

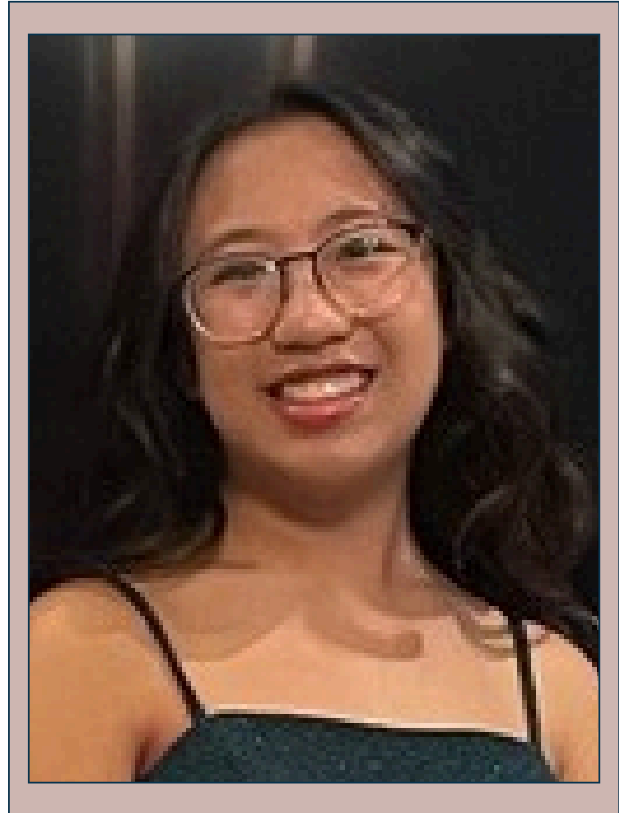


FCDC TODAY

Filipino-American Community &
Development Center of Ocean County Inc.
2014 Bayaning Pilipino Awardee
May 2024

Member Spotlight

Jayden Alexis Tejada-Chong is a vibrant and talented 15-year-old student currently enrolled as a freshman at the STEAM Academy Biomedical Engineering program at Toms River High School East. Born on April 30th, 2009, Jayden has always exhibited a natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, with a particular interest in math and biology. Her academic dedication and discipline are setting a strong foundation for her future aspirations.



A proud Filipino-Chinese American, Jayden values her rich cultural heritage deeply. She believes that understanding her roots is vital to her personal identity and is actively involved in FACES/BARKADA, a cultural organization that celebrates Filipino traditions. Through her participation, Jayden has had the opportunity to engage in various cultural events such as the FCDC Rocks Variety Show, summer camps, and the

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traditional Santacruzán festival. These experiences not only allow her to connect with her heritage but also foster a strong sense of community and belonging.

Family plays a pivotal role in Jayden's life. She is the cherished granddaughter of Lorna Tejada and the late Chito Tejada, and the beloved daughter of Alan and Jona Chong. Jayden shares a close bond with her older brother, Jacob, who is more than just a sibling, he is her partner in crime and her confidant. They enjoy spending time together and creating countless cherished memories. Jayden is close with her family, especially with her four boy cousins—Cooper, Kellan, Connor, and Kirran—and her newest girl cousin, Maia.



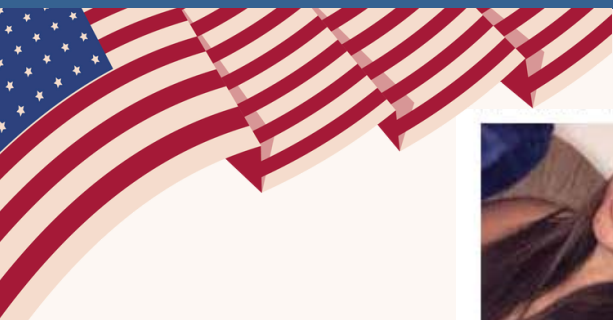
Jayden's talents and interests extend beyond academics and culture. She is an accomplished swimmer, dedicating significant time to training and competing. Her love for swimming is not just a personal pursuit; she works as a swim instructor and lifeguard at the Ocean County YMCA. This role allows her to impart her knowledge and skills to younger swimmers, fostering a sense of responsibility and leadership. Her dedication to the sport is evident in her commitment to both personal excellence and community service. Jayden is also an altar server at St. Joseph's Church, where she finds spiritual fulfillment and a sense of duty. This role reflects her commitment to her faith and her community, illustrating her well-rounded character and dedication to service.

