



## IN THESE PANDEMIC TIMES...

### THE COMMUNITY PANTRY PHENOMENON

If indeed, as John Milton wrote centuries ago, every cloud has a silver lining, a bright silver lining suddenly appeared in our country: the community pantry.

So that future generations of Paulinians may know, this is what happened:

#### **Beyond charity': How the Maginhawa community pantry started it all**

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 19)



Patricia Non, a resident of Quezon City, had to temporarily close down her small business due to the series of lockdowns imposed in Metro Manila. But what started as a small gesture for others who are also grappling with the pandemic created a ripple effect beyond what she had intended.

Speaking to CNN Philippines' *The Source* on Monday, Non shared what made her put up what is now known as the Maginhawa community pantry, which was eventually replicated across different cities and barangays where residents can donate basic goods.

*"Before po ito mangyari, before ko mabuo, nagkaroon ng lockdown sa area namin before mag-ECQ (enhanced community quarantine), then three weeks akong nasa bahay lang, ang small business ko affected talaga,"* she said. *"Walang masyadong pumapasok na income, sakto lang yung meron ako para sa every day na gastusin."*

[Translation: Before this happened, before I set this up, there was a lockdown in our area even before the ECQ, then I was forced to stay at home for three weeks so my business was really affected. I had no other streams of income and I only had enough for the day's expenses.]

But Non thought of others who had it worse.

*"Sabi ng pamilya ko, ang goal lang natin is mabuhay, to survive, magpalakas, kung may sakit, magpagaling. Ginawa ko naman siya pero hindi mawala sa isip ko na may mga taong hindi kayang mag-stay safe at stay home kasi nakasalalay ang pangkain nila sa everyday na livelihood,"* she said.

[Translation: My family told me that our only goal must be to survive and to stay healthy, and to recover if we are sick. I tried to do it but I can't erase from my mind how others could not afford to stay safe and stay home because their daily food depends on their livelihood]

*"After ng lockdown, sinet up ko ang community pantry bilang pantawid gutom sa mga Pilipinong ganito ang nararanasan,"* Non shared.

[Translation: After the lockdown, I decided to set up the community pantry to help ease the hunger of Filipinos going through difficult times.]

The Maginhawa community pantry has been operating for six days now, Non shared. People are reminded to follow their simple reminder: "Magbigay ayon sa kakayahan, kumuha ayon sa pangangailangan" (Give what you can, take only what you need).



Those who also intend to line up and donate goods must wear their face masks, face shields, and observe social distancing.

Other makeshift community pantries inside and outside Metro Manila have also popped up in the past days. Some residents in Quezon City, Marikina City, Manila and Rizal, and even as far as Laguna and Boracay have allotted a small space within their barangays to allow others to take or drop off basic items such as canned goods, rice and vegetables.

Non said the replication of this initiative proves that poverty and hunger in the Philippines amid the pandemic cannot be treated as an "isolated case." It also shows that people can help each other especially at a time when a measly subsidy of ₱1,000 would simply not suffice.

*"Yun naman po ang purpose niya. Hindi naman po siya charity na isa lang ang tinutulungan at nililigtas natin ang mga tao. Hindi po. Salubungan ang pagtutulongan,"* she said.

[Translation: That's the purpose of the community pantry. It's not charity that only helps one person. Everyone is encouraged to help out.]

*"Sana po hindi tayo magsawang tumulong sa kapwa natin, lalo na kung may extra tayo. Lawakan po ang pag-intindi, buksan ang puso at isipan dahil iba-iba ang struggle ng mga tao,"* Non added. *"Buksan ang isipan natin sa kalagayan ng kapwa at ng bansa natin."*

[Translation: I hope we will never get tired of helping our neighbors, especially if we have resources. Let's widen our understanding, open our hearts and minds because we never know the struggle of others. Let's keep our fellow Filipinos and the current state of our country in mind.]

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The idea captured the imagination and awakened the Filipinos' native, albeit at times forgotten, sense of helpfulness; and soon, community pantries sprang up in very many locations, in NCR, and later as far as the Visayas and Mindanao.



Unfortunately, there seems to be some truth in the saying there is a fly in every ointment. The well-intentioned community pantry project was red-tagged by Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr., spokesperson of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-Elcac).

The general red-tagged Maginhawa Community Pantry organizer Ana Patricia Non and contended that similar setups had links with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA), thus the need for the task force to "check" their activities.

The "checking" has intimidated the organizer of a community pantry in Pandacan, Manila, into closing it down. She announced her decision

online on Thursday, saying she felt uneasy after policemen came to the site on Monday and told her to fill out a form specifying personal details. Fortunately, the military leadership did not support Gen. Parlade's contention and expressed support of the community pantries.

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Civic and religious organizations have continued to open and support community pantries.

SPU Manila is one of these organizations. Sr. Ma. Evangeline Anastacio, SPC, University President, posted pictures of the SPU Manila Community Pantry and appealed to the school community and alumni for support. The alumni have responded generously.



Here is Sister's account of Day 2 of the community pantry: Day 2: The Community Pantries spread throughout the country is truly a manifestation of God's compassion for humankind... a present-day reality of the multiplication of the loaves and Jesus feeding the multitude so that no one will remain hungry.

I'm truly overwhelmed by the generous response of our Paulinian alumni, parents, faculty, staff, students, relatives, and friends to our call for support. What we

gave out this morning has been replenished almost immediately and even more. May God bless all the kind-hearted donors.

Thank you, Lord, for the love and compassion that you put in everyone's heart. ❤️❤️❤️😊😊😊



## PAULINIAN EDGE HOLDS WEBINAR

The Paulinian EDGE (Excellence through Digitized Education) held a webinar on “The World of Texts: Textual and Content Analysis” at 2:00-5:00 P.M. on 24 April 2021.

Resource speaker was Ms. Claudine Mariano-Alhambra, Chair, Communication Program of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education.



## PEAC HOLDS USAPANG BAYANIHAN



Members of the Private Education Assistance Committee held an “Usapang Bayanihan” via zoom on 19 April 2021. Sr. Ma. Evangeline Anastacio, SPC, SPU Manila President, was in attendance, as was Sr. Mercedes Ang, SPC, President of St. Paul University Philippines.

## CONDOLENCES

The Paulinian Family condoles with

Corazon Cabrera-Katigbak (HS 1970) on the passing of her sister, Mitch Cabrera-Samonte;  
Pilar Almira (HS 1970) on the death of her nephew, Rimo;  
Rosanna Ang (AB 1977) on the passing of her mother, Zenaida;  
Delia Sayoc (BSN 1969) on the death of her siblings, Mario and Hector.

