



FCDC TODAY

Filipino-American Community &
Development Center of Ocean County Inc.
2014 Bayaning Pilipino Awardee
July 2026



Congratulations!

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Congratulations to the Blue Team, the Champions of the 5th FCDC Filipino Summer Camp, for an outstanding performance throughout four days of exciting and friendly competition! Demonstrating exceptional teamwork, enthusiasm, and determination, the Blue Team rose to the top by earning an impressive 515 points, surpassing the Red Team with 475 points, the Yellow Team with 462 points, and the White Team with 380 points. Campers, ranging in age from 5 to 18 years old, worked together in various activities, including games, Quiz Bee, team chants, arts and crafts, songs, creative fashion design, and showcase presentations. Every point earned reflected the team's commitment to encouraging one another, giving their best effort, and embracing the true spirit of camaraderie and sportsmanship.

Leading the Blue Team to victory were dedicated team leaders Gregory Alcid, Jayden Chong, and Bella Sadsad, who inspired their teammates through their leadership, encouragement, and positive attitude. They motivated every camper to participate, contribute their unique talents, and strive for excellence in every challenge. The Blue Team have won the Sustainable Fashion Contest as well as the Showcase Presentation which gained them 100 points for each category catapulting them to 1st place.

Other members of the team were Maya Inid, Rosie Alberto, Elaina Pamintuan, Joaquin Seno, Jason Buenaflor, Jannah Arpay, Liam Gill, Mykel Panerio, Eleana Taguam, Kirran McPartlin, Tommy Alberto, Gabrielle Latonio, Josef Taguam, Adrik Batin and Adeline Batin. While only one team could be crowned champion, all four teams displayed remarkable teamwork, respect, and Filipino pride throughout the camp. The Blue Team's championship is a well-deserved achievement and a testament to what can be accomplished when young people work together toward a common goal. Congratulations once again to the Blue Team on an unforgettable victory and for setting a wonderful example of leadership, unity, and perseverance for everyone at the 5th FCDC Filipino Summer Camp!





PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Jasmine Alcid



FILIPINO CAMP 2026. PHOTO SHOWS CAMPER, FACILITATORS AND VOLUNTEERS.

The 5th FCDC Filipino Camp was another remarkable success, bringing together children and teens for five exciting days of learning, teamwork, and celebration of Filipino heritage. Throughout the camp, participants were immersed in the rich culture and traditions of the Philippines through a wide variety of engaging activities. They learned traditional folk dances such as Cariñosa, Maglalatik, and Itik-Itik; sang meaningful songs including Growing Up and the Community Song; and explored Philippine history through the inspiring story of Gabriela Silang. Campers also strengthened their language arts skills, listened to the epic tale of Biag ni Lam-ang, learned the traditional art of weaving (habi), enjoyed Pinoy games, and eagerly participated in volleyball, which quickly became a favorite activity among the teens.

The camp also encouraged creativity and hands-on learning through arts, crafts, and practical activities. Campers discovered the vibrant artistic style of Pacita Abad by creating their own "World of Color" masterpieces, crafted beautiful resin necklaces featuring Philippine flowers and seashells, learned the process of making delicious polvoron, and even planted kangkong to appreciate the importance of gardening and sustainability. Ice-breakers, games, and an exciting Quiz Bee kept the energy high while reinforcing the lessons learned each day. As in previous years, the camp featured a friendly team competition with campers divided into four color teams, earning points through teamwork, sportsmanship, and participation. Children also collected raffle tickets by winning contests, giving them the opportunity to bid on authentic Filipino-themed prizes during the much-anticipated auction.



FILIPINO CAMP 2026. PHOTO SHOWS CAMPERS, FACILITATORS AND VOLUNTEERS.

