



ARNOLD JANSSEN KALINGA FOUNDATION INC.

Annual Report



20
24

*Faces & Stories;
Rituals & Mission*

The Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation Inc. is a non-profit organization that offers dignified, systematic, and holistic care to the homeless and to victims of extra-judicial killings.

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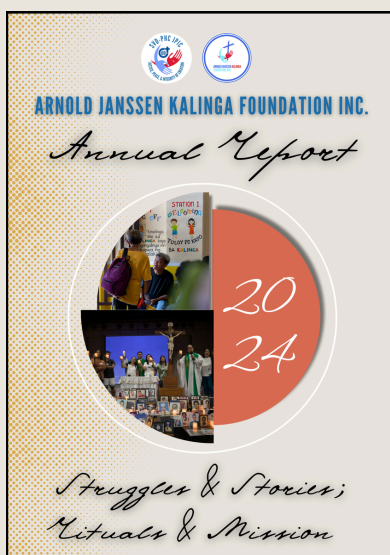
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About the Cover

Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation's Annual Report 2024 cover expresses the two faces & fields of mission for the Foundation: re-creating & empowering the homeless of Manila through the AJ Kalinga Center & doing the same for EJK families through Program Paghilom. The photo on the upper left quadrant shows two homeless near the 7th station (sending-off) during a regular "Kain-Ligo" day, while the lower quadrant shows EJK widows & mothers during a memorial Mass for their loved ones on Oct. 20, 2024.

PHOTO CREDITS: RAFFY LERMA

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of Trustees

The Faces & Stories of 2024

Each missionary has a story—not just any story but the story of *missio Dei* (mission of God). This story takes shape through struggles, success, and rituals. These elements are ever present, inevitably shaping the very story of our lives.

The Arnold Janssen Kalinga family and I are proud to share with you in this 2024 Annual Report the many faces of transformation we've encountered in the past 365 days and the miracles they represent. These pages contain several stories that reveal how providing dignified, systematic, and holistic care facilitates God's miracles. Each story begins with scars and woundedness, but the compassionate touch of the Divine Artisan creates new and beautiful stories waiting to be told.

The need to re-create oneself

I remember one day, I was touring someone around the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center and I was asked what the value of station 2 (also known as profiling) was. Station 2 is intended to go beyond profiling the person—his name, age, height, and weight; it seeks to go deep into the roots and the beautiful story of the human person's creation and unfolding: the struggles against sin, the success, and more importantly, his recognition of God's constant healing and recreating love.

It is in this station where our dear street dwellers are reminded not only of their broken past but of a promising future that can be recreated with God's grace. And this is true, not just for station 2 but for all the other stations; each station that each homeless person goes through uncovers a transformed face—and with it, a story waiting to unfold.

*It is in this station where our dear
street dwellers are reminded not
only of their broken past but of a
promising future...*



When the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us, God was fully aware that His Incarnation would mean embracing the cross and enduring the Paschal mystery. Consequently, this would signify conquering darkness, sin, and death. Similarly, each beneficiary, every orphan or widow—or even a member of the staff/co-missionary is strongly exhorted to recreate himself/herself and to internalize the rituals and the unique mission of the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation.

Just as the Divine Word subjected Himself to human rituals, each person—whether one is a partner-in-mission in one's commitment and humble efforts to support the Foundation or one is a member of the staff playing an active role in the mission of recreating and empowering lives, everyone, who has engaged with the Foundation, will consciously or unconsciously begin to respond to God's invitation to recreate and empower their own lives.

Sacred rituals, sacred mission

As we join hands in building a society where the lives of the homeless and victims of the drug war are recreated and empowered, we also unveil new, beautiful faces and stories, which include our own faces and stories as well. When life becomes difficult and challenging, we must remember that it is ok to frown—or even to weep—but we should remember that even tears open up a new chapter and story. There is no place that our Lord's grace cannot reach.

May the Divine Word continue to bless you for being part of our rituals, programs, and mission. Rest assured, your dearest intentions are always in our prayers.

I pray that you too may also discover a unique face and story, a sacred ritual calling you towards a sacred mission, a sacred gift of mission you alone can accomplish.

Fr. Flavie L. Villanueva, STD

Founder/President
Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation Inc.

Executive Summary

One year shy of turning a decade old, the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation Inc. (AJKFI) embraced a year of deepening formation for its beneficiary volunteers who committed to undergo a 6-month training, as well as a marked focus on shaping the next generation of leaders of Program Paghilom through various firsts: the first youth leadership trainings and the debut of Himig Paghilom. Undoubtedly, 2024 has been a year of recognizing how to strategically address the core needs of the people we serve.

