



Arnold Janssen Kalinga FOUNDATION

Quarterly Newsletter of the Arnold Janssen
Kalinga Foundation Inc.

Inside the Issue

EJK ORPHANS NURTURED BY LOVE, NATURE, & COMMUNITY *by Ludy Duran*



PROGRAM PAGHILOM'S EJK ORPHANS
PLAY A GAME DURING THEIR FIRST
OUTING AT THE LA MESA ECO PARK,
QUEZON CITY ON MARCH 26

| PHOTO: RAFFY LERMA

“Salamat po at nakasama ako dito; masaya po ako at may bagong nakilala.” (Thank you for including me; I am happy and have met new friends).

This sentiment may seem so simple, but coming from a child who had lost a parent from an extra-judicial killing (EJK), it is practically miraculous.

Nature + laughter

Nineteen younger children, aged 5–12, explored La Mesa Ecopark in Quezon City on March 26. They were able to connect with nature and forge new friendships among themselves. It was a day of relaxation, games, fun, and food. Taking selfies and sharing jokes, they felt like children again—needing protection, love, and care.

Initially, some of the EJK orphans were shy and hesitant to participate in the prepared games, but gradually, they became more at ease. Many expressed their gratitude for having been able to spend the day together.



YOUNGER ORPHANS OF PROGRAM
PAGHILOM HOLD UP GROUP ART TO
REPRESENT THEIR TEAM FOR
THE DAY. | PHOTO: RAFFY LERMA

Program Paghilom also organized an activity on April 22 – 23 for the older orphans, aged 13–20, at Mt. Purro Nature Reserve Park in Antipolo, Rizal. Willing to take more physical risks, thirteen teens hiked up a mountain, did a river walk, shared their thoughts, and swam to their hearts' content!

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Note from the Founder

NOTHING ORDINARY ABOUT LOVE

“I am not capable of doing big things, but I want to do everything, even the smallest things, for the greater glory of God.”

- St. Dominic Savio

After the great liturgical seasons and celebrations of the Church, we are back in what is called ordinary time. It seems a bit like a letdown. We wonder, “What’s so special about the ordinary?” Ordinary actually comes from the Latin root for “rule”. What are the usuals, the default, the norms? This is the ordinary. What should be ordinary for us at the Foundation? What should be our default?

For us at the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation, the call is to do the mission in a special way during ordinary times, to do ordinary things in a way that is plus or extra.

This month of June, we are specially inspired by the Sacred Heart that beats life-giving blood into our souls. This reality of God’s love is truly what powers everything that we do. On a human level, the predictable and timed beating of our hearts is easy to take for granted. In the same way, it’s exactly the predictability and the regularity of Divine Providence that keep the mission alive. It’s anything but ordinary!

More than ever before, we act with urgency so that the Sacred Heart will inflame more hearts with its love among our dear street dwellers and EJK families, as well as partners in mission. “May the Heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all people!” ■

TWO EJK ORPHANS OF PROGRAM PAGHILOM GET TO ENJOY EACH OTHER'S COMPANY AND NATURE DURING A VISIT TO THE LA MESA ECOPARK IN QUEZON CITY. | [PHOTO: RAFFY LERMA](#)



Isn't that what gives love away? The little details that surprise us aren't so ordinary when you realize the thought and attention put into them. This is why having premium Sinandomeng rice is ordinary for us at the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center or why a buffet set-up with unlimited rice for our dear homeless is SOP for us.

In this issue, we share stories of our usual program activities, yet each one is unique. It may seem like routine, nothing new, but it's the regularity and consistency of what we do that make them powerful and life-changing.

Isn't that what gives love away? The little details that surprise us aren't so ordinary when you realize the thought and attention put into them.

Rev. Fr. Flavie Villanueva, SVD

THE UNEXPECTED EFFECT A MANDATORY OUTREACH HAD ON ME

by JR Torres

The day I volunteered at the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center, there were many volunteers, including a group from Meat Plus who were also doing their outreach. Little did I know, while I had previously questioned my faith, this experience with the homeless would help me regain some of my spiritual confidence.

The presence of so many volunteers made the workload feel lighter since there were many assisting. However, considering so many street dwellers coming for food and showers that day, the work didn't actually feel light. I can't even begin to imagine how challenging it would have been without the Meat Plus volunteers.

Initially, I assisted at station 6, where I served the food. Later on, I moved to station 2, where I recorded the weight of street dwellers coming in. Finally, I took over station 7, where I distributed giveaways and said goodbye to the homeless.