The grand finale on the fourth day showcased everything the campers had accomplished during the week. Families, friends, and members of the community gathered for a joyful Filipino Fiesta as campers confidently performed their dances, songs, and cultural presentations. One of the highlights of the celebration was the creative fashion show, where each team designed sustainable Filipino-inspired outfits using recyclable materials such as paper, cardboard, plastic, and metal, demonstrating both imagination and environmental awareness. Each team also presented a unique showcase featuring one of the Philippines' beautiful destinations—Baguio, Bacolod, Davao, and Palawan—highlighting the country's rich history, culture, and natural beauty. The success of the 5th FCDC Filipino Camp is a testament to the dedication of its volunteers, teachers, facilitators, parents, and sponsors, whose unwavering support continues to inspire the next generation to embrace their Filipino identity with pride, build lasting friendships, and become future leaders in the community.

The excitement of the camp continued with a memorable field trip to Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, New Jersey. Campers explored the breathtaking 42-acre sculpture park and arboretum, where they experienced the beauty of nature intertwined with inspiring works of art created by renowned artists from around the world. Walking through the picturesque gardens, the children learned to appreciate how art can tell stories, spark imagination, and connect people with their surroundings. The day concluded with a visit to Jollibee, the beloved Filipino restaurant, where everyone enjoyed sharing a delicious meal and celebrating new friendships. The field trip was the perfect ending to an unforgettable week, leaving campers with cherished memories, a deeper appreciation of Filipino culture, and excitement for next year's FCDC Filipino Camp.

A PEEK FROM THE FILIPINO CAMP

photos from several sources
THANK YOU!

VOLLEYBALL WITH COACH JOSE



POLVORON-MAKING



RESIN NECKLACE



GARDENING WITH KANGKONG



SAMPAGUITA FLOWERS



POLVORON GIRLS



ARTWORK



WORKING WITH COLORS



SALAMIN DANCE



MAGLALATIK



"GROWING UP"



CARIÑOSA



BIAG NI LAM-ANG



PINOY OLYMPICS



OUTDOOR GAMES



HABI



KUBING



QUIZ BEE



AUCTION PRIZES



SUSTAINABLE FASHION CONTEST



SHOWCASE JUDGES



SHOWCASE



FIESTA



GABRIELA SILANG



LANGUAGE LESSONS



COMMUNITY SONG AND ITIK-ITIK



FILIPINO SONGS



2026 GRADUATES



ARTIST: PACITA ABAD



TEAM EFFORT

MORE PHOTOS ON FCDC AND FACES FACEBOOK SITE



Champions
BLUE TEAM (BUGHAW)



2ND PLACE
RED TEAM (PULA)



3RD PLACE
YELLOW TEAM (DILAW)



4TH PLACE
WHITE TEAM (PUTI)



GROUNDS FOR SCULPTURE

field trip





***LETTER FROM THE
EDITOR
by Jamie Mariano***



Another school year has come and gone, and milestones have been achieved. Not everything accomplished came with ease; there were roadblocks, detours, and forks on the road. Sometimes, there were even accidents! No matter what your direction is in life, it does not come without its challenges as you navigate the journey. It is important to hold strongly to your faith, remember the big picture (end goal), and take time to enjoy things that can happily distract you from the challenges for a brief moment.

To the Class of 2026, your life has entered a new chapter. The plot will depend on your decisions, who you choose to influence those decisions, and the opportunities that will be presented to you. Appreciate others' advice and support, but remember, that your life is ultimately only lived by you. Take the chances others might be afraid of you taking. Choose the road that others might think you'd get lost following. Whatever you do, do so with wisdom and care.

And speaking of care...take good care of yourself. You are the only you that there is in this world, and you are the only one who could be you!





ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

by Ferlie Almonte

Speaker. Author. Life Coach.

***One Conversation. One Young Heart.
One Lasting Lesson.***

Some of the most meaningful moments of community service are never planned. I attended Dairy Queen's Miracle Treat Day in Absecon, New Jersey, to support the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Wearing my crown and sash as Ms. New Jersey Senior America 2023, I expected to spend the day greeting families, taking photos, and encouraging people to support an incredible cause.

