20TH ANNIVERSARY

FCDC TODAY

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

Member Spotlight:
Twenty-Five Years of the FAMS Golf Outing Honoring the Founders and Organizers

By Dr. Jose Ramon Suatengco

On October 10, 2001, more than 140 golfers gathered at Eagle Ridge for the first FAMS Golf Outing. It was a successful beginning during a deeply somber time in our nation's history, just weeks after the September 11 World Trade Center tragedy.

The inaugural outing was chaired by Dr. Vic Asanza and Dr. Oscar Ortiz. FAMS was then in its first year as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. As FAMS president, I joined board members Drs. Elena Buenviaje, Rene Ynaya, and Mark Kasper in approving this new fundraising initiative.

Despite the uncertainty and sadness surrounding that period, the outing went forward with strong participation and support. Funds raised supported projects benefiting the local community, Community Medical Center, and collaborative efforts with organizations in the Philippines. That first event demonstrated what we could accomplish by bringing colleagues, friends, and sponsors together for a shared purpose.

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In the years that followed, the first Wednesday of October became the customary date for the FAMS Golf Outing. Drs. Oscar Ortiz, Mario Gallardo, Dino Espineli, and I continued as co-chairmen, helping sustain an event that combined our enjoyment of golf with our commitment to community service.

I want to give particular recognition to Drs. Ortiz, Gallardo, and Espineli, whose steady leadership and dedication have been central to keeping the outing going. An event like this requires people who will take responsibility for making it happen, year after year. Their willingness to do so deserves our appreciation.

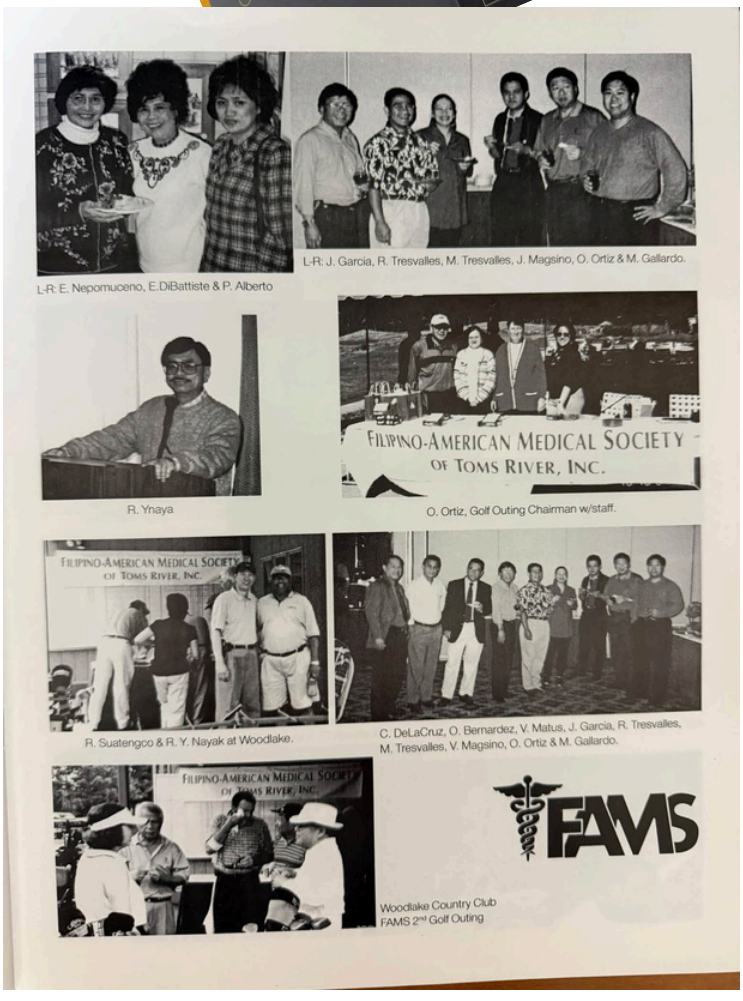
Mabuhay!

Congratulations!

