



# FCDC TODAY

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

## Member Spotlight - Angela Pontipiedra



Angela was FCDC's Reyna Elena in the recent Virtual Santacruzán 2022. She has been a member of FACES since she was 8 years old. She has precious memories of singing Bahay Kubo, performing Filipino folk dances during the annual Simbang Gabi celebrations, and participating in the fashion show for the variety show, FCDC Rocks. Now, she joins various activities of Barkada

(FCDC's group of Filipino teens) and participates in some volunteer work sponsored by FCDC. Through FACES, she learned the Filipino culture, and some Tagalog words.



Angela is the youngest child of Allan and Elma from Toms River, NJ. She has two brothers, Gabriel and Joshua.

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Angela was a Valedictorian and received the President's Education Awards in recognition of her Outstanding Academic Excellence when she graduated from Intermediate School in 2021. She is now a Sophomore in Toms River High School North, and continues to earn High Honor Roll status in her class. She is an active member in several clubs offered at TR North. She is especially involved in environmental and public services to better our community. She plays lacrosse, swims, and plays instruments like piano and violin. She is part of the North Swim Team, a certified lifeguard, and has worked in the Country Club last summer. She is also a member of John 6/Youth in BLD (Bukas Loob sa Diyos).

At home, she enjoys watching movies, and baking her favorite cookies (her matcha cookies and macarons are really yummy!!!). She also loves shopping and hanging out with friends.

She loves travelling and exploring different cultures around the world. She had an awesome experience with her friends from school when they traveled to France and Italy last spring break.

Angela wishes to make a difference in the world in the future and continues to strive for a better life for all those around her.





## ***LETTER FROM THE EDITOR***

***by Jamie Mariano***



Our hearts go out to the parents, loved ones, educators, and general community of Uvalde, Texas.

My daughter's elementary school recently practiced their routine ALICE (Active, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) drill. When I asked her about it, she explained what her class and teacher had to do. I asked her why she had to hide, and who she was practicing hiding from, and she made gun signs with her hands. I asked her if she's heard of someone breaking into a school with a weapon, and she said, "Yes, in Texas."

In no way did she exhibit fear or concern. I admired her for her strength, and also felt so grateful that her teachers have made her feel safe. However, not everyone can exercise that same calm feeling. Anxiety is real. There are parents, teachers, other school employees, students and many others, who are crippled with fear. I feel for any of you who are mentally drained and physically exhausted from the news.

I didn't want to be the writer of yet another article related to what occurred at Robb Elementary. However, I also don't want another mass shooting to yet again occur.

What can we do, as people who live and work and send our children to school, here in the United States? How can we mobilize for change so that the security of our educational facilities are adequate enough to stop the violence? Does anyone — from any political party or any side of the gun law argument — really have an answer? Because I'm not sure. I hear more problems than solutions because no one can seem to ever agree on what is best.

Is increasing security in the schools' budgets?

Can money be allocated from the states to the schools for this reason?

What matters more to the bottom line?

Will our taxes be raised?

Will schools in lower-income areas even have the chance to add a higher level of security?

Is this a mental health issue or a gun policy issue?

I grew up in the 90s. I grew up with mass school shootings seemingly the norm, or least more common than not. My kids practice ALICE drills as casually as fire drills.

There needs to be more action and less arguing, and this goes beyond gun laws and school safety. Our country has become a competition between political parties, rather than a collection of united states. Who's going to continue to pay for this?



# President's Corner

*By Jasmine Alcid*

Summer is fast approaching and we are all excited for the fun associated with it. However, in the meantime, we are busy with all other activities such as Santacruzán, backyard planting, planning for Summer Camp, and several festivals happening around the county. Our Virtual Santacruzán was just concluded and all participants are found on this special issue of FCDC Today.



On June 18, FCDC will resume the picnic that we all love. It will be at the Winding River Park and it'll be kicked off by Bike Fun starting at 9 am. If you or your family and friends love to exercise your legs, bring your bike and join us. It is a free, family event. Signupgenius link will come out soon. There will be a free tote bag with special items to all finishers of the bike fun.



The picnic is potluck and open to all. Bring a dish from your region in the Philippines or any specialty that you want to share. There will also be a Filipino Trivia challenge and winners will get a prize. Time to sharpen your Filipino knowledge!



Speaking of Filipino challenge, our Filipino Summer Camp will be on July 11-15 for all FACES members who want to learn about Filipino culture and tradition. There will be a variety of activities that kids will learn and experience. But the thing is, it's all Filipino sports, dance, cooking, games, songs, trivia, and costumes. Everything Filipino! This is a special time that we can have our kids "immerse" themselves in a Filipino setting here in Toms River. Our talented teachers will volunteer their time and care for our FACES children. The camp will run from 9am to 4pm. Registration for the camp will be on Signupgenius link which will come out on June 1st.