Those familiar with the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation know that it is committed to its mission of recreating and empowering the lives of the homeless and extra-judicial killings (EJK) victims. For the past year, AJKFI has been reinventing and exploring new and more relevant ways to provide dignified, systematic, and holistic care to its beneficiaries. Increasingly, the organization has also been embedding its core values of KALINGA (Kaibigan, Ayusin, Linisin, Ingatan, Nilay, Galang, at Aruga) in its programs and activities.

Amid so many narratives and developments, the 2024 Annual Report aims to share the most significant metrics and the most compelling stories across our programs that we hope will encapsulate the essence of 2024 for AJKFI. In 2024, the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center (AJKC) marked its 9th year. This was also the year that batch 8 and 9 of our beneficiary volunteers, former homeless who undergo the KALINGA values formation, overlapped in their stay at the Center.



Restructuring of AJKC's formation and training came in the form of catechism; kitchen management workshops; Canva-sponsored trainings and exposure; and total human development sessions—aside from the KALINGA sessions. It was also last year that AJKC engaged a mainstay "Kain-Ligo" donor, the Loaves x Fish Foundation, which committed to provide rice and viands enough for 200 meals every Wednesday, our first so far.

On the volunteerism side, 2024 was also the year that De La Salle Greenhills went all out in bringing batch after batch of its students to experience serving at the Center's different stations during our feeding days; listen to some of our beneficiary volunteers' stories; and learn how to make rosaries. Debatably the most notable development for AJKC, however, was "Gabi ng Pasasalamat" on September 26, which was a simple yet moving tribute to the organization's partners-in-mission.

This was also where AJKC launched yet another first: “Tubig Kalinga”, a partnership with Maris Pure Corporation’s Healthy & Pure Water that would bring premium quality bottled water to the market while raising funds for AJKC.

Meanwhile, Program Paghilom was not one to lag behind in terms of breakthroughs. One milestone was the inauguration of the “Dambana ng Paghilom” at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery, which was a first not just for the foundation but also for the country, being the first EJK memorial site and columbarium in the Philippines. Former Senator Leila De Lima; European Union Ambassador Luc Veron; German Ambassador Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke; Dutch Ambassdador Marielle Geraedts; British Ambassador Laure Beaufigli; then SVD PHC Provincial Fr. Jerome Marquez, SVD; and Senator Risa Hontiveros graced the event. Through a critical collaboration with the Diocese of Kalookan, “Dambana” saw the inurnment of 41 urns containing the remains of victims of Duterte’s bloody drug war in 2024.

As Program Paghilom also recognized the need to invest in the more vulnerable yet promising EJK orphans and youth, 2024 was a year for more performances by “Teatro ng Kabataan”. When Swiss Ambassador Dr. Nicolas Brühl thought of inviting Paghilom to sing the Swiss National Anthem at the National Swiss Day on August 29, he did not know that it would spur the birth of “Himig Paghilom”. A choral group of some of Paghilom’s young singers was born because of a simple invitation, bringing the unique talents and energy of the young on a broader stage.

This is simply a snapshot of the 2024 that proved to be full of learning, recalibration, and goals achieved. The entire Arnold Janssen Kalinga family also expresses its deepest gratitude to all the partners-in-mission who have continued to believe in the mission and backed it up with time and support. Your presence, prayers, promotions, pesos, and products are truly precious. Read on to see the finer details of the 360 degree overview presented here.

A choral group of some of Paghilom’s young singers was born because of a simple invitation...



*Our
Impact*

AJKFI IN NUMBERS



January to December 2024

60,926

Meals & showers
provided to the
homeless

207

"Kain-Ligo" days
catering to
250 - 300 homeless

350-400

Street dwellers served
at the Center every
"Kain-Ligo" day

12

ALS graduates for
School Year
2023-2024

824,116

Meals & showers
served from July 2015
to December 2024

108

Remains of EJK
victims exhumed

101

EJK victims' remains
cremated & turned
over to their families

319

EJK families under the
care of
Program Paghilom

150

EJK scholars
supported by
Program Paghilom

Our Impact



*Arnold Janssen
Kalinga Center*

Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center

7 STATIONS



STATION 1
Welcoming



STATION 2
Profiling



STATION 3
Clothing



STATION 4
Bathing



STATION 5
Grooming & Affirmation



STATION 6
Meals & Bonding

Arnold Janssen Kalinga provides “systematic care” through the 7 Stations, which all the beneficiaries go through when they enter the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center to receive dignified meals & showers.



