



FCDC TODAY

Filipino-American Community &
Development Center of Ocean County Inc.
2014 Bayaning Pilipino Awardee
April 2025

Member Spotlight - Joice Salcedo Villegas

My name is Joice Salcedo Villegas, born and raised in Iloilo City, Philippines, the fifth among seven siblings of former Vice Mayor Jesus Salcedo and Florita Apaso. I finished elementary and high school at Colegio de San Jose in Jaro, Iloilo City. I graduated with my Bachelor of Science in Nursing from St. Paul University of Iloilo. Growing up, I became very close with my cousins, and they became my best friends, instead of hanging out with friends from school. I enjoyed collecting Sanrio and Tweety Bird stuff. I was an avid fan of Aga Muhlach and the boy band Menudo. I come from a very close knit family. All five girls are in healthcare and the two boys are in agriculture.

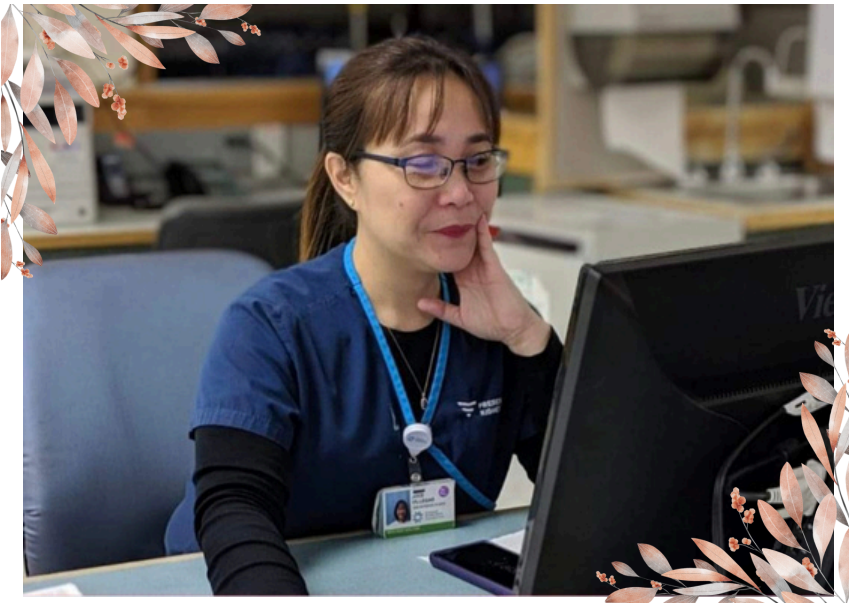


Being away from my family back home is hard. All of my siblings are back home except for my youngest sister, who lives in Emerson, NJ. I try to visit the Philippines as often as I can. My boys love going home and cherish every moment spent with their family.

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I migrated to the US in 1995 and started working in LTCF which was a shock for me, since we have no nursing homes in the Philippines. But I learned to love my job and enjoyed taking care of my residents. Then in 2000, I had the opportunity to get a job in dialysis, which I really love. I have been working as a dialysis nurse up to the present at Ocean University Medical Center. Being a nurse is very challenging, but I love everything about it. I can't imagine myself not being a nurse. I did try to encourage my eldest son to take up nursing with no luck. He told me that nurses work a lot but are usually not appreciated. I'm keeping my fingers crossed with my younger one who is contemplating taking up nursing. Nursing is not how it used to be when I was younger, which makes me have second thoughts when my youngest told me about his plans to become a nurse. I hope and pray that he will be successful in whatever path he chooses to take.



I am happily married to Victor and we have two adorable boys, John and Jason. If not at work, I enjoy cleaning, shopping and the most favorite is sleeping. I'm an active member of PTA at MTHS and PNANJ. I used to attend a lot of FCDC activities when my younger son was in elementary school and just started attending again recently. I really would love to be more involved with the FCDC activities, but at times due to work, I can't attend most of them, although I keep myself updated by reading the FCDC Facebook page.