In 2025, the decision was made to turn over the Golf Outing to FCDC, with the same co-chairmen continuing their involvement. This next chapter carries forward the purpose and relationships established through FAMS.

Our sincere thanks go to Pine Barrens, our sponsors, the officers of FAMS and FCDC, and the golfers and supporters who have made this event possible. Its success belongs to everyone who has contributed time, resources, and encouragement.

Twenty-five years after that first gathering at Eagle Ridge, I am grateful that an initiative we approved in 2001 continues to bring people together in service to our communities. We look forward to carrying this tradition into the years ahead.



Throwback

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Jasmine Alcid

The Filipino-Community and Development Center of Ocean County (FCDC) proudly celebrated the 25th Annual FCDC/FAMS Golf Outing on October 7, marking a remarkable milestone in this longstanding tradition of fellowship, generosity, and community support. The event was a tremendous success, made even more memorable by the beautiful weather, exciting raffle prizes, delicious lunch and dinner, and the wonderful memories shared by everyone who participated. FCDC extends its heartfelt gratitude to all our sponsors, donors, golfers, volunteers, organizers, and everyone who contributed their time, resources, and generosity to make this silver anniversary celebration possible. Your continued support over the years has helped sustain this meaningful tradition and strengthen our commitment to serving the community. Most importantly, the proceeds from this event will benefit the Dr. Ynaya Scholarship Fund, which provides support to senior high school students in Ocean County as they pursue their educational goals and prepare for a brighter future. Thank you for being part of this special milestone and for helping us invest in the next generation of leaders.

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www.fcdcnj.org

FCDC continued its celebration of culture, community, and togetherness on October 24 at Winding River Park, where members gathered for a fun-filled Halloween and Filipino-American History Month celebration. Children and adults alike came dressed in creative and festive costumes, while decorated car trunks showcased imaginative themes that brought excitement and Halloween spirit to the gathering. The park was filled with laughter and enthusiasm as participants enjoyed various games, exciting prizes, and a delicious lunch shared by everyone. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for families and friends to bond, connect, and create lasting memories while celebrating the joy of community involvement.

Adding deeper meaning to the festivities, FCDC members presented special performances in commemoration of Filipino-American History Month, highlighting the rich culture, traditions, and contributions of Filipinos to American society. These performances served as a reminder of the importance of preserving our Filipino heritage and passing it on to the younger generation. Through events like these, FCDC continues to fulfill its mission of bringing families together, encouraging children to participate in cultural activities, and keeping Filipino traditions alive while embracing the diversity of our community. Heartfelt thanks go to all the participants, parents, volunteers, organizers, and supporters who helped make both celebrations successful. With everyone's continued involvement and generosity, FCDC looks forward to creating more meaningful experiences that strengthen our community and celebrate the spirit of Filipino-American pride.

Performers Ferlie and Christine, Beejay and Kyle all doing Filipino-inspired numbers

Halloween costume winners in the boys and girls categories. Special prize went to Filipino-inspired costume

Halloween costume winners: adult category

Best family theme category

Voted as best trunks: Punchout trunk, Capybara Cafe, Day of the Dead

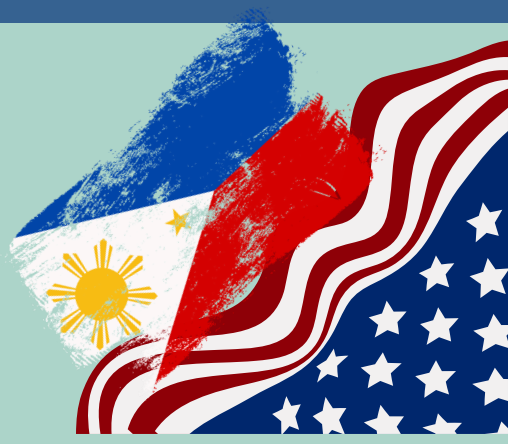
HAVE YOU
SEEN THIS
WIZARD?
APPROACH WITH EXTREME CAUTION!
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO USE
MAGIC AGAINST THIS MAN.