## FCDC Version



On May 14, 2022, FCDC celebrated the 4th (3rd Virtual) Santacruzán on Zoom as a yearly Filipino tradition.

FCDC President, Jasmine Alcid, welcomed all the participants and thanked everyone including the parents for allowing the children to immerse in the spirit of this beloved tradition done every month of May.

Chairman of the Board, Lorna Tejada, gave a background on the history of Santacruzán in the Philippines including how it is celebrated. She also highlighted wonderful ideas for the children to do to commemorate our Blessed Virgin Mary.

Santacruzán is not complete without the recitation of the rosary. This year, FACES kids were the leaders of the prayer.

After the prayer, a slideshow presentation featuring FCDC members was shown. Santacruzán is composed of Reynas (Queens) representing the BVM, and their escorts. Other Biblical characters like Methuselah and angels are also part of the "procession".

The Zoom event was graced by FCDC Board members, namely, Ferlie Almonte, Celine Villanueva, Maryann Payumo, Lisa Martinez, Christine Lauguico, Jess Alcid & Ross Jacinto.

It was announced that the 2023 Santacruzán will be a live procession. Everybody is invited for next year's celebration. Stay tuned!



*Reyna Elena  
Angela Pontipiedra*



*Haring Constantino  
Kirran McPartlin*



Methuselah  
Augustus Salud



Reyna Banderada  
Aria & Tre Didomenico



Reyna Mora  
Chloe Uy & Adrian Perono



Reyna Fe  
Grace Alcid & Kellan McPartlin



Reyna Abogada  
Anika Tan & Jimmy McCann





Reyna Sheba  
Paulina & Joseph Belocura



Reyna Justicia  
Kateri & Thomas Alberto



Mother of Christ  
Rosie Alberto

Mother of James  
Jed Juliano



Reyna delas Estrellas  
Emma & Joseph Payumo



Rosa Mystica  
Elizabeth Tupaz & Axl Perono



Reyna Paz  
Gillian & Gregory Alcid



Reyna delas Propetas  
Elaina Pamintuan & Connor McPartlin



Reyna del Cielo  
Gia Tonog & Jason Buenaflor



Reyna delas Virgines  
Emma Tupaz & Pax Perono



Reyna delas Flores  
Jayden Chong & Cooper McPartlin



Reyna delos Angeles  
Georgiana & Gabe Satterfield



Reyna Luna  
Therese Alberto & Joey McCann



Angel  
Lorenzo Salud



Angel  
Genevieve Satterfield





**FACES' BARKADA met the first Filipino recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize - Ms. Maria Ressa. The Toms River High School North's Auditorium was dedicated in her honor on May 23, 2022.**

"Having the privilege to speak with someone as influential as Maria Ressa was definitely a huge moment for me. It was extremely inspiring to see and hear her speak so passionately about what she does, especially for young Filipino Americans like me. To see this strong, intelligent woman represent the Filipino American community we have here in Toms River was truly moving. Hearing of her endless accomplishments and goals opened my eyes to the possibilities of my future as I stood in the seemingly same place she once did back in high school. It is amazing to have Maria Ressa as a role model for young students everywhere."

**- Lea Gatpolintan**



It had been such an honor to meet with Ms. Maria Ressa in Toms River High School North this past Monday. Never have I met someone so articulate, eloquent, and graceful with her words, yet so compelling. She spoke very slightly about her high school career as a student at North, leading into her fruitful career as she proceeded to study at Princeton University, followed by her associations with CNN and being the co-founder of Rappler, a leading digital media company in the Philippines. I felt so deeply inspired by her story and saw parallels in her upbringing with mine. This type of Filipino representation in school is more than anything I could have ever asked for. **- Jed Juliano**

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After her many years of hard work with CNN and Rappler, Maria Ressa is a staple and one of the biggest inspirations to not only me but also many other people. Being able to see and listen to her talk of her times and memories in the same school that I go from class to class, is probably one of the weirdest things one can ever experience, as we are both such different people yet come from the same background and stepping stones. To think that one small person such as her has had so much impact on the world is so inspiring. It further motivates me and pushes me to truly try to be the best version of myself to help make the world a better place. Having the honor of singing not only the U.S. national anthem, but also the Philippines' national anthem, for the assembly was very special to me because I was able to celebrate both countries that truly shaped her into the person that she is and the person that I am today.