Drawing is a creative outlet for her, providing a space to express her vivid imagination and artistic skills. This hobby helps balance her rigorous academic schedule and offers a well-rounded approach to her personal development. Jayden's culinary tastes are as diverse as her interests. She delights in sushi, acai bowls, and boba drinks, appreciating the unique flavors and textures these foods offer. When she has free time, she enjoys watching her favorite TV shows, including "Gilmore Girls," "The Summer I Turned Pretty," and "Never Have I Ever." These shows provide a mix of entertainment and relatable narratives that resonate with her experiences as a teenager.

Music plays a significant role in Jayden's life, providing both inspiration and solace. Her favorite artists include Taylor Swift, Olivia Rodrigo, Noah Kahan, TV Girl, One Direction, and The Smiths. Each of these artists contributes to a diverse soundtrack that mirrors her multifaceted personality and emotional depth.

In every aspect of her life, Jayden embodies a blend of intellectual curiosity, cultural pride, artistic talent, and athletic prowess. She is a young individual poised for a bright future, continually striving to learn more about her heritage, excel in her studies, and enrich her community. Jayden's journey is a testament to her hard work, dedication, and the support of her loving family and vibrant community.





LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

by Jamie Mariano

I hope all mothers enjoyed their day! I also hope that all college graduates had a joyous commencement ceremony. Many of the class of 2024 did not have a high school graduation ceremony due to the pandemic that canceled a lot of traditions in 2020. Despite it all, we have come so far!

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. In this month's issue, you'll read how FACES/BARKADA members shared our culture at our local libraries!

May is also when we remember our fallen heroes during Memorial Day. Living in Ocean County, our beaches are a big tourist attraction for MDW, the unofficial kickoff to summer. However, let us not forget that the long weekend of beaches and barbecues came with a price -- paid by those who never made it home because they fought literally to the death for our freedoms. If your loved one was one of those who were remembered on this special day, we thank you also for the sacrifice that your families have made to ensure that the USA remains the land of the free! God bless America.





PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Jasmine Alcid



SANTACRUZAN 2024

Our 2024 Santacruzans culminated last May 18, 2024, at St. Luke's Church in Toms River. It was a colorful celebration of the religio-historical tradition being practiced by Filipinos all over the world in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Check out the photos in this issue.

FCDC extends our special gratitude to Fr. Michael Kennedy, pastor of St. Luke's Church for gracing the event.

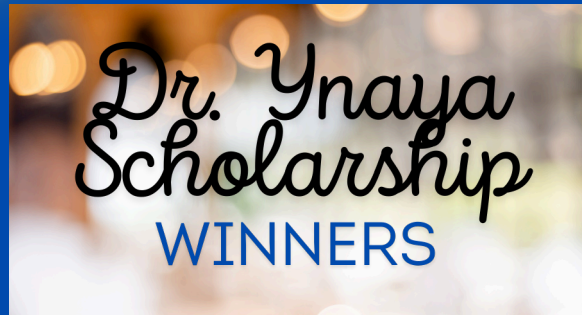
DR. YNAYA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

We are so proud to announce the winners of the 2024 Dr. Ynaya Scholarship Foundation Program. Congratulations to the 7 high school seniors who are all high achieving graduating students. Check out the next page for the complete list.



Thank you to all the benefactors of the program including friends of FCDC and FREED Foundation.

Congratulations!



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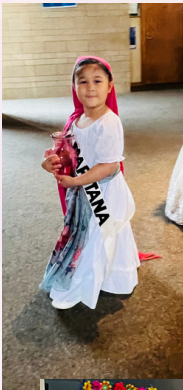
\$ 500
LANCE KING

\$ 500
JULIANNA BATIN

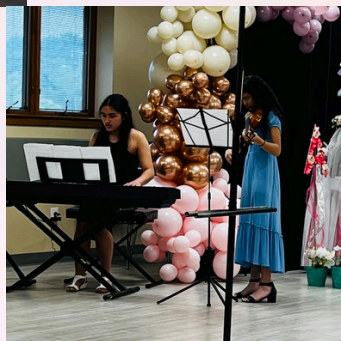
Santacruz 2024



Santacruzian 2024



Santacruzán 2024





Lumpia-

MAKING



May was a busy time for lumpia-making at the Ocean County Library. In celebration of the AAPI Heritage Month, FCDC shared how to make one of the popular dishes in the Philippines - lumpia.

Liah King, 8th grader at Central Regional Middle School, demonstrated the art of lumpia-making at the Berkeley location. She was assisted by her mother, Christina King.

All participants had a chance to make their own and eat it, too! Yum!