Instead, something unexpected happened.

A beautiful, petite teenager quietly approached me and asked, "Can you give me some pageant tips? I've never competed before."

As we began talking, I immediately recognized something familiar—not a lack of potential, but a lack of confidence.

She spoke very softly, avoided eye contact, rushed through her words, and seemed unsure of herself. Yet behind that timid voice was a bright young woman simply waiting for someone to believe in her.

I shared a little of my own journey.

I told her that I entered pageantry at the age of 61 and was blessed to win Ms. New Jersey Senior America 2023, becoming the first Asian woman in the pageant's 40-year history to earn that title.

If I could step onto a pageant stage later in life and make history, then she could certainly step onto hers with confidence.

For the next several minutes, an ordinary sidewalk outside Dairy Queen became our classroom.

We practiced posture.

We worked on smiling naturally.

I encouraged her to slow down, breathe before answering questions, project her voice, and make genuine eye contact with the judges.

We even role-played mock interviews, and together we transformed nervous answers into authentic conversations.

But the most important lesson had nothing to do with pageants.

I told her:

“Life is not about Win or Lose. It’s about Win or Learn.”

That simple shift changes everything.

When we stop fearing failure, we begin embracing growth.

When we stop comparing ourselves to others, we discover our own unique gifts.

When we choose authenticity over perfection, confidence naturally follows.

By the end of our conversation, I could already see a difference.

Her smile was brighter.

Her posture was stronger.

Her voice carried more conviction.

Most importantly, she walked away understanding that she didn’t have to become someone else to succeed.

She simply needed to become more fully herself.

As someone passionate about youth empowerment and personal development, this brief encounter reminded me why mentoring matters. Young people are not looking for perfection. They are looking for encouragement, guidance, and someone willing to say, “I believe in you.”

Sometimes cultural enrichment and youth empowerment don’t happen in classrooms or on stages.

Sometimes they happen over ice cream.

Sometimes they begin with a simple conversation.

And sometimes, a few words of encouragement can inspire a young person to discover the confidence they never knew they possessed.

If that young lady remembers only one thing from our conversation, I hope it is this: Be yourself. Have fun. Learn from every experience. Your confidence is your greatest crown — and no one can ever take that away.

For more inspiring messages, follow @FerlieAlmonte on social media.



My Experience Volunteering at St. Joseph's Social Concerns Supper

By Jannah Arpay

Volunteering at St. Joseph's Sunday Supper to help give out warm and nutritious meals was such a meaningful experience. At first, I was nervous because I didn't know what to expect.

Being my first time, I was unsure if I would like it, but now I'm glad I went because it made me realize that even a small act of kindness can make a difference in someone's life. It was also wonderful to volunteer alongside my fellow teens from FCDC under the guidance of Tita Lorna, whose encouragement and leadership made the experience even more enjoyable. We worked together in preparing fruits, salads, burgers and helping to give out cookies and drinks. Everyone's compassion made the experience of volunteering one I will certainly never forget. I was overwhelmed with warm smiles and appreciation after receiving their food. Seeing their happiness made me want to continue giving back as much as I can to my community.

Overall, my volunteer experience at St. Joseph's Social Concerns Sunday Supper was a great opportunity that I will always treasure. It made me connect with people and inspired me to continue volunteering. Also, having this kind of event is not only beneficial to those who are helping but to those who are attending as well. Personally, I believe others, especially young people, should try to make time to volunteer and experience the difference it can make. It also helps volunteers grow as compassionate and responsible individuals.



Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Jason Batin

Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES)

Achievements: Competitive Mountain Biker and First Chair Cellist

Future Plans: To pursue a degree in Chemical Engineering at Rutgers University, gain hands-on research and internship experience, and use my education to develop innovative solutions that improve people's lives.

Parents: Jojo and Anna Batin



Congratulations, Kuya Jason! Keep reaching higher, embracing new challenges, and making a positive impact wherever life takes you. We are so proud of you.