Life lessons learned

Throughout my stay, I had the opportunity to observe the stations

other than the ones I actually manned. Interestingly, I found myself drawn to the coaching area, where I gained valuable insights and life lessons. One of the most important lessons I learned from the visit is that no matter how difficult life may seem, we should never give up and have faith in God's plans for everyone. I realized that God doesn't present challenges that are insurmountable, and this belief gave me a renewed sense of hope and joy.

Additionally, I discovered how important it is to consistently act in a positive manner. Expressing gratitude and performing simple acts of kindness such as picking up trash, saying thank you for everything, and showing respect to elders, can have a profound impact on everything around us. I realized how important it is to always strive to be a good person and to spread positivity in every way we can.

What I felt serving in AJKC

Personally, this outreach activity stands out as the most meaningful one I've had so far.

Despite also being the busiest one I've attended, with around 200 beneficiaries served during that Kalinga day, it surprisingly didn't feel exhausting. Even though the physical demands were high due to the number of beneficiaries to be served, there was something about the experience that made it feel less tiring. The valuable life lessons I learned were amplified by seeing the joy and smiles on the faces of the homeless, adding to their transformation from dirty and worn-out to clean and refreshed. Seeing them brought me a sense of being mentally and spiritually refreshed, overshadowing any exhaustion I might have experienced.

'Indescribable'

The indescribable feeling I experienced during past outreach efforts is there; I find it impossible to put it into words. This feeling has fueled my desire to experience it more—it's addictive but in a positive way. Participating in this outreach has transformed me, making me a better person and giving me a renewed purpose in life. It has also reshaped my perspective on the world.



JR FERRIES PLATES OF FOOD TO THE HOMELESS AT THE MEALS AND BONDING AREA DURING A REGULAR "KAIN-LIGO" DAY AT THE AJ KALINGA CENTER IN TAYUMAN, MANILA.

WAITING FOR THEIR TURN TO SHOWER, STREET DWELLERS RECITE THE KULTURANG KALINGA HOUSE RULES EVERY HALF HOUR.

| PHOTO: JR TORRES



As I reflect on my own emotions, I wonder if other volunteers share similar sentiments when they do volunteer work. Do they also have the same heartfelt feelings I experienced? Moreover, I'm curious to know what the beneficiaries think of the volunteers. These questions have occupied my thoughts since leaving AJKC, and I'm eager to find some answers.

Initially, this task felt like an obligatory academic requirement. However, over time, I began to genuinely consider its value and have now decided to actively seek more ways to volunteer in the future. In fact, I have already registered for some upcoming volunteer programs, and this time, my involvement will be heartfelt, driven by a genuine desire to make a positive impact rather than by solely complying with a school requirement. ■

JR Torres found out about AJ Kalinga Foundation Inc. through one of its partners, iVolunteer Philippines.



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ARNOLD JANSSEN KALINGA CENTER

1 meal	1 day	1 week	1 month	1 year
PHP 85	PHP 25,500	PHP 76,500	PHP 306,000	PHP 3,672,000
1 meal & shower	300 meals & showers	900 meals & showers	3,600 meals & showers	43,200 meals & showers

**We serve an average of 250-300 street dwellers 4x a week.*

Helping Manila's street dwellers start anew, begins with 1 meal.



Teresita C.
GCash 09175460829
AJ Kalinga Foundation Inc.
AUB Savings: 082-11-000496-2

Be a partner-in-mission!



ajkalingafoundation@gmail.com | 0961-240-8692 |
ajkalingafoundation.org

The 5Ps of how to help: Pesos, Products, Presence, Promotions, & Prayers help the most vulnerable sectors of society, the homeless & the wounded re-create themselves.

EJK ORPHANS NURTURED BY LOVE, NATURE, & COMMUNITY by Ludy Duran

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'Stay with us, O Lord'

Reserved and quiet at first, the orphans grew more comfortable with one another. The founder-priest of Program Paghilom, Fr. Flavie Villanueva, led a poignant celebration of the Holy Eucharist, which served as a highlight of the outing. In his closing message, he encouraged the orphans to always seek God's presence. Fr. Villanueva reminded them to take on the posture of the hearts of the apostles on the road to Emmaus that cried out: "Stay with us, O Lord."

After the Holy Mass, everyone enjoyed dinner and a bonfire. The crackling fire served as a backdrop for toasting hotdogs and marshmallows, symbolizing the warmth of friendship. The evening was filled with fellowship, stories, and the creation of lasting memories, reaffirming their sense of belonging to a caring community.

