



FCDC TODAY

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

2014 Bayaning Pilipino Awardee

September 2025

Member Spotlight - Glenda Dar Juan



In God's will, plan and time... that is how I describe my life with so many things to be thankful for. Reflecting on my life, I can't help but feel so blessed and grateful for all the experiences (good and bad), opportunities and people that have made me who I am today.

My name is Glenda, born in Manila, Philippines, the youngest and the only girl among four children of the late Gil Vargas Sr. and Alicia Vargas.

I was a typical kid you can see in the street, blowing bubbles made up of mashed gumamela leaves and flowers, playing Filipino traditional games like patintero, luksong baka, and Chinese garter. I loved to draw, paint, cross stitch and read pocket books when I was younger.

I graduated college at AMA Computer University with my bachelor's degree in Business Administration, major in Management Information System. Right after I graduated, I got employed at the

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same university as a college instructor, and later worked for other colleges and universities. It such a wonderful teaching experience for me that I even took and finished a Masteral degree in Business Administration. For almost seven years I felt love and respect from my students. I felt happiness and accomplished when they passed and graduated.

As time goes by, trying to have a greener pasture as I entered a married life, I applied and got hired by the U.S. Embassy, Manila. A different setting from my previous work, but my dedication and hard work led me to stay for almost 17 years.

Covid hits in year 2020, scariest time for everyone. It was a chaotic moment that I got worried for my family. We felt so unsafe as no one can determine when it will stop. But through prayers, God listens, as another opportunity opens a door not only for me but for the whole family through my husband, Darryl. We were granted immigrant visas, and in year 2022, me, my husband and our three children, Alyson, Dylan and Ellie, flew to New Jersey, USA.

A new beginning, July 31, 2022, my husband's birthday, our 1st day in the U.S. It was a stressful 24-hour flight, but super worth it the moment we saw the welcoming faces of our family here in New Jersey. They helped us all the way and gave us tours to nearby places, like Seaside Heights, Atlantic City, Six Flags, and many more.



With all honesty, my husband and I were nervous as we don't know where or how to start our life again, starting from scratch with our growing children. But God provides, we were blessed to have a very strong support system. Our children did not have any difficulty adjusting to school, they even gained friends immediately. My husband works as a Nursing Assistant while I started working as an Activity Assistant.

We became members of Filipino-American Community and Development Center (FCDC) which my children are actively participating in most of the events. FCDC is a good medium for our children's future.

Looking forward for a better future of our family here in the U.S., I made a big decision, with my husband's support and encouragement, I went to Nursing school and took License Practical Nursing (LPN). It was a challenging and stressful thing for me, as it was not my line of experience, and at the same time I was working, taking care of my family and doing house chores.



family



Love

But God loves me as He always gives me strength to strive harder and gives me wisdom to help me make the right choices and guiding my actions in everyday life. After a year of sleepless nights, I finally finished my schooling and passed my NCLEX. I got my license, thank God! I made it just in time for my eldest who is now in college.

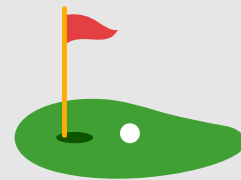
Now I am working as a nurse, still adjusting as a newbie, but it is a fulfilling feeling. A better future lies ahead for my family. Lesson learned: You have to embrace change, adapt to a new environment and be willing to accept challenges, for it brings fresh beginnings and new opportunities. Perseverance and resilience are important in achieving one's goal.





PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Jasmine Alcid



FAMS/FCDC GOLF OUTING

We are thrilled to join the Annual Golf Outing on October 1st at Pine Barrens in Jackson, NJ. This wonderful event is organized by the Filipino-American Medical Society in partnership with FCDC.

For 24 years, FAMS has created this fantastic occasion. We eagerly look forward to collaborating with FAMS for this event, where proceeds will benefit the Dr. Rene Ynaya Scholarship Foundation. See you all there!

FILIPINO-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION AND FCDC HALLOWEEN PARTY

Join Us for a Celebration of Filipino-American History Month!

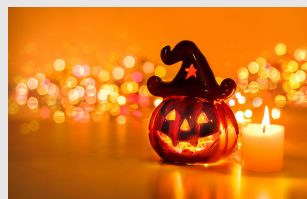
We will honor Filipino-American History Month at our Halloween Party on October 25. We invite you to join us for this festive occasion!

- ****Costume Requirement**** Please wear any costume, but be sure to sign up so we can keep track of attendees.
- ****Signup Link**** Check your inbox for the signup link that had been emailed to you.

The event will feature:

- Games
- Performances
- Prizes
- Dancing (we will have a DJ)
- Indoor trick-or-treating

Don't miss out on the fun!



WHY DO WE CELEBRATE FILIPINO-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH?