FCDC

Filipino-American
Community
Development
Center

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

by Jamie Mariano



October is Filipino American History Month

We celebrate our Philippine heritage 12 months a year through FCDC, but the United States acknowledges October as Filipino American History Month, officially recognized by Congress in 2009.

There are people who don't care for diversity and are actually appalled by it. I guess there are some people who forget that the America we know today was built on the backs of immigrants from all continents -- and continues to be sustained by them as well. How could there be resistance to accept other cultures in one of the world's most ethnically diverse countries that was built and is maintained by people whose families are not native to American soil?

Filipinos are part of those groups of people who settled and were part of building America to be what it is today. US military forces recruited Filipinos. The Philippines was also a major source for nurses. Hawaiian sugar plantations had a large number of Filipino laborers. California saw the earliest Filipinos in America on October 18, 1587, and still has a large population of Filipinos, where we have major influence on Bay Area culture. Personally, I am connected to all of this -- through my grandfather who came to Hawaii to work, my dad who served in the Navy, my mom who is a retired nurse, my brother who was born in Hawaii due to my dad being stationed there, and myself, born in San Diego also because of my dad's station. I'm sure I'm not the only one who can connect the dots to see the historical significance of how their family came to the US.

Our earlier presence in America was not without its challenges, as Filipinos were victims of segregation and racism along with other people of color. This is part of our history that also needs to be shared with our children, especially when schools only teach Black vs. White when discussing slavery and segregation.

We are a blessed group of people because we still have relatives who live in the Philippines and many people are still migrating to the US. The Philippine culture isn't lost in America. The connection to the Philippines isn't ancient history, it is still very present and alive for us. Because of this, the lifestyle and traditions are weaved into the daily lives of Filipino-Americans. It is part of who we are, how we live, and how we raise our families.

This is why FCDC is important. Being Filipino-American, not just American, is something that comes naturally for us because we have not been disconnected from our roots. The Philippine culture and Filipino American history is relevant today and taught through many activities and events with FCDC. The history of Filipinos in America is a testament to our resilience and strong work ethic. FCDC provides an opportunity for Filipino-Americans and younger generations to learn our history and continue to embrace traditions that hopefully will remain part of their families for years to come.

Good Books & Good Company

October 8, 2026 , In honor of Filipino American history month and our love of reading and as little free library stewardesses, Mary Latonio and I visited Aurelia's Nook in Downtown Toms River, NJ. on Saturday, October 3, 2026, Billy opened her store in honor of Filipino American History month and named it after a daughter she would've had. She specializes in the romance and fantasy genres and has excellent gifts to buy directly from other vendors, such as cups, keychains, stickers, and bookmarks. Billy is originally from Northern New jersey and is the daughter of Filipino immigrants, such as myself. please, show your support by visiting her store and telling everyone you know about it.

By Pearl Hann

Aurelia's Nook
is located on
53 Main Street,
Toms River, NJ, 08753
P: 732-703-6701
https://aureliasnook.com/
aureliasnook@gmail.com

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT
by Ferlie Almonte
Speaker. Author. Life Coach.

WITCHIC: The Fashion Potion

Who says witches have to wear black, ride broomsticks, and have crooked noses? Apparently, this witch missed that memo!
At FCDC of Ocean County's recent outdoor Halloween gathering, I found myself facing a little dilemma. I received a last-minute notice about the event and had absolutely no idea what costume to wear.

Now, I could have simply shown up in ordinary clothes, but where's the fun in that?

So I decided to raid my wardrobe and got creative!

Out came a bright orange jumpsuit adorned with matching ostrich feathers, oversized orange fringed earrings, and a fabulous autumn-inspired witch hat. Since Mother Nature decided to add freezing temperatures to the festivities, I topped everything off with a stylish, full-length black faux leather coat.

And just like that, the FASHIONISTA WITCH was born!

No broomstick. No magic wand. Just a little imagination, a whole lot of attitude, and enough orange to stop traffic!

Then came the unexpected twist.

Children and adults were invited to participate in a Halloween fashion show. As I approached the "runway," someone shouted, "WORK IT!"

Well, they didn't have to tell me twice!