Ella Jacinto, a sophomore at MATES, showed the techniques of wrapping the lumpia at the Lacey Branch on May 14. Her mom, Jaye Jacinto, was present to support her. Everyone in attendance enjoyed the presentation.

Thank you to our amazing FCDC youth for teaching our community.





We are looking for

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for the Summer FILIPINO CAMP.
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responsible and love to have
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F.A.C.E.S. Summer CAMP

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ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

by Ferlie Almonte

Speaker. Author. Life Coach.

COURAGE METER

The month of May. So many graduations happening simultaneously in many parts of the world. Super exciting time! Social media is flooded with graduation photos and posts, mostly from proud parents. Rightfully so. Facebook has turned into a ginormous Brag Book. What a joyful and proud moment it is for the graduates, their families, teachers, mentors and other raving believers!

When all the hype has settled down. There comes the question, "What's next?" It is an easy query to answer for those stepping into the next level of the traditional academic structure, but for those graduating from high school, college, or those who desire or dare to take the roads less traveled, where one's passion and vision are out of the mold, where grit, tenacity and audacity are imperative, it could be terrifying. In life, careers, or relationships, there are no guarantees. Sink or swim. Pass or fail. Win or Learn.

After graduation from high school or more advanced learning, we, more seriously, begin to be the architects of our future, guided by our parents, mentors, coaches, idols or by a quiet but persistent and relentless whisper within our souls to boldly follow passions leading to an

occupation, vocation, or innovation. The end result is seldom definitive. Life throws many curve balls, tests, and challenges that define our strength, character and the intensity of our hunger to achieve certain goals. These are the moments when we will be faced with the decision to throw in the towel or keep fighting for our dreams.

There is a powerful quote by Anais Nin that best describes our critical and life transforming moment. "LIFE SHRINKS OR EXPANDS IN PROPORTION TO ONE'S COURAGE." Should we stay in our comfort zone and follow the easier and tested way to an admirable, respectable goal? Or are we willing to take a chance, heed our calling, hang on to faith, design and put into implementation our own remarkable and trailblazing idea?

Either plan is right. Many people will try, fail, reflect, redirect, reinvent. Whatever path we take, we must never give up. Let us stretch our capabilities and possibilities.

We were not made to be mediocre. We were made for greatness, progress and success.

Graduation is not the last stop. It is the beginning of our journey to massive possibilities for greatness that we, and the future generations, will leave on historic and futuristic Brag Books!



My Experience at Santacruzán

by Zachary Lichter

The members of the Filipino-American Community and Development Center (F.C.D.C.) celebrated Santacruzán on May 18, 2024.

What is Santacruzán? It is a celebration of the Holy Cross, which was discovered by St. Helena and her son, Constantine, who became the first Christian emperor of Rome. Santacruzán usually takes place in the month of May because it is the month of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The tradition of Santacruzán involves a procession on the street followed by a mass at the end. Toward the end of the procession, the participants are handed a red or white rose that they will place by the Statue of Mary inside the church. Filipinos observe this tradition by having girls wear filipinianas and by boys wearing barongs.

The characters of Santacruzán this year included Methuselah, played by Jomar Batallones. The Reynas are a representation of Mary, and the Reynas for this year's Santacruzán included Reyna Banderada (Queen with a banner), Reyna Fe (Queen of faith), Reyna Esperanza (Queen of Hope), Reyna Caridad (Queen of Charity), Reyna Abogada (Queen and defender of the poor and oppressed), Reyna Sentenciada (Queen of the Convicted), Reyna Esther (Queen Esther), Reyna Sheba (Queen of Sheba), Reyna delas Estrellas (Queen of the Stars), Reyna Paz (Queen of Peace), Reyna delas Propetas (Queen of the Prophets), Reyna del Cielo (Queen of Heaven), Reyna delas Virgines (Queen of the Virgins), Reyna delas Flores (Queen of Flowers), Reyna delos Angeles (Queen of Angels), and Reyna Candelaria (Queen of Candles).

A boy wearing a barong escorted each girl who played a Reyna. The other characters included Samaritana (Female Samaritan), played by Patricia Belocura, and St. Veronica, played by Kateri Alberto. The representations of Mary included Mary of Magdala (Mary Magdalene), played by Gillian Alcid; Mary, Mother of Christ, played by Lucy Alberto; and Ramila Rose Lim, played Mary, Mother of James. The Divina Pastora (Divine Shepherdess) was played by Gigi Satterfield and Hannah Arabiana. played Rosa Mystica (Mystical Rose). Eight angels carried a letter spelling the word "Ave Maria." Jayden Chong was Reyna Elena (Queen Elena) and Lorenzo Salud was Constantine.