Being a member of FCDC helps me in any way connect my son to our culture and learn new ones. I hope that he will continue to be involved in the community even when he goes to college. I always believe that a strong foundation will help my sons become better people.



family
is
EVERYTHING





PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY JASMINE ALCID



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service is incredibly valuable for children because it helps them develop empathy, responsibility, and a strong sense of belonging. By participating in activities that support others, children learn the importance of kindness, teamwork, and giving back to their communities. These experiences teach them to appreciate what they have and to understand different perspectives, building a foundation for a compassionate and socially responsible life. Community service also boosts their confidence, leadership skills and real-world problem-solving abilities, preparing them to become active, caring citizens in the future.

FCDC families have shared their resources through clothing and household item donation with Just Believe, a nonprofit organization that support the homeless in Ocean County.

Thank you to Just Believe for giving FCDC the opportunity to do community service.



REMINDERS:

- Santacruzán - May 10, 2025 , 2 pm at St Luke's Church
- FCDC Band practice - May 24, 2pm
- Filipino Summer Camp - July 14-17. July 18 is field trip for those attending camp

SANTACRUZAN
SAVE THE
date

**FCDC's 7th Santacruzán
LIVE procession!**

When: May 10, 2025, Saturday
St. Luke's Church,
1674 Old Freehold Rd, Toms River, NJ

Time: 2:00pm Assembly
2:30-3:30 Procession
4:00pm Mass
5:00pm Refreshments at the
St Luke's Social Hall

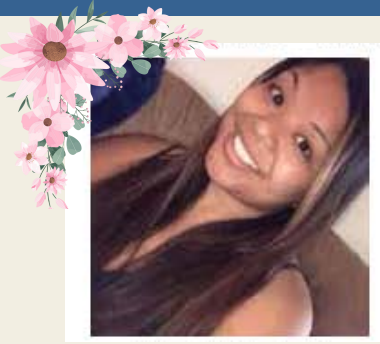
Potluck: Sign-up genius link attached

For any questions please email
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***LETTER FROM THE
EDITOR
by Jamie Mariano***



I hope everyone enjoyed celebrating the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ during the Easter holiday. Easter reminds me that we should give sacrificially and in love, as God gave us His only son as a sacrifice for our sins. That was the ultimate act of giving and of sacrifice.

FCDC brought together FACES families to donate household items and clothing to Just Believe, a local nonprofit on a mission to help those in need. Any little bit of help can go a long way for someone. I am so proud of how members of FCDC make a conscious effort to donate and help those in need, whether it's by donating toys at Christmas time or responding to a natural disaster by raising funds for relief efforts. More information about the donation event that took place the last weekend of April can be found in this month's newsletter.

With the large number of FCDC members, I am sure that many of you have ideas and resources that can help FCDC continue to be -- as my pastor (who was a past FCDC board member!) says -- on the giving side of life. If you want to share ways FCDC can be a blessing to others, please email fcdcteam@gmail.com. Share your thoughts, as you might have an idea that someone doesn't know about or ever considered doing. Together, can we can effect change!



COOKING INSPIRATION

by Zachary Lichter



When I was growing up, my lola (Nancy Ynaya) made me bistek. It was this dish with round steak, onions, lemon, and soy sauce that I always ate. To this day, she still makes it for me, and I always enjoy eating it. When I decided to start cooking in my dorm, I wanted to cook some of the classic recipes that Lola made for me growing up. Bistek happened to be one of them.

Bistek is traditionally cooked with round steak and it's a tougher cut of beef. I typically don't like round steak because of how tough it is, and I prefer a more softer or tender cut of steak. Being a food critic, I've reviewed a couple of steak places and the ones that I've rated really high, tend to be the steaks that are the most tender. So when it came time for me to learn how to make bistek, I knew I was going to change my lola's recipe by using a softer cut. Thankfully, she didn't mind it. I think when we inherit recipes, we are afraid of being bold by changing them to our liking because firstly, it causes conflict between family members, and secondly, some people are content with cooking recipes the way they are, whether someone likes it or not.

The way I make bistek is that I use filet mignon instead of round steak because it is more tender and soft. I still use onions, lemon juice and soy sauce. I cook the steak until it's medium rare and serve it with rice. Serving bistek with rice is important because it takes away the saltiness from the soy sauce. After serving my version of bistek at a party, I can say that many people enjoyed it.

