with their contact information who can help provide guidance on your road to empowerment. Reach out. Everyone needs a helping hand. PACC-DC is also inviting everyone to our virtual Health and Wellness Summit: "I FIL AMPowered" on December 1-3, 2021 at 6pm. This summit is in collaboration with Trainstation Philippines, and credit goes to them for the event title, which I've appropriated for this article.

PACC-DC, Health & Wellness Sector:

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Lawyer-entrepreneur, freelance writer, emcee and speaker, Ms. Inocentes is a founding partner of The OMLLI Group, LLC., offering consulting services and legal and identity protection plans, and the Gold & Green LLC, offering health & wellness products and services, including coaching services and indoor air quality products. Ms. Inocentes is also the managing partner of the law firm Inocentes Canonizado & Associates Co.

I FIL AM Powered
HEALTH & WELLNESS SUMMIT

One Day Pass \$25
Full-Access Pass \$60

December 1-3, 2021
 6:00pm EST/3:00pm PST
December 2-4, 2021
 7:00am PHT

Day 1: MIND

Neuro - The Brain • Panic and Emotional Hijack • The Emotional, Logical and Social Brain • The Organizing Principle of the Brain • Linguistics: Words • The Story in Your Head • Programming Our Defaults • Empowered to be CHAMPS – Connection, Have Fun, Attention Training, Physical Movement, Sleep Optimization • Healthy Mind, Healthy Body • Brain-Mind Talk • Guest Performer

Day 2: BODY

Body Movement • The Importance of Physical Fitness • Diet and Nutrition • Dental Care • Mentimeter Activity • General Health Care • Heart to Heart • Body Care through Breathing and Relaxation • COVID 19 and Vaccine updates • Guest Performer

Day 3: SPIRIT

Mentimeter Activity • Filipino Spirit: Thriving Amidst Challenges • Spirit of Resilience and Courage, Bayanihan, Malasakit • Fighting Spirit: Mental and Emotional Agility • Flourishing Spirit: Empowered From Within • Gratitude – Devi Prayer • Round Table: The Spirit of the Filipino • Round Table: Values & Community • Round Table: Grit and Flourishing in a Changing World • Guest Performer

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PACC-DC

Our Vision

To expand and strengthen Filipino-American entrepreneurship and business development activities in the greater Washington, D.C. area, and to become a meaningful force in the growth and development of communities within the region.

Our Mission

To develop programs, seminars, and events that have a positive impact on the business community; to connect and foster open and consistent communications across communities; to support and augment all our members; and to foster community outreach initiatives that benefit the entire region.

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Join the PACC!

Membership Benefits

Business Development Connections

- Calendar of events & meetings offering networking and business development opportunities
- Priority registration and discounted event ticket pricing for members
- Sponsorship opportunities at networking events as well as e-newsletter, social media, and website
- Listing in and access to PACC-DC business directory and members-only resources
- Post job and partnership opportunities on the PACC-DC website and Newsletter
- Creating collaboration and business opportunities with fellow members
- Connections to local businesses, other Chambers of Commerce, and to SBA and Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) as well as other business organizations

Learning & Support

- Access to recognized industry experts, speakers, and thought leaders
- Mentorship opportunities with key business leaders
- Webinars on topics of interest

Savings

- Exclusive PACC-DC Membership Savings Card - discounts offered to member firms

Advocacy

- Networking and advocacy opportunities with leading federal, state, and local officials

—  —

FREE 1st Year Membership Promo ends on

December 31, 2021

Join the PACC today!

—  —

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS!

Member Name	Business/Employer
Regina Aquino	
Janine Inselmann	Tela By Janine
Beau Canlas	Some Never Really Get S.N.R.G.