This year's Santacruzán was at St. Luke's in Toms River. The participants met in the event room, where they all assembled. I was an escort for Reyna delas Virgines, played by Therese Alberto. Esther Tambor, Mae Alberto, Lorna Tejada, Lorna Alfaro, and Arlene Tan all prayed a decade of the Rosary.

Since it was raining, we processed inside St. Luke's. The procession began in the event room, went down the hallway, and concluded by the altar in the church. After the procession, F.C.D.C. joined the parishioners of St. Luke's for the 4:00 Vigil Mass to celebrate Pentecost. Gregory Alcid, Joseph Payumo, and I altar served the mass with two altar servers who go to St. Luke's. The festivities concluded with a reception in the event room.

What was great about participating in Santacruzán for the second year in a row was seeing my Catholic faith and my Filipino heritage come together in one event. It's not every day that Filipino-Americans come to church dressed in their barong or filipiniana and pray to Mary. But what's great about Santacruzán is that it allows people to express their faith and culture, and parents, in particular, get to pass down their traditions to their children. What's also great about Santacruzán was that I honored my lolo, the late Dr. Rene Ynaya, by wearing his barong. My lolo was big on celebrating his culture, and he would've enjoyed watching the procession and seeing the parents pass down their traditions to the next generation.

Santacruzán is an event that celebrates what it means to be Filipino. It includes wearing traditional clothing expressing their Catholic faith, for most of them, expressing their love for the Blessed Virgin Mary, and allowing parents to pass down their traditions to the next generation.



Hermano/Hermana Mayor Mr. Steve & Mrs. Maria Gallagher



Santacruzian Line-up

1. Methuselah - A bearded man, bent with age, depicted as riding a cart and looking preoccupied with toasting grains of sand in a pan over fire (Jomar Batallones)
2. Reyna Banderada - A young lady dressed in long red gown carrying a yellow triangular flag (Rosie Alberto and Thomas Alberto)
3. Reyna Fe - symbolizes virtue of faith. She carries a cross. (Princess Cunanan and Kyle Galdon)
4. Reyna Esperanza - symbolizes virtue of hope. She carries an anchor. (Natalynne Tee and Axl Perono)
5. Reyna Caridad - symbolizes virtue of Charity. She carries a red heart. (Ciana Corliss and Kellan McPartlin))
6. Reyna Abogada - the defender of the poor and the oppressed. She wears a black graduation cap (toga) and gown and carries a book. (Julianna Suobiron and Connor McPartlin)
7. Reyna Sentenciada - has her slim hands bound by a rope. She is the symbol of the innocents who have been convicted. (Anika Elyze Tan and Gregory Alcid)
8. Reyna Esther - the biblical Jewish who secured her countrymen from death and destruction. She carries a scepter. (Aria Imperial and Jarod Suobiron)
9. Reyna Sheba - She carries a jewelry box. (Emma Payumo and Gabriel Satterfield)
10. Samaritana - the woman who Christ spoke to at the well. She carries a jug on her shoulder. (Paulina Belocura)
11. Veronica - the woman who wiped the face of Jesus. She carries a bandana printed with the three faces of Jesus. (Kateri Alberto)
12. Mary of Magdala - she carries a bottle of perfume (Gillian Alcid)

Santacruzsan Line-up

13. Mary, Mother of Christ - she carries a handkerchief (Robyn Alberto)
14. Mary, Mother of James - she carries a bottle of oil (Ramila Rose Lim)
15. Divina Pastora - she carries a shepherdess staff. (Gigi Satterfield)
16. Reyna delas Estrellas - she carries a wand with star (Ava Lazaro and Kirran McPartlin)
17. Reyna Paz - she carries a symbol of peace (Rihanna Mclining and Michael Wall)
18. Rosa Mystica - she carries a bouquet of roses (Hannah Arabiana and Simon Villanueva)
19. Reyna delas Propetas - she carries an hourglass (Gia Tonog and Alex Babuschak)
20. Reyna del Cielo - she carries a flower (Alexa Lazaro and Cooper McPartlin)
21. Reyna delas Virgines - she carries a rosary (Therese Alberto and Zachary Lichter)
22. Reyna delas Flores - she carries a bouquet of flowers. (Gabielle Zafra and Miguel Zafra)
23. Reyna delos Angeles - dressed in white and bears a bouquet of flowers (Chloe Uy and Adrian Perono)
24. Reyna Candelaria - she carries a long lit candle symbolizing the Purification of Mary (Grace Alcid and Michael Jurilla)
25. Candle bearer - Otto Alberto
26. Ave Maria Angels (Genevieve Satterfield; Marinelle, Gabrielle and Rayden Latonio; Christel Garduque, Zander Jurilla, Alden Wall and James Wall)
26. Reyna Elena and Constantino - (Jayden Chong and Lorenzo Salud)



KAPWA KO Ni Sisa Batongbacal

Kapwa ko.