Filipino-American History Month (FAHM) is observed in October to commemorate the arrival of the first Filipinos in the continental United States in 1587, highlighting their history and contributions to American society. Founded by the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) in 1992 and officially recognized by the U.S. Congress in 2009, FAHM involves events, exhibits, and community celebrations. The month also celebrates the rich cultural heritage and the ongoing resilience of the Filipino American community, including their efforts in the labor movement and advocating for justice.

Key Aspects of Filipino American History Month

Commemorates First Arrivals:

FAHM marks the landing of the first recorded Filipinos, the Luzones Indios, in Morro Bay, California, on October 18, 1587, from the Spanish galleon Nuestra Senora de Esperanza.

Founded by FANHS:

The Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) first introduced the month-long observance in 1992.

Official U.S. Recognition:

In 2009, the U.S. Congress officially recognized October as Filipino American History Month.

Celebrates Contributions:

Beyond the initial arrival, FAHM honors the significant achievements and cultural impact of Filipino Americans throughout U.S. history and across various fields.

Promotes Justice and Dignity:

The month also serves as a reminder of the Filipino American community's struggles for justice, particularly their role in the labor movement alongside other marginalized groups.

Community-Led Celebrations:

FAHM is a time for communities to gather for events like festivals, exhibits, and educational programs that celebrate Filipino American culture and heritage.





A vibrant purple flyer for a Halloween Party. At the top, a curved banner reads "FILIPINO-AMERICAN COMMUNITY & DEVT. CENTER OF OCEAN COUNTY, INC." in white. Below this, a large dark purple cloud contains the words "HALLOWEEN PARTY" in bold orange letters. The date and time "25 OCTOBER 2025, SAT. 6:00 - 10:00 PM" are centered in white. The location "FUNCTION HALL @ ST. BARBARA GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH 2200 CHURCH RD, TOMS RIVER, NJ 08753" is listed below. Activities include "POTLUCK", "GAMES", and "LINE DANCING", each accompanied by a candy corn icon. "AWARDS FOR BEST IN COSTUME" are also mentioned. A group of cartoon Halloween costumes (mummy, pumpkin, skeleton, witch, dinosaur) is shown on the left. The text "FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION" is in green, followed by "*ON-SITE ART CONTEST*" and "*PERFORMERS*" in green. At the bottom left, it says "CANDY Station for the kids" with a "Trick or Treat" sign. The bottom right features "NO WALK-INS", "SIGN-UP GENIUS ATTACHED", the date "10/17/25", and the email "FCDCTEAM@GMAIL.COM". The flyer is decorated with pumpkins, candy, and ghost icons.

FILIPINO-AMERICAN COMMUNITY & DEVT. CENTER OF OCEAN COUNTY, INC.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

HALLOWEEN PARTY

25 OCTOBER 2025, SAT.
6:00 - 10:00 PM

FUNCTION HALL @ ST. BARBARA GREEK
ORTHODOX CHURCH
2200 CHURCH RD, TOMS RIVER, NJ 08753

POTLUCK  GAMES  LINE
DANCING

AWARDS FOR BEST IN COSTUME



FILIPINO AMERICAN
HISTORY MONTH
CELEBRATION

ON-SITE ART CONTEST

PERFORMERS

CANDY
Station for
the kids 

NO WALK-INS
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FCDCTEAM@GMAIL.COM



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



There is nothing more exciting than the holiday season approaching. It is a time for family, friends, and most of all, glorifying and honoring Jesus Christ.

Not everyone can enjoy the holidays. There are many reasons why it could be more depressing than joyful. Be mindful of those who can't celebrate the way holidays traditionally are.

Here are ways you can support local individuals and families by volunteering and/or donating:

- **Just Believe, Inc.**
- **The Hope Center (House of Hope)**
- **The Children's Home Society of NJ**
- **JBj Soul Kitchen**
- **Ocean of Love**
- **Fulfill FoodBank**
- **Lasagna Love**



If you know of any other organizations to donate to or volunteer, visit the FCDC Facebook page and add your suggestions in the comment section of newsletter post.

SUMMER IN ILOILO

BY: JULIANNA SUOBIRON

This summer I took a trip with my family to the Philippines for three (3) weeks. I visited my family who live in Iloilo which is located in Western Visayas. Our main reason for going there at the time was to surprise my Lola on her 80th birthday.

My favorite part of visiting the Philippines is always spending time with my cousins. I also visited multiple islands, Guimaras and Concepcion Island. Both of these islands have such beautiful beaches. The water at these beaches is so perfectly clear and warm to swim in. I can't even explain how absolutely majestic sunsets and sunrises were in the Philippines. At both of these islands I went island hopping and snorkeling. It was such a cool experience to see all these fish and coral at the sea floor.