I sashayed down that runway with an attitude, as though I was walking at New York Fashion Week. After all, who says a witch can't be glamorous?
To my surprise and delight, I won BEST FEMALE ADULT COSTUME!

But the real prize wasn't the recognition. It was the reminder of something I've believed for years:

Sometimes, the magic isn't in what you wear. It's in HOW YOU SHOW UP!

How often do we miss opportunities because we feel unprepared? We tell ourselves we don't have the right outfit, enough time, or the right circumstances.
We wait until everything falls into place before allowing ourselves to participate, explore, or shine.

But life rarely hands us a perfectly prepared script.

Sometimes, the best moments happen when we improvise, embrace the unexpected, and give ourselves permission to have fun.

It's learning to replace "I can't" with "Why not?" Turning inconvenience into creativity, uncertainty into possibility, and ordinary moments into extraordinary memories.

Halloween may be about costumes, but here's a thought worth carrying throughout the year:

Don't disguise your confidence. Don't hide your individuality. And never let the fear of looking foolish rob you of the joy of being fully alive!

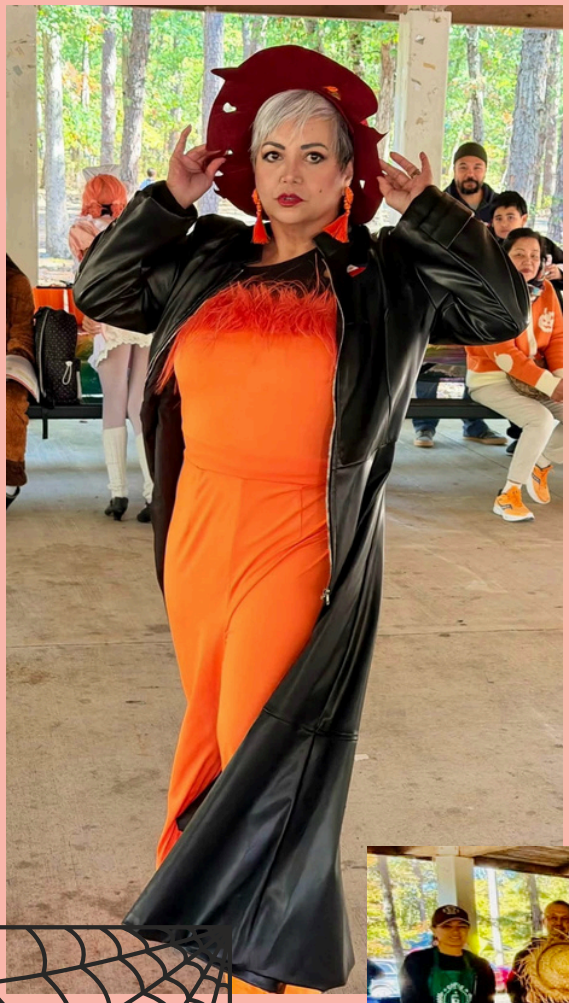
We don't need a special occasion to celebrate who we are. We don't need everyone's approval to express ourselves. And we certainly don't need everything to be perfect before stepping into life's spotlight.

Sometimes, all we need is a little courage, a playful spirit, and the willingness to show up.

So the next time life throws you an unexpected challenge, don't automatically retreat. Get creative. Adjust your attitude. Put on your imaginary witch hat, and WORK IT! Because the greatest magic of all isn't found in a spellbook.
It's found in the power of your attitude.
And remember...
Create your own magic in life. Sometimes, all you need is the confidence to EXPRESS YOURSELF in your unique and authentic essence.

So, what's the secret ingredient in that fashion potion?
A dash of creativity, a sprinkle of spontaneity, and a generous dose of CONFIDENCE!

For more inspiring messages, follow @FerlieAlmonte on social media



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

From Diagnosis to Destiny: A Victor's Message

Five years ago, cancer challenged my body, tested my spirit, and changed my life. But it never took away my dreams, my purpose, or my passion for living!

Today, as a 5-year cancer victor, I celebrate not just survival, but the extraordinary gift of living with renewed purpose, resilience, confidence, and gratitude.