The orphans were asked to reflect on what was meaningful and what they were grateful for. Many expressed gratitude for the safe journey, the opportunity to participate in various activities, attending the Mass, and meeting Fr. Flavie. To end, they shared a group hug, which stirred in them their longing for parental love. Some were moved to tears as they shared their prayers, thanking the Lord for the love and connection they felt.

'May pumalit'

The second day kicked off with an early morning forest hike. The guide described the challenging trekking alternatives available. Undeterred, the orphans courageously chose the most difficult trail. The children, accompanied by some staff members, reached the summit after almost an hour.

Before lunch, everyone gathered to reflect on and share their experiences from the two-day excursion. Laughter filled the air as they reminisced about their most memorable moments. One of the orphans poignantly said, "May nawala pero may pumalit." (We may have lost something, but we gained something else.) This sentiment captures the essence of their journey, as they discovered new experiences, forged meaningful connections, and developed resilience. ■



AN EJK ORPHAN GOOFS AROUND DURING ONE OF THE GAMES ORGANIZED DURING THE GROUP'S OUTING. | PHOTO: RAFFY LERMA

Some were moved to tears as they shared their prayers, thanking the Lord for the love and connection they felt. ”

HOW EJK FAMILIES ARE HEALING THROUGH THEIR 'GRIEF JOURNEY' *by Nirva Delacruz*

DURING PSI SESSIONS, EJK FAMILY MEMBERS LEARN ABOUT BOUNDARIES, GRIEF, AND RECLAIMING A "SAFE SPACE" FOR THEMSELVES, TO HELP PROCESS WHAT IS PROBABLY THE MOST TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE OF THEIR LIVES.

| PHOTO: VINCENT GO



“Pwede palang umiyak dito.”

“Dito lang ako nakakapagkwento nang maluwas at walang takot!”

“Marami akong natututunan dito—lalo na tungkol sa mga karapatan ko.”

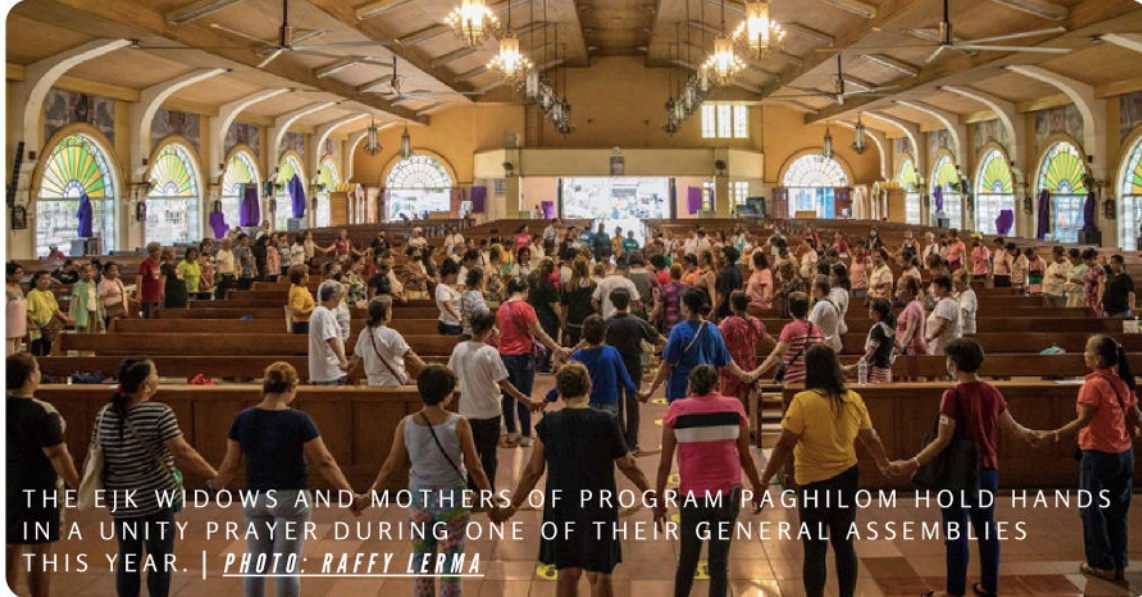
These are just some of the things we’ve heard EJK (extra-judicial killings) family members say after undergoing Program Paghilom’s 7-session psycho-spiritual and social interventions. This culturally sensitive entry point into Program Paghilom aims to encourage self-awareness and acceptance; foster better relationships among other family members; and prepare them to build supportive and nurturing communities.

Much-needed life transition

“I think all life transitions need a PSI. Why? Because sometimes or many times, we are afraid of changes.