Emma Delhaas

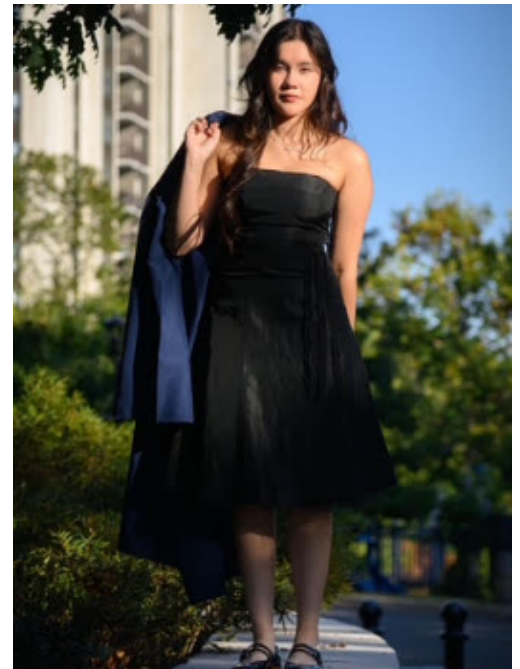
Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES)

Extracurricular Activities: Executive Producer of MATES TV, President and Lead Editor of the MATES Literary Magazine, Mock Trial Team, HOBY Leadership Seminar participant (two years) and piano

Achievements: Member of the MATES Mock Trial Team that placed 3rd in the State of New Jersey; recipient of the 2026 Arts & Language Award; selected to attend the HOBY Leadership Seminar for two consecutive years; served as Executive Producer of MATES TV and Lead Editor of the MATES Literary Magazine;

Future Plans: Emma will attend Loyola Marymount University this fall, where she plans to major in Journalism.

Parents: Christine Matus and Steven Delhaas



Emma, your determination, creativity, leadership, and compassion inspire us every day. We are so proud of you and can't wait to see the impact you'll make as you begin this exciting new chapter at Loyola Marymount University.

Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Julian Miles L. Panerio **Donovan Catholic High School**

Extracurricular Activities: Academic Decathlon Challenge - Team Captain, Robotics Team, Chess Club, Debate Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentorship Program

Achievements: Class Valedictorian, Presidential Award for Educational Excellence, United States Marine Corps Scholastic Excellence Award, Ocean County Mayors' Association Scholarship Award, National Honor Society Officer, Science National Honor Society Member, National Society of High School Scholars Member, Sister Frances Rita Award - Four years of Excellence in Mathematics at the Advanced Honors Level, Sister Kathleen Marie Skurka Award - Four Years Excellence in Spanish

Future Plans: Major in Biochemistry, achieve PhD, become a scientist and researcher

Parents and Brother: Medifel Junius J. Panerio & Jullie L. Panerio, Mykel Jerome L. Panerio



Congratulations and good luck as you embark on this exciting new college adventure! Remember to pray always, be kind to yourself and others, and know that our love and support follow you through every mistake and triumph.

Elizabeth Noelle Tupaz **Toms River High School North**

Extracurricular Activities: Violin and dance

Achievements: English National Honor Society, Tri-M Music Honor Society, Arts National Honor Society, High Honor Roll, Academic Achievement Awardee (9th to 12th grade), President of Filipino Culture Club, Member of Student Council, Competitive Dancer since 6th grade- won 1st place in solo competition in Tap

Future plans: Will attend college at St. John's University in Queens, New York, majoring in Pharmacy; accepted in PharmD program; hopes to land an internship and work as a pharmacy tech while in school

Parents: Manny and Malou Tupaz



Good luck on this six-year road trip of college...you will do great as you always have. We will always be here for you! Love, Dad, Mom, Kuya, Ate and Emma

Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Matthew Rafael Villaneueva

**Marine Academy of Technology and
Environmental Science (MATES)**

Extracurricular Activities: FACES, Terrapin Club, Yearbook Club, Games Club, Art Club, Arnis, Rock Climbing, Toms River Artist Community, Toms River Field of Dreams Volunteer

Achievements: Founder - FACES Disability and Accessibility Committee, Honorable Mention - Sophomore Research Project

Future Plans: will attend George Washington University in Washington, DC

Parents: Ron and Celine Villanueva



Congratulations on your high school graduation, Matthew! We are so proud of all your hard work and perseverance, and we wish you God's blessings and every success as you begin this exciting new chapter at college.

