



FCDC TODAY

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

Member Spotlight - JULIAN MILES PANERIO



Hi! I'm Julian Miles Panerio from Toms River, originally from Iloilo City, Philippines. My favorite things to do include playing Badminton, watching movies, and doing digital art. I recently moved in 2023 from the Philippines and have been living in Ocean County since then.

Moving to the United States from the Philippines, the biggest struggle for me was balance. Not the type of balance you'd expect with work-life, but rather maintaining my own identity as I try to merge myself with the culture of America. I believe that language holds culture, so what that means in reference to me is preserving my mother tongue. While outside the house English is the language we use to communicate with others, but inside my family and I try to continue speaking our native tongue when we can. Beyond that, keeping up with family and friends from the Philippines also helps me not lose where I originally came from.

CONTENTS

Member Spotlight	Page 1-3
President's Corner	Page 4-5
Editor's Note	Page 6
Attitude Adjustment	Page 7-8
Community Outreach	Page 9
Ads	Page 10

The biggest part of that shared culture, and those that make up my fondest memories come from having a connected life. It is in people where our cultures and traditions are shared, so making sure I dedicate my time to family and friends made up a lot of my life in the Philippines, always having a close and supportive group around me as I grew up.

The summer camp at FCDC was another conduit for which I could share my own culture to others who have not lived it firsthand. Among the games and dances that came straight from the Philippines, I am proud to be open in helping others realize our shared identity through something as simple as camaraderie, where we compete in team games that help make us comfortable with those from our shared ethnic background. Other volunteer work I do includes giving back to the community I have now in Toms River. I help mentor the youth at Bayville Elementary School





for Big Brothers Big Sisters of America every 2 weeks, and also go on trips to Seeds of Service with my school, helping a local food pantry and donation center support our local underprivileged community.

My future plans revolve around Biochemistry, learning the ins-and-outs of the wondrous thing we call nature. Hopefully, as I learn more about it, I can use what I know to improve our everyday health.



OUR
family



President's Corner

by Jasmine Alcíd



Tagsibol

Spring has arrived! Our family recently took a much-needed trip to Washington, D.C., where we enjoyed a refreshing stroll through the city, surrounded by blooming plants and flowers lining the streets. The beautiful scenery filled me with renewed energy. I can almost hear the cheerful conversations of friends as they plan barbecues, parties, and special activities at FCDC.

May marks the celebration of Santacruzán. We are excited to continue our live procession at St. Luke's Church on May 23, honoring the various roles of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our FCDC members will walk through the church grounds beneath arches adorned with flowers. To conclude the event, the FCDC Ensemble will perform specially arranged Filipino songs. We hope you can join us on this meaningful occasion.

Anyway, what is Tagsibol? Tagsibol is the Filipino term for spring. This term refers to the time of growth and budding derived from "sibol" (growth/sprout). As Filipinos, we rarely use the term nowadays as we just say "spring" to describe the season. However, there is no spring season in the Philippines as the country only has two seasons: the dry season and the wet season. It's a blessing we can now experience spring living here in the US along with the vibrant colors of the blooming flowers and the sweet scent of the fresh grass, coupled with the feeling of joy that come with the season of renewal.

Happy Spring to everyone! We will see you soon!

Save the Date

FCDC Ensemble:

practices are ongoing.
May 2, 2-4pm, Episcopal Church
May 17, 2-4 pm, venue TBA

Santacruzán:

May 23, St. Luke's Church
2:00 pm Assembly
2:30 pm Procession
4:00 pm Mass
5:00 pm Socialization

Dr. Ynaya Scholarship Awards: (invite only)

June 27, 6pm

Filipino Camp:

July 13-16

Field Trip:

(for those attending
Filipino Camp):
July 17

SANTACRUZAN
SAVE THE *date*

LIVE procession!
When: May 23, 2026, Saturday
St. Luke's Church,
674 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
Hotluck: Sign-up genius link attached
For any questions please email
fdccteam@gmail.com




Filipino-American Community & Development Center
of Ocean County Inc.
www.fcdcnj.org • Tel: 732-664-8120 • Find us on Facebook



F.A.C.E.S
FILIPINO AMERICAN CULTURAL ENRICHMENT STUDIES
summer camp



CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH'S FUNCTION HALL
415 WASHINGTON ST.
TOMS RIVER, NJ

9-3 PM



13-17 July 2025

RSVP
6/30/26
FCDCTEAM@GMAIL.COM

FREE (FCDC members)
Non-members email us at
fdccteam@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE!




Filipino-American Community & Development Center
of Ocean County Inc.
www.fcdcnj.org • Tel: 732-664-8120 • Find us on Facebook



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

SEASONS

As I was editing the newsletter, I read President Jasmine Alcid's column. She provides a brief lesson on the meaning of spring in the Philippines. It reminded me that we all live on planet Earth, but view it quite differently.