**- John Claude Yambao**



let's enjoy  
**2nd Bike fun & Picnic**

June 18, 2022 8:00 - 4:00 PM

Winding River Park, 37 West, Toms River, NJ 08755



**FUN  
TIME**

**Free Event**

**Fun & Games for the whole family**

**Potluck! Sign up here:**

**[https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090d4](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090d45afab23a5f94-bike)**

**5afab23a5f94-bike**

**or RSVP on or before June 15 at [fcdcteam@gmail.com](mailto:fcdcteam@gmail.com)**





# A Reflection of my Freshman Year of College

## by *Zachary Lichter*

It's always exciting once you commit to college because you're about to enter a brand new chapter in your life. As a current senior in high school reading this article, you may be feeling excited about going to college because you can't wait to see what lies in the journey ahead. But maybe you could be feeling nervous because this is the first time you're going to be on your own for the first time, and it's up to you on how you want to make the most of your college journey. I felt excited to commit to Catholic University because after I looked at the school in March 2021, I felt like I belonged at that school. I decided to go to Catholic University because I wanted to study history in Washington D.C., and I wanted to go to a Catholic school so I could altar serve. If you ask anyone in college or who went to college, they can tell you why they went to that school, and I'm sure you have a good idea of why you decided to go to the school you will be attending.



When it came to packing for college, we looked at the packing list that my school's housing services provided. My mom also thought of some items that might be useful for me to have in my dorm. Every college should have a packing list of what you should have in your dorm. You can typically find the packing list on the housing services website for your school. Some of the everyday items you would most likely be packing are an alarm clock, blankets, comforters, sheets, bulletin boards, a first aid kit, laundry detergent, and a wastebasket. When I moved into my dorm, my parents took two cars since I had packed a lot of stuff. When my Mom came down to visit me for the Cherry Blossom Festival, I gave her a suitcase full of clothes to take home, and then when I came home for Easter, I also brought another bag full of clothes. When I moved out in May 2022, my Dad and I were able to fit the rest of my stuff in one car.

My experience of living in the dorm was interesting because Catholic University did not only have Resident Assistants (RAs), but they also had resident ministers assigned to all the dorms. Some dorms either had a priest or nun living in the dorm. Your resident ministers were upperclassmen who would send an email to their assigned residents notifying you about events throughout the week. Whenever I saw my resident ministers on campus, I always made conversation with them, and I was able to get to know the three of them individually in a one-on-one situation. When it came to getting to know my RAs, I made conversation with them whenever I ran into them in my dorm. Know that your RAs are not there to get you in trouble; they're there to create a community in the dorm. Like my resident ministers and RAs, I was lucky enough also to get to know the resident priest because we usually ate breakfast around the same time. What was interesting about eating breakfast with the resident priest was that I got to know who he was as a person. He told me many stories about his life, and I did the same. The bad part about my dorm was getting used to sharing a bathroom with people, dealing with my loud neighbors, and streaming everything on my computer. But I learned how to be adaptable, and I plan on taking everything I learned from freshman year into sophomore year.

If there was one phrase that stuck with me throughout freshman year, especially when it came to my classes, it was, "I had to learn some things the hard way." When I arrived on campus, I was getting lost at orientation because I couldn't find the buildings where some of the events were. But if you have any questions, talk to your orientation advisors. Your orientation advisors are there to make your first few days as comfortable as possible. During my first month of freshman year and even at orientation, I learned that college was different from high school. For starters, I learned to read the syllabus carefully because I remember misinterpreting an assignment and mistaking it for another assignment in the same class. Secondly, make sure you order your books ahead of time because some of the books I ordered took a long time to arrive. When it came to my classes, every professor had their own teaching style. Some of the professors I had did a great job with their lectures and laying out their expectations, while others made their expectations a little more challenging. When it came to the amount of homework I had every week, it made me question how people can handle the workload that people receive in the workforce. After the second half of my fall semester, I was able to get a handle on the workload, and I did a good job keeping myself organized. By the time the spring semester started, I already knew what I would expect.



The best part about freshman year was the friendships I created. I met many of my friends through three people who were mutual friends. I started hanging out with all of them every weekend from then on. We would eat lunch and dinner together almost every day, sometimes breakfast. Every Friday or Saturday night, we would hang out in one of the lounges and watch a movie, and on Sundays, most of us would go to mass at the same time. My friends are supportive of me, and I'm supportive of them. I am willing to do anything for them. Over the last eight months, I've enjoyed getting to know all of them, sharing stories, and having some laughs. I couldn't have asked for a great group of friends, and I'm excited to see what sophomore year has in store for all of us.

As you start getting ready for your freshman year of college, take advantage of everything that will be offered to you during freshman year. That means the opportunities that come up in your major, the social events in the clubs you join, and everything else your college offers. College is supposed to be a place where you can rediscover yourself and figure out what you want to do with your life. Whatever happens in college, I know it's going to be great. Best of luck to the incoming freshman of the Class of 2026!