Maya Inid

Toms River Intermediate East

Extracurricular Activities: School orchestra and TRMO - violin and piano, softball for Toms River Township

Achievements: Presidential Award, High Honor Roll, accepted into the STEAM program for broadcasting at Toms River High School East

Parents: Chris Inid and Debra Thomas-Inid



We are so proud of you Maya, keep working hard and never give up!!

Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Emma Louise Tupaz North Dover Elementary

Extracurricular Activities: plays piano, cello, dances, takes vocal lessons

Achievements: KINDNESS AWARD, AWESOME ATTITUDE AWARD, CHORUS AWARD ORCHESTRA AWARD- Instrumental Music Program, SAFETY SQUAD AWARD(Safety Patrol) OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Plans: incoming 6th grader in Toms River Intermediate North; join clubs and sports in middle school, continue playing cello, piano and voice lessons

Parents: Manny and Maria Tupaz



Congratulations on crushing elementary school! Wishing you all the best as you move forward into middle school. We are very proud of you Emma! Love, Dad, Mom, Kuya, Ate Elisha and Ate Beth

Cooper Tejada McPartlin Toms River Intermediate South

Extracurricular Activities: Cross Country, Track, Soccer, Lacrosse, Music

Achievements: Geometry Pinnacle High Honor Roll, Accepted to MATES, Business Academy, and STEAM Academy

Parents: Mike and China McPartlin



Good luck at MATES, Cooper.
We love you so much!
- Mommy, Daddy, Kellan, Connor, & Kirran

Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Joseph B. McCann **St. Joseph Grade School**

Extracurricular Activities: Baseball

Achievements: First Honors, Best in Science, Honor Society, two scholarships (Alumni and D'Onofrio Trust Scholarship)

Parents: Brian and Evelyn McCann



**We are beyond proud of you Joey!
Balancing Academics and 4 baseball teams
is no easy feat while achieving your goals.
Your hardwork is truly amazing.
Congratulations!**

Aeva Angelique Nimanand **Toms River Intermediate North**

Extracurricular Activities: Orchestra,
Theatre

Achievements: Valedictorian, Academic
Presidential Award

Parents: Victor and Adea Nimanand



**We are incredibly proud of your hard
work and achievements as valedictorian,
from your academics to your beautiful
violin playing. We can't wait to see what
God holds for your future as you step into
this exciting next chapter of high school.**

Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Joaquin Seno

Russell O. Brackman Middle School

Extracurricular Activities: Baseball,
volleyball

Parents: Jerome and Janet Seno



**Congratulations on your graduation,
Joaquin! We love you and always
here for you.**

Geraldine Pia Tonog

Toms River Intermediate North

Extracurricular Activities: Tennis,
Volleyball, Pickleball, Theatre, Piano and
Violin

Achievements: Salutatorian, Academic
Presidential Award, Most Valuable Player -
Cross Country Girls, 4th Quarter Perfect
Attendance

Parents: Gideon & Rica Tonog



**Congratulations Gia! God has
an amazing plan for you!
We love you so much! - Tatay,
Nanay & Mama Andi**

Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Elyus Valmon

Manchester Township Middle School

Extracurricular Activities: School band (trumpet), football, Jesus is Lord Fellowship Youth Group

Parents: Jamie Mariano and Sirron Valmon



Put God first, make the next four years count, enjoy high school, and never forget how loved you are!