KRIZZHIA ROSERO, THE ELDER SISTER OF KIAN DELOS SANTOS, TAKES A SELFIE WITH HIS PHOTO. SHE WAS PART OF THE THIRD BATCH THAT UNDERWENT THE PSI SESSIONS.





THE EJK WIDOWS AND MOTHERS OF PROGRAM PAGHILOM HOLD HANDS IN A UNITY PRAYER DURING ONE OF THEIR GENERAL ASSEMBLIES THIS YEAR. | PHOTO: RAFFY LERMA

Facing the uncertainty always brings out past issues, past trauma, and then people get confused,” explained Tin Bartolome, one of the PSI facilitators who joined the team in August 2018.

The 7 PSI sessions are as follows:

- Session 1: The Context of the Killings [Ang Konteksto]
- Session 2: Finding A Safe Place [Pagiging Payapa]
- Session 3: Faces of Grief [Mga Anyo ng Pagdadalamhati]
- Session 4: Boundaries & Self Awareness [Pagharap at Pagtanggap sa Sarili]
- Session 5: Relationships and Levels of Involvement [Bilog ng Pagkakaugnay]
- Session 6: Building Communities [Lamay at Pakikiramay]

- Session 7: Breaking Free [Babang Luksa: Pagpapalaya sa Sarili at sa Namatay]

The module explains and puts into context the loss of their loved ones, followed by a reminder of how being safe felt like before the killings.

The facilitators then encourage the participants to look at the uniqueness of grief and how it may look and feel like. The group also shares about their experience of the Filipino traditions of *lamay* and *babang luksa*, as well as the idea of boundaries and the different levels of Filipino relationships. The last session helps them accept loss and grief, to let go, and to strengthen trust, especially among the members of the group. It is a reminder that they are now part of a bigger family, their community.

‘New family, new friendships’

For Bartolome, the PSIs help reconnect the EJK families to other survivors and help build strong bonds of support and understanding. “They hear each other during the 7 sessions, they cry together. In a sense, it becomes a new family for them. New friendships are formed. I think that’s how the PSI helps,” she shared. She mentioned several cases where the EJK mothers’ psychological and emotional states radically improved after the PSIs.

Particularly, Bartolome noted how a mother converted to Catholicism because of the warmth and personal witness she saw through the program. “Not a single centavo have I given the Catholic Church but it was only the Catholics who helped me when my husband was killed,” Bartolome quotes her as saying.

ANITA PECSON GIVES A MESSAGE AT A PAGHILOM ASSEMBLY IN NOVEMBER 2022 WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE HER LAST.

| PHOTO: RAFFY LERMA



”

Not a single centavo have I given the Catholic Church but it was only the Catholics who helped me when my husband was killed...

THE EJK WIDOWS AND MOTHERS OF PROGRAM PAGHILOM SHARE A LIGHT MOMENT DURING ONE OF THEIR REGULAR GATHERINGS. | PHOTO: RAFFY LERMA



Another radical turnaround was the case of an EJK widow who before the PSI sessions was always in tears and withdrawn. During the course of the sessions, Bartolome said she noticed how the young widow was slowly opening up to the new world the interventions were preparing her for. “...Whenever she was asked to share her reflection, we could sense that she understood what was going on. Look at her now, she’s really so active.” Today that young widow is one of the most dependable and dynamic area coordinators of Program Paghilom, handling the area of Bagong Silang in North Caloocan.

The Paghilom PSI Sessions have gone through a long process since it began in 2017. Initially conceptualized and headed by Ms. Anita Pecson, a senior counselor at the RMT Center for Family Ministries (RMT-CEFAM). Pecson drew from her long experience of accompanying the abused and the disadvantaged, especially victims of natural disasters, when she trained graduates of the

RMT-CEFAM Diploma Course in Pastoral Counseling. There were other volunteers from the Don Bosco Parish in Makati whom she also trained and mentored.

Online PSI sessions

Pecson held the PSI sessions online during the pandemic until she had to take a rest. Today, her CEFAM-trained volunteers, in collaboration with AJKFI founder Fr. Flavie Villanueva, SVD and Managing Director Ms. Tessam Castillo, continue to facilitate Paghilom sessions, culminating in 3-day retreats, with CEFAM President Fr. Teodulo Gonzales, SJ as retreat master.

Based on Carl Rogers’ Humanistic Approach and the framework of Fr. Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ, Program Paghilom’s PSI sessions are a watershed experience that all 305 members of Program Paghilom have undergone. ■



**For comments or suggestions
about the AJ Kalinga newsletter,
contact us:**

**ajkalingafoundation@gmail.com
0961-240-8692
ajkalingafoundation.org**