My message this Breast Cancer Awareness Month is simple:

"DO NOT LET A DIAGNOSIS BREAK YOU OR DEFINE YOU. LET YOUR SETBACK BE YOUR SETUP FOR A PURPOSEFUL, IMPACTFUL, AND JOYFUL COMEBACK!"

May we continue to spread awareness, encourage early detection, honor those we have lost, uplift those still fighting, and celebrate every victory—big or small.

Because life is not merely about surviving the storm. It's about discovering how magnificently we can BLOOM after it!

— Ferlie Almonte
5-Year Cancer Victor
Ms. New Jersey Senior America 2023

Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey, Inc.
1976
Save the Date
PNANJ
OCEAN COUNTY SUBCHAPTER
Annual
Thanksgiving Party
SATURDAY
NOV 21, 2026
6 PM
CLARION HOTEL
TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY
Let's give thanks and celebrate
friendship, unity and blessings!

SIMBANG GABI
MASS SCHEDULES
DECEMBER 12–20, 2026
THE FILIPINO-AMERICAN LAY APOSTOLATE
OCEAN COUNTY • DIOCESE OF TRENTON
THEME:
"One Family of Faith under God"
DAY 1
SATURDAY
DECEMBER 12
St. Justin The Martyr
Roman Catholic Church
975 Fisher Blvd.,
Toms River, NJ 08753
732-270-3980
Rosary: 6:30 PM
Mass: 7:00 PM
Celebrant:
Rev. Mark A. Kreder
Choir: BLD Choir
Coordinator:
The Recruits
DAY 2
SUNDAY
DECEMBER 13
St. Dominic
Roman Catholic Church
250 Old Squan Rd.,
Brick, NJ 08724
732-840-1410
Rosary: 6:30 PM
Mass: 7:00 PM
Celebrant:
Father Carlo Calisin
Choir: BLD Choir
Coordinator:
Ortiz Family &
Panerio Family
DAY 3
MONDAY
DECEMBER 14
St. Joseph's
Roman Catholic Church
685 Hooper Ave.,
Toms River, NJ 08753
732-349-0018
Rosary: 6:30 PM
Mass: 7:00 PM
Celebrant:
Father Scott Shaffer
Choir: Tom &
Marissa Miller
Coordinator:
The Campers
DAY 4
TUESDAY
DECEMBER 15
St. John
Catholic Church
619 Chestnut St.,
Lakehurst, NJ 08733
732-657-6347
Rosary: 6:30 PM
Mass: 7:00 PM
Celebrant:
Father Vic Magdaraog
Choir: BLD Choir
Coordinator:
Laarne Wilde
DAY 5
WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 16
The Parish of
St. Therese
450 Radio Rd.,
Little Egg Harbor
Township, NJ 08087
609-296-2504
Rosary: 6:30 PM
Mass: 7:00 PM
Celebrant:
Father Gerry Asirvatham
Choir: Our Lady of
Guadalupe Choir
Coordinator:
Agnes Villanueva
DAY 6
THURSDAY
DECEMBER 17
St. Mary of the Pines
100 Bishop Way,
Manahawkin, NJ 08050
609-698-5531
Rosary: 6:30 PM
Mass: 7:00 PM
Celebrant:
Father Nestor Chavenia
Choir: Our Lady of
Guadalupe Choir
Coordinator:
Carol Dionisio
DAY 7
FRIDAY
DECEMBER 18
St. Monica
Catholic Church
679 W. Veterans Hwy.,
Jackson Township,
NJ 08527
732-928-0279
Rosary: 6:30 PM
Mass: 7:00 PM
Celebrant:
Father Alex Enriquez
Choir: BLD Choir
Coordinator:
Karen Franco & Family
DAY 8
SATURDAY
DECEMBER 19
St. Luke
Roman Catholic Church
1674 Old Freehold Rd.,
Toms River, NJ 08755
732-286-2222
Rosary: 6:30 PM
Mass: 7:00 PM
Celebrant:
Father Michael Kennedy
Choir: Missionary Family
of Christ (NJMFC)
Coordinator:
Payumo Family
DAY 9
SUNDAY
DECEMBER 20
St. Maximilian Kolbe Church
130 St. Maximilian Lane,
Toms River, NJ 08757
732-914-0300
Rosary: 5:00 PM
Mass: 5:30 PM
Celebrant:
Father PJ Alindogan
Choir: BLD Choir
Coordinator:
David Family &
Reyes Family
Special Announcement
The final day of the Simbang Gabi Novena Mass will be followed by
our traditional Christmas Party at the St. Maximilian Kolbe Banquet Hall.
Everyone is warmly welcome!
Parents with young children are asked to bring one wrapped gift
labeled with the child's name for Santa Claus.
Please also bring 2 bottles of soda per family
and one dessert to share.
We look forward to celebrating with you and your family.
Merry Christmas & God Bless!
Simbang Gabi 2026
Ann David
Overall Coordinator
732-912-4146
Father Vic Magdaraog
Spiritual Advisor
ADVISERS
Carol Dionisio
Missy Alberto-Suliguin
Shiela Alberto
Joji Babuschak
908-783-2680