Aria Maxine Imperial

St. Mary Academy

Extracurricular Activities: Member - St Mary JV Basketball girls
Altar Server - St Mary's Church
Kumon Math Platinum Medal
3rd Degree Green Belt MMA

Parents: Michael and Marsha Imperial



Congratulations on graduating 5th Grade, we're so proud of you. Make Luck in Middle School, you'll be amazing!

Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Marinelle M. Latonio

Washington Street Elementary School

Achievements: Outstanding Performance and Participation in the Washington Street Orchestra (Violin), Outstanding Performance and Participation in the Washington Street Chorus, Safety Patrol Award, Outstanding Achievement in Art, Graduation Ticket Designer, Outstanding Participation in Theater

Parents: Roldan and Mary Grace Latonio



Congratulations on all your achievements. Keep up the great work and may God bless you always.

Gabrielle M. Latonio

Washington Street Elementary School

Achievements: Outstanding Performance and Participation in the Washington Street Orchestra (Violin), Outstanding Performance and Participation in the Washington Street Chorus, Safety Patrol Award, Outstanding Achievement in Art, Graduation Ticket Designer, Outstanding Participation in Theater, Highest Individual 5th Grade Score at Washington Street Elementary in the Ocean County Math League Contest, Excellent Attendance

Parents: Roldan and Mary Grace Latonio



Congratulations on all your achievements. Keep up the great work and may God bless you always.

Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Connor Tejada McPartlin

Washington Street Elementary School

Extracurricular Activities: Band, Drama Club,
Soccer, Lacrosse, Music

Achievements: Advanced Math, Advanced ELA,
Accepted to the Middle School Pinnacle
Program

Parents: Mike and China McPartlin



Good luck at Intermediate South,
Connor. We love you so much!
- Mommy, Daddy, Cooper, Kellan, &
Kirran

Jason Buenaflor

Central Regional Middle School

Extracurricular Activities: basketball, golf
Piano

Achievement: Best in Music in Middle School

Parents: Roderic Buenaflor &
Liesl Pia ILedan



We are so proud of you, Jason!

Congratulations, Class of 2026!

Élysée Lucia Jacinto

Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES)

Extracurricular Activities: Reading, crochet, guitar, violin & hiking

Achievements: Honor Society, Girl Scout Alumnae, Consistent Honor Roll, Rotary Club of Southern Ocean scholarship awardee, black belt in Taekwondo

Future Plans: Temple University Fox School of Business, Honors Program, Major in Actuarial Science

Parents: Rossano and Jaye Jacinto



"The best way to predict your future is to create it." - Abraham Lincoln
We love you and we're very proud of you. We hope your next adventure will be as bright as you are.

Axl Perono

Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES)

Extracurricular MATES Class Council Vice President, Civil Air Patrol First Sergeant, Paul Pendergast Karate Black Belt, MATES Independent Research, South Toms River EMT

Achievements: 2026 NSMC National Merit Commended Student, Tri-M Music National Honor Society, MATES National Honor Society,

Future Plans: Major in Biomedical Engineering at Drexel University to pursue a career as a Biomaterials R&D Engineer

Parents: Wilfred and Berverly Perono



Axl anak, embrace the opportunities that come your way. Keep pushing boundaries and surpassing limits. We're here for you always..... your Family

Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Gleanna Margaret M. Gatchalian **Toms River Intermediate North**

Extracurricular Activities: Orchestra Member
and Art Club member

Achievements: President's Award

Parents: Glen and Glenda



**Congratulations! We are so proud of
you and all that you've
accomplished. We love you.**





SHARE YOUR STORY
Email our Editor-in-Chief
Jamie Mariano at
jamiefcdctoday@gmail.com



Renewal of Memberships

Marsha Imperial & Family

Malou Tupaz & Family



FCDC
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08754

To join us or renew
your membership,
visit our website at
www.fcdcnj.org
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support!

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