The landscape in the Philippines is so much more different than it is here. There is much more greenery and tropical plants. Being in the presence of the Philippines really made me feel like I was home, even though I am a first generation immigrant American. The food there in the Philippines is delicious. Everything is so authentic and you can truly taste all the effort and love that is put into these dishes. I ate so many popular dishes like lumpia, kare-kare, inihaw, batchoy, pancit molo which is my favorite, inasal manok, and a lot of seafood. The seafood there tastes so fresh, I especially ate a lot of crabs and scallops. Of course I ate a lot of Jollibee, I ate Jollibee exactly 15 times when I was there.

Overall, experiencing the Philippines is such an amazing opportunity. I truly encourage any FilAm to visit.





FCDC's BOOK DRIVE

Back in April 2025, Ate Rica from FCDC tasked us with gathering book donations for Learner's Grove, a Pre-K school located in Pasig, Philippines. By May 2025, we were happily overwhelmed with the amount of book donations by FCDC family members and were able to pack one large balikbayan box.

The Latonios and Hanns, who are avid readers and former educators, or come from a family of educators, joined forces for this goodwill project. It was not hard for us to collect the books because, aside from the donations of our generous FCDC members, we are also stewards of our own little free libraries. As stewards of little free libraries, we already have a collection of books from our own libraries and donations from our neighbors and little library patrons.

A little free library is a nonprofit organization with a mission to build community, inspire readers, and expand book access for all through global network of volunteer-led book exchange boxes. Todd Bol pioneered the Little Free Library movement in 2009 by building the first book-sharing box in Hudson, Wisconsin to honor his mother. There are about 200,000 registered Little Free Libraries worldwide with the significant portion located in the US.



We lost count, but it was a lot of books that we were able to fill up a large balikbayan box all the way to the top. We collected books ranging from Pre-K to middle school books, paperbacks to hardbound books, thin to thick books, board books to intermediate level books.

“It takes a village to raise a child,” as an old proverb goes. Our little friends at the Learner’s Grove will have something in their library to start with. The donated books will be shared to the public as well. The book donations will remind these kids that our community supports them and that our teamwork is a tool for a bright and promising future. One book at a time, one child at a time!

By: Pearl Tamargo Hann and Mary Grace Latonio

FOR BOOK DONATIONS, EMAIL US AT FCDCTEAM@GMAIL.COM



Kindly RSVP:
SCAN QR CODE OR EMAIL:
WhiteMassTR@gmail.com



Join us at **St. Luke in Toms River, NJ** to praise and honor St. Luke, the patron saint of Physicians. **Healthcare workers of ALL faiths, their families, and friends are invited.** Please wear your white coat or other work attire. There will be a **blessing of hands.** **Reception to follow.**

ST. LUKE CHURCH IN TOMS RIVER INVITES YOU TO THE 12TH ANNUAL WHITE MASS

for HealthCare Workers



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2025 | 2PM

1674 Old Freehold Rd., Toms River, NJ 08755

Ocean County's Simbang Gabi 2025

Theme: "Jesus is the HOPE for this holy season"

DEC 13

ST. JUSTIN THE MARTYR ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
975 Fischer Blvd
Toms River, NJ 08753
President: Fr. Mark Kreder
Rosary 6:30pm Mass 7pm

DEC 18

THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTHA
3800 Herbertsville Rd
Point Pleasant, NJ 08742
President: Fr. David Swantek
Rosary 6:30pm Mass 7pm

DEC 14

CHURCH OF ST. DOMINIC
250 Old Squan Road
Brick NJ 08724
President: Fr. Carlo Calisin
Rosary 7pm Mass 7:30pm

DEC 19

CHURCH OF ST. MONICA
679 W Veterans Hwy
Jackson, NJ 08527
President: Fr. Alex Enriquez
Rosary 6:30pm Mass 7pm

DEC 15

ST. JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
685 Hooper Ave
Toms River, NJ 08753
President: Fr. Scott Shaffer
Rosary 6:30pm Mass 7pm

DEC 20

ST. LUKE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
1674 Old Freehold Rd
Toms River, NJ 08755
President: Fr. Mike Kennedy
Rosary 6:30pm Mass 7pm

DEC 16

ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
619 Chestnut St
Lakehurst, NJ 08759
President: Fr. Tito Ignacio
Rosary 6:30pm Mass 7pm

DEC 21

ST. MAXIMILLIAN KOLBE CHURCH
130 St Maximilian Ln
Toms River, NJ 08757
President: Very Reverend Edward Blanchett
Rosary 5pm Mass 6:30pm

DEC 17

ST. MARY OF THE PINES
100 Bishop Way
Manahawkin, NJ 08050
President: Fr. Vic Magdaraog
Rosary 6:30pm Mass 7pm

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

SPECIAL DINNER & DANCE PARTY

To benefit the Filipino-American Lay Apostolate of Ocean County



Sister Moon & The Groove

Live Music, Food, Dancing, Raffle Prizes!

Saturday 18 OCT 6-10PM

Knights of Columbus Hall
113 Tennyson Ave, Toms River

For information, contact:
Carol Dionisio 732-278-1941
Joji Babuschak 908-783-2680

Ticket: \$50



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