Kapitbahay, kahangga sa bakuran,
Sa palengke'y kabunguan ng katawan,
Sa pagkain sa karinderya ay kasabayan,
Sa dyip o traysikel ay katabi sa upuan,
Kapwa-pasahero sa eroplano o tren,
Kinantahan ng hapi birthday na kaibigan,
Kadasalan sa simbahan, ninong, ninang, inaanak
Ate't kuya, kahit hindi kamag-anak.

Sapagkat hindi tayo mabubuhay ng mag-isa,
Lalaging may bahagi ang iba
Sa buhay natin at mga pagpapasya:
May nagtanim sa prutas na ating kinain,
May nangawil sa inihaw nating isda;
May gumiling ng bigas o mais,
May tumahi at naglilip ng ating kasuotan,
May naglagay ng bubong sa ating tahanan,
May guro tayong sinusundan,
May gagamot sa ating mga karamdaman.

At pansinin,
Kapwa-obrero,
Kapwa-empleyado,
Kapwa-babae,
Kapwa-Pilipino—
Hindi ba't sa kahulugan, ay parehas o pantay?
Samakatwid, hanggang tayo,
Ang tao ay kumikilala, sa ating kapwa-tao,
May puwang pa kaya ang pagmamalabis?

Mayo 27, 2024



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Jamie Mariano at
jamiefcdctoday@gmail.com

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AW Allergy & Asthma Center of Lacey, LLC
Janet Ang Tumalian, M.D.
Board Certified, American Board of Allergy & Immunology
606 LACEY ROAD
FORKED RIVER, NJ 08731
609-693-6464
525 ROUTE 70, SUITE 3C
BRICK, NJ 08724
732-370-8006

OFG OCEAN FAMILY GASTROENTEROLOGY
RANGAS LOKCHANDER, MD
NEIL NAGARIA, MD
JOSE R SUATENGCO, MD
REKHA VARGHESE, PA-C
GABRIELLE CORPUZ, PA-C
WENDY STRATTON, APN
Phone: 732-281-1590 Fax: 732-281-1593
OceanFamilyGastro.com

**ALBERTO, ALBERTO, GABRIEL & JIMENEZ
MEDICAL ASSOCIATES, P.A.**
INTERNAL MEDICINE AND DIAGNOSTIC DIVISION
RENATO D. ALBERTO, M.D. • PRISCILLA M. ALBERTO, M.D.
TIMOTHY C. GABRIEL, M.D. • MARTIN Z. JIMENEZ, M.D. • VIRGILIO R. MARINAS, MD
MELISSA M. ALBERTO-SULIGUI, MGR. • SHEILA M. ALBERTO-SOARES, MLT
25 MULE ROAD • SUITES A 1 TO A4 • TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY 08755
TELEPHONE: 732.240.0404 • FAX: 732.244.3555

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.
FRANCISCO D. CRUZ, M.D.
1163 ROUTE 37 WEST • SUITE A-1
TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY 08755
732-736-1000 • FAX 732-736-8811

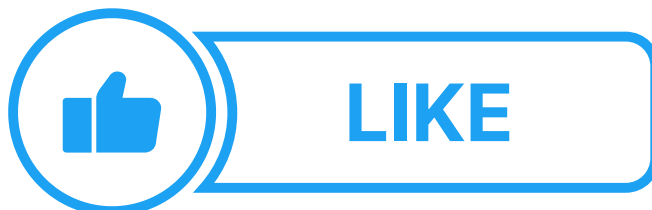
Atlantic
printing & design
467 Lakehurst Rd, Toms River, NJ 08755
732.557.9600 | 732.557.9601 (f)
775 North Main St, Manahawkin, NJ 08050
609.597.2727 | 609.597.3715 (f)
info@apadnj.com | www.apadnj.com
f i l n

Whiting Medical Associates, LLC
65 Lacey Rd STE A, Whiting, NJ 08759 Tel. 732-350-0404
Crisnoel Cervantes, MD * Mario L. P. Gallardo, MD
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FCDC
P.O. Box 1418
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