STATION 7
Send-off

Arnold Zanssen Kalinga Center

3 HOLISTIC PHASES OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



Food & Hygiene to *re-create their self-image*

**Homeless Volunteers' Human
Development & Holistic Formation**
(Alternative Learning System, Non-
Formal Rehabilitation Renewal &
Psycho-Spiritual Interventions) towards
reclaiming their self-respect



Livelihood & Employment
Opportunities to *restore their self-worth*

Arnold Zanssen Kalinga Center

2024 IMPACT *(January to December 2024)*



60,926

Meals & showers
provided to the homeless



350 - 400

Street dwellers served
every "Kain-Ligo" day



207

"Kain-Ligo" days where
the needs of 250 - 300
homeless are addressed



824,116

Meals & showers
served from July 2015
to December 2024



12

Alternative Learning
System graduates for
School Year 2023 - 2024



1,266

External volunteers
engaged during
"Kain-Ligo" days



4

Work referrals for
beneficiary volunteers

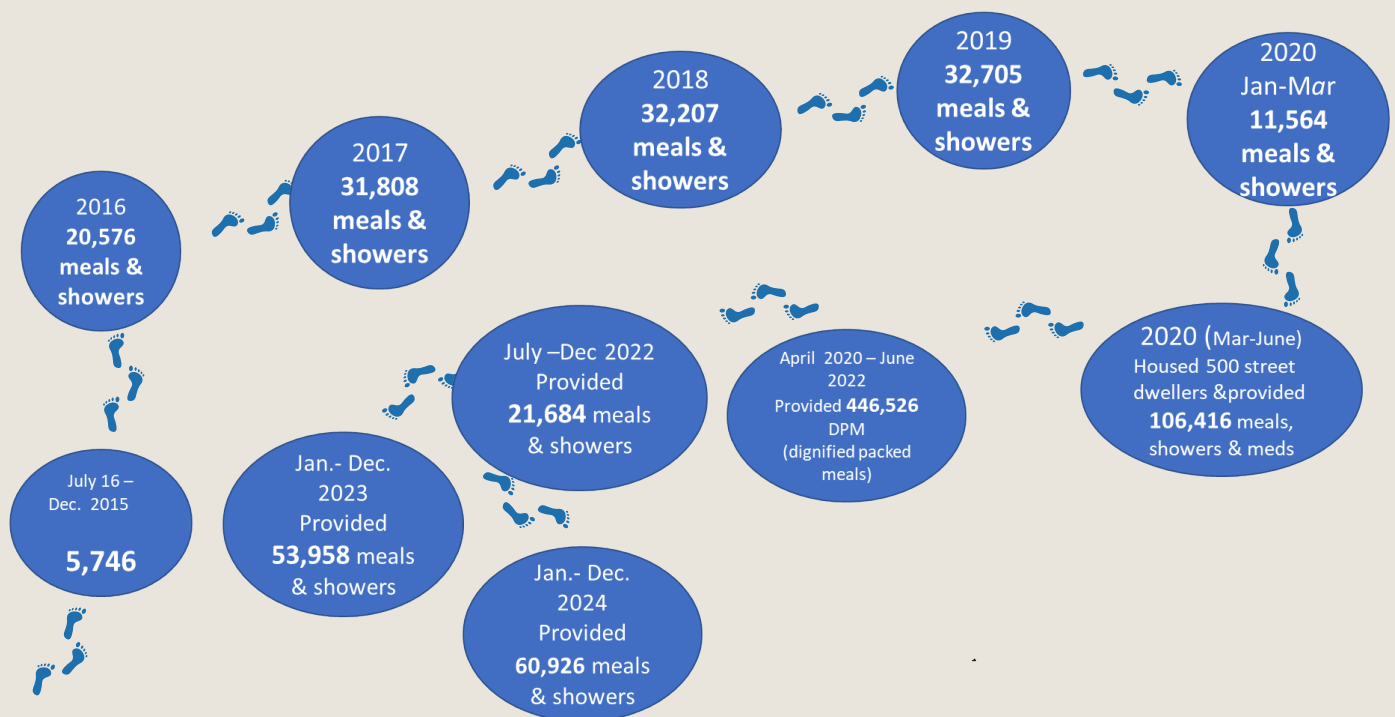


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Former homeless in
the post-care program

KALINGA = Kain-Aral-Ligo-NG-Ayos
Eat, Learn, Bathe To Be Well

A Glimpse at the **ARNOLD JANSSEN KALINGA CENTER** *(JULY 16, 2015 to December 2024)*