For some of us, the heat of summer calls us to the pool, while others prefer to swim in the natural wonder of the ocean. The winter keeps many of us indoors, while others are living their best lives on ski slopes. Fall foliage brings peace to some, but others might find it to be a nuisance to rake the leaves once they litter the ground. Spring brings gorgeous flowers, but the onset of allergies prevents some of us from stopping to smell them.

Whatever season it is, keep in mind that someone else is looking at it from their personal perspective. Throughout the world, as Ate Jasmine shares in her column, people do not experience the four seasons the same. Similarly, our lives might have common elements, but our experiences are uniquely our own. Our values are different. Some of us are driven by success and are fulfilled when accomplishing achievement after achievement. Some of us find value in solitude, never marrying or having children, but finding joy in hobbies and charity work.

Your life will not look like your neighbor's or your sibling's or your parent's lives. December weather in New York City will not be the same as December in Maui.

Embrace and rejoice in our diversity.

As Louis Armstrong sings, "What a wonderful world."





ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

by Ferlie Almonte
Speaker. Author. Life Coach.



DOES AI MAKE US FAKE?

Filters. Recreating our look. Achieving perfection through Artificial Intelligence.

How could something so easily accessible be so exhausting and frustrating?

Simple. It is indirectly misleading and stressful. We exposed ourselves to scrutiny and judgment. Others find it deceitful.

It all started with me joining the fad of creating cartoon AI versions of ourselves. For fun. I had dolls created in my image and my daughter's in a box. They're cute. Then the addiction set in.

Everyone started creating various images of ourselves on ChatGPT in our efforts to look perfect.

But ChatGPT often recreates versions of ourselves far from being authentic. It thinks it will make us happy seeing ourselves in the perfect way we dream of. Amusing it is. Til it gets annoying.

I asked ChatGPT to create a social media poster from one of my photos. I was so displeased at how it recreated me looking taller, with longer neck, a lot slimmer. It even altered my accessories. I hated everything. That wasn't me. I felt like it was trying to show me what a perfect me need to look like to be admired. Oh no! I am happy with my beautiful imperfections.

I found myself yelling at a robot.

"That doesn't look like me!"

We often preach authenticity. We promote vulnerability.

Yet, what we put out there are filtered, altered versions of us. Not just touched up, like in the old days. Now, there's a yearning for perfect that AI can achieve for us, with one click of a button.

Then we show up in person. The perfect versions people saw in us soon vanished. Judgement happens and then we shrink back to our much less confident selves.

How does self-imposed pressure to look perfect serve us? How does that make us happy, content and grateful?

At a fundraiser, my male co-host said to me “ You actually look like yourself in the poster. Me, I hilariously, look so buffed and handsome in my tuxedo. It doesn’t look like me.” He is actually very attractive in person. But AI thought it needed more refining.

I have no objection to looking beautiful. I enjoy getting dolled up in edgy looking clothes and putting on makeup. I use concealer and contour makeup, but I understand that it has limits to its magic. I strive for just a little enhancement of my God given traits.

Showing up in the best versions of ourselves is far different from a recreated image of what our best must be in the AI world.

AI is incredible for auto-correcting sentences, spelling, or even in helping construct letters, when you give it proper instructions. It can help with graphics too. AI is useful, but not to the point of altering what is real.

We encourage people to be real, and they will be loved for their authentic selves. It starts with showing up unmasked, unafraid of being seen. And loving ourselves with all the flaws that set us apart. Laugh lines we earned from the happy moments of our lives. Scars from the strength and wisdom of our trials, wins and lessons in life, the extra curves we now have for the honor of bringing lives into this world.

Beauty unfiltered is sexy! Being imperfect and unapologetic are marks of true confidence. Owning one’s true value, unedited, is magnificent.

Stay true to who you are. As Bruno Mars puts it, “Coz you’re amazing, just the way you are!”



The Tamargo Sisters, FCDC, and Local Grocers, Generously Donate to a Family Barangay

In December of 2025, Pearl Hann's sister, Shirley Anne Tamargo Tolentino, contacted her through social media. Shirley, the barangay captain of Pangpangdan, Santo Domingo, Ilocos Sur, asked if Pearl could donate books to the Tamargo family barangay. Through the generosity of FCDC, RJ's Sariling Atin and Little Kusina, the second book drive of the year occurred in addition to the annual FCDC Christmas Toy Drive. Through these two drives, the Tamargo family barangay was blessed with donations.

Pearl, with the help of her sister, Jade Tamargo Goswick and her family, said that, "we were able to ship two balikbayan boxes full of books and gently used clothes and shoes that were happily received by my family barangay. Captain Tolentino, who has overseen the family village for three years, was astounded by the generosity. My family and I always look forward to giving back to our community."

Thank you to all who donated books and items! God bless!





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

Welcome

New Members

Maricar Yanong & family

Trizia Arpay & family

Renewal of Memberships

Koppin Family



FCDC
P.O. Box 1418
Toms River, NJ
08754

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

Find us on Facebook.