Here is my recipe for bistek:

Ingredients

- 2 pieces of filet mignon. You may need to add more depending on how many you're serving
- 1 sweet vidalia onion
- 1 ½ cups of soy sauce
- 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil

Directions

- Chop the filet mignon into bite size pieces and put it into a mixing bowl
- Pour 1 ½ cups of soy sauce on top of the steak inside the bowl
- Cut the lemon in half and squeeze all the juice on top of the steak, as hard as you can. Be sure to scoop out the lemon seeds that fall into the bowl
- Mix everything together. Cover the bowl with tin foil and marinate the steak for 30 minutes in the refrigerator.
- Chop up the vidalia onion into slices
- Heat up a frying pan with vegetable oil and fry the steak until it's cooked. Once it's cooked, transfer the steak onto a plate.
- Using the same frying pan, add the onions and cook them until they are soft
- Put the steak back into the frying pan with the onions and pour the marinade on top. Finish cooking until the steak is fully cooked and the onions are covered in the soy sauce.
- Serve and enjoy!



ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

by Ferlie Almonte
Speaker. Author. Life Coach.

A TRUE IDOL

I came across this tribute to Pope Francis on Facebook on the day he transitioned into eternal life. It is an introspective and profound insight on one's choices in life, as powerfully and beautifully exemplified by the late Pope Francis.

In this materialistic world we live in, many idolize the superficial and curated lifestyles and images of celebrities popularly shown on all forms of media. Are they real? Do they teach values to the present and future generations? Who, truly, is worth idolizing? Let's look into the choices we make in life, who we look up to, and reflect on what and who influenced us. It's never too late to change and grow in spirit.

The Loss of a Good Man: A Tribute to Pope Francis and the Power of Universal Faith

by Vinod Sekhar

I only met Pope Francis once. It was brief. Just a few moments in a crowded room filled with dignitaries and seekers, some there out of duty, others out of belief. I was neither Catholic nor there on some divine pilgrimage. I was just a man in need of a little hope. And somehow, in that fleeting encounter, I received it.

It's hard to explain without sounding overly romantic, but when you're in the presence of someone truly good — not performatively good, not “publicly moral” or selectively kind — but genuinely, deeply, relentlessly good... something shifts in you. You feel lighter. You feel braver. You feel like humanity, for all its wounds and wickedness, is still worth fighting for.

I am a Hindu. My God wears different names. My prayers come in different rhythms. But I would have followed this man through fire. Because in his belief in God, he carried a belief in all of us. His eyes didn't see denominations — they saw dignity. His voice, always soft but never weak, carried the weight of truth even when it unsettled the comfortable. Especially when it unsettled the comfortable.

This world has a way of chipping away at your soul. The noise, the greed, the hate, the empty rituals that masquerade as faith or patriotism or family values. It's easy to go numb. It's easy to give in to cynicism. But once in a while, someone comes along who reminds us that the better angels of our nature are still within reach. That goodness is still possible. That we don't need to be perfect to do good — we just need to be brave.

Pope Francis was that man.

He chose love over doctrine. He chose compassion over judgment. And most remarkably, he chose action over applause. He walked with the poor. He knelt before the discarded. He challenged the powerful not with anger, but with moral courage. And he did all of this with a smile that felt like a prayer.

He understood something many religious leaders forget: that God doesn't reside only in temples or churches or mosques. That holiness isn't a place — it's a way of living. A way of seeing others. A way of choosing kindness, over and over, even when it hurts.

So yes, today we mourn. I mourn. Not just for the Catholic world, but for all of us. Because when a man like this leaves, it feels like a light has been dimmed.

But maybe — just maybe — the way we honour him is by becoming the light ourselves.

Let us remember his faith in humanity, and let it fuel our own. Let us keep making the right chess moves in this complicated, brutal, beautiful game of life. Let us speak truth with grace. Let us protect the vulnerable, question the powerful, and lift each other up not because of who we are, but because we are here — together.

Pope Francis believed in a world where dignity wasn't conditional. Where faith was lived, not just preached. That world can still exist — if we build it.

And maybe that's the final gift he's given us. A call not to despair, but to duty.

Because as long as we carry his belief in each other, then truly, he has not left us at all.



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