Start of the Kalinga Mission

Our Mission

To provide dignified, systematic, & holistic care to the homeless

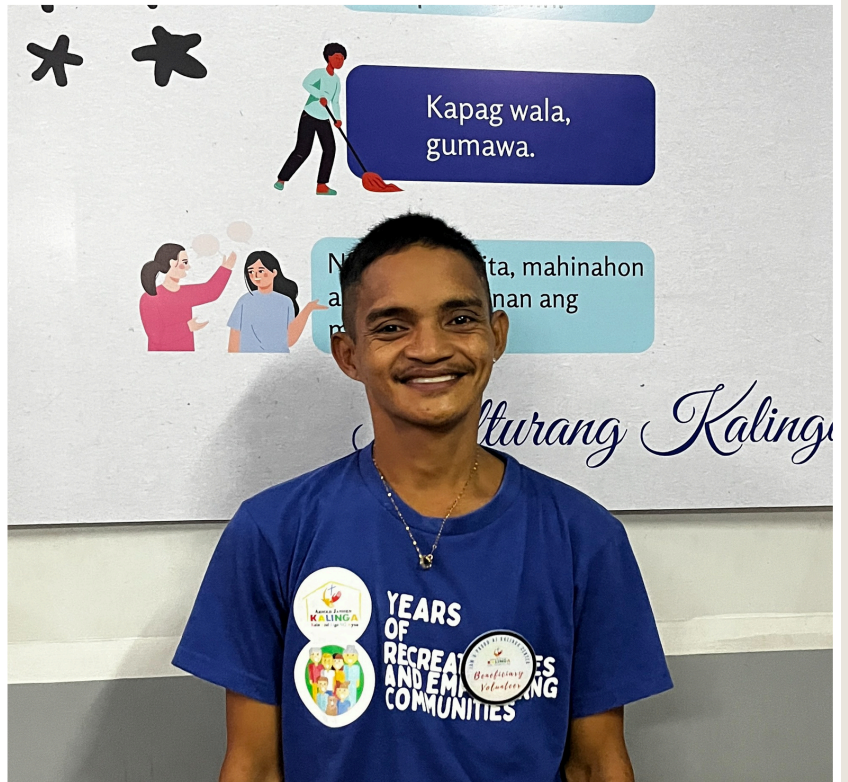
Our Vision

A society where the lives of the homeless are re-created & empowered



*Re-created &
Empowered Lives*

Before & After



Before & After



Reunited at Last: Melvin's Homecoming

By Venice Narisma

"Sir Vinz, this is Polangui, Albay, the place where I was born and where I felt the love of my relatives. But this is also the place where I experienced my worst nightmares. A lot has changed..."

These were the words that came out of Melvin's mouth as he felt nervous and mixed emotions when we arrived in his hometown, 463 kilometers south of Manila. He went on to describe how what used to be a grassy expanse was now a national highway. Dense forests and mountains were now rolling plains. "I left this place 35 years ago; I changed a lot about myself. I have gradually fixed my bad habits ("kulturang kalye"). I hope that in this new chapter of my life, I will be accepted by the people who once loved yet judged Melvin Bobis, the child..."

Caged like an animal

Stubborn as a mule—as he himself admits, with only words of complaint on his lips, Melvin is in a class of his own. He has often been described as a troublemaker because of his way of rubbing people the wrong way.



Melvin (4th from left) poses with his relatives upon his arrival in Polangui, Albay in January 2024. *VENICE NARISMA*

While his peers, the other formerly homeless members of batch 5 who underwent the 3-month KALINGA values formation program of Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation, have already started working or have returned home to their respective families, Melvin couldn't quite transition yet. During his extended stay at the Arnold Janssen Bahay Kalinga (BK), the full horrifying details of his traumatic childhood experiences came to light.

Melvin had several video calls with his family in Albay before finally meeting them again in January 2024.

VENICE NARISMA

At the young age of 11, Melvin was sent to a juvenile center in Tanay, Rizal. There he experienced beatings, the first of many others he would suffer in various prisons later on in life. But before these, he first experienced physical, emotional and other kinds of abuse at the hands of his own uncle. "I remembered then, sir, that my uncle used to lock me up in the dog kennel and tie me up...I was even fed in that cage," he shared. He admitted that he was hard-headed even as a child, but he couldn't imagine why his own relative had mistreated him so badly. Orphaned from a young age, Melvin never knew the care of his parents. Painful and unspeakable things happened to him during his tender years.

No one to trust

After his release from the juvenile center, the inexperienced Melvin had nowhere else to go; Luneta and the streets of Manila became his home for 31 years. On the street, he learned to fend for himself despite having no one to trust. Hunger pangs is what urged him on. Because of the