Filipino-American Community & Development Center of Ocean County Inc.

Sow • Root • Grow • Branch

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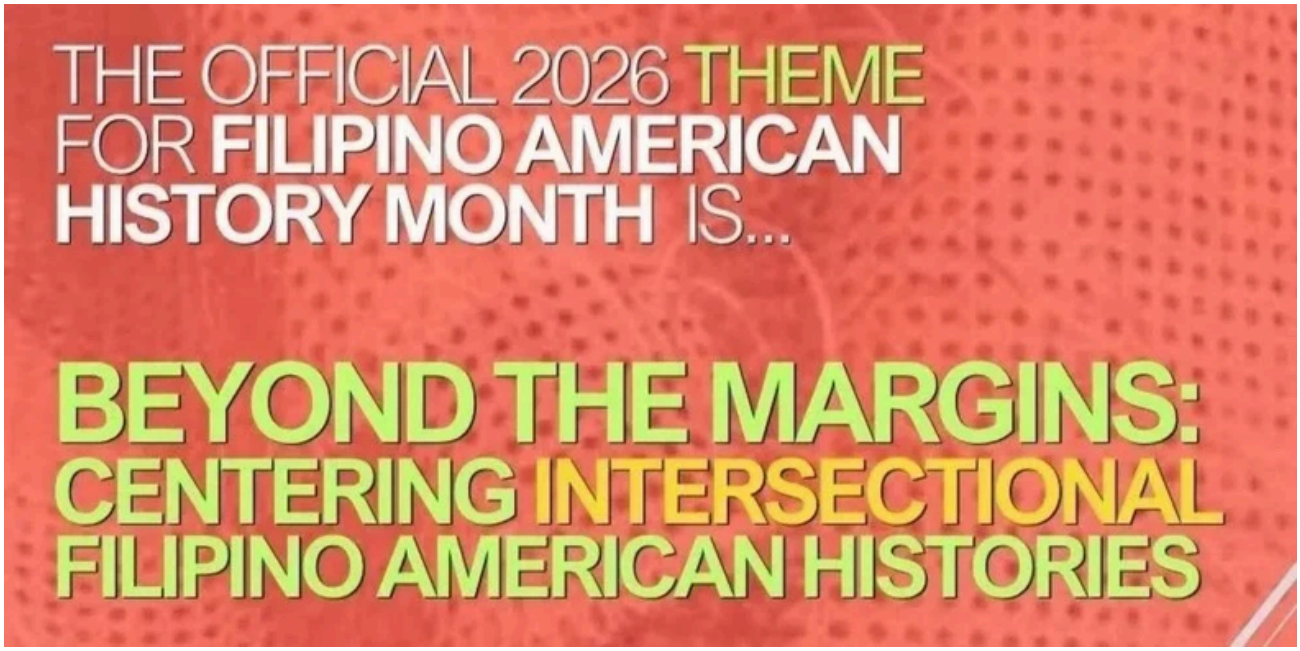

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Toms River, NJ 08754

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Thank you for your support!