**F.A.C.E.S.**  
*summer*  
**CAMP**

**ART**

**11-15 July 2022**

**9-4 PM**

**RSVP 6/30/22**  
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## **ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT**

**by Ferlie Almonte, Speaker. Author. Coach**

### **THE SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER IN YOU**

WooHoo!!! What a proud and exciting moment it is for graduates and their families. The results of the years of dream chasing, hard work and sacrifices are shining through as graduates march across the stage, their names flashed on a jumbo screen, many with impressive academic recognitions, smiles gleaming as tassles and uniquely decorated caps scream every individual mantra one believes in. The burst of joy and pride cannot be denied. Rightfully so. These are moments well deserved to be celebrated.

Every grad has accolades. Success means differently to everyone. Burning the midnight candle to be able to study and earn a degree, in between jobs to help pay for tuition, is a massive sacrifice and a huge accomplishment. Not everyone has the financial means and support from others. Many are also called for more speciaized and lengthy vocations and professions. Equally, they are exhilarating, when desires and requirements are aligned, fulfilled, and successfully completed.

GRAD is also not just a short name for graduates. Some people graduate from what's not academic. Another way we can see GRAD is through the lens of Growth and Resilience Achieve Destinies.



When you look at it, both Graduation from a University and Rising through Adversity, are both TRIUMPHS of the HUMAN SPIRIT. They Ignite Hope for Great Futures and Open New Possibilities. One could lead to long, exciting and meaningful careers, the other could catapult us to create a life of purpose and impactful legacy.

To GRADUATE is to  
Grow with  
Resilience,  
Audacity and  
Diligence to  
Unlock  
Astonishing  
Talents for  
Empowerment



For more inspiring messages, follow @FerlieAlmonte on social media



# Congratulations

**Jon Joshua F. Gapilango** is a sophomore at Central Regional High School. He was one of the students who earned the prestigious membership of the National Honor Society Garnet Chapter on May 5, 2022. Membership is based on Scholarship, Service, Leadership, and Character. His active participation in community service on various clubs and organization, while maintaining exceptional grades in all courses, enabled him to earn this eminent membership.



**Sisters, Bethany Mariel and Brianna Melanie Suliguin**, rising seniors in MATES, were inducted to the National Honors Society on May 17th. They also recently participated in 2 statewide competitions, NJ Environthon & NJ Chem Olympics. Their team won Second Place overall for NJ Environthon, while taking First Place for team competition for NJ Chem Olympics, as back to back winners, winning the same category from last year.





# Congratulations

## St. Joseph Grade School Performing Arts

**Willy Wonka, Jr. May 20, 21 22 3 day SOLD OUT shows**

**Alex Babuschak - Grandpa Joe**

**Matthew Villanueva - Mr. Bucket**

**Emma Delbaas - Grandma Georgina**

**Anika Tan - ensemble/ghost**

**Gillian Alcid - featured ensemble/orchestra member**

**Jayden Chong - Stage crew**

**Gregory Alcid - orchestra member**

**Grace Alcid - orchestra member**

**Pride of FCDC/FACES**





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# FACES JOINS THE NATURE FESTIVAL AT THE CATTUS ISLAND PARK, APRIL 30, 2022

Nature walk, picnic, live bug race, live  
animal talks, crafts, archery and seining.







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RENATO D. ALBERTO, M.D. • FRISCOLLA M. ALBERTO, M.D.  
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25 MULE ROAD • SUITES A 1 TO A4 • TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY 08755  
TELEPHONE: 732.240.0404 • FAX: 732.244.3555

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WENDY STRATTON, APN

Phone: 732-281-1590 Fax: 732-281-1593  
OceanFamilyGastro.com

**OLIVIA ORTIZ, M.D.**  
**EVELYN TIU, M.D.**

1163 ROUTE 37 WEST, SUITE A-1  
TOMS RIVER, NJ 08753  
732-505-4007 • FAX 732-736-8811

**OSCAR T. ORTIZ, M.D.**  
**RONALD B. VILLANUEVA, M.D.**  
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1163 ROUTE 37 WEST • SUITE A-1  
TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY 08755  
732-736-1000 • FAX 732-736-8811

**Whiting Medical Associates, LLC**  
65 Lacey Rd STE A, Whiting, NJ 08759 Tel. 732-350-0404

**Crisnoel Cervantes, MD \* Mario L. P. Gallardo, MD**  
**Vicente Magsino, Jr. MD \* Danna Dela Cruz, MD**

**Atlantic printing & design**

467 Lakehurst Rd. Toms River, NJ 08755  
732.591.9600 | 732.591.9601 (F)  
775 North Main St. Manahawick, NJ 08050  
609.597.2727 | 609.597.3715 (F)  
info@apadnj.com | www.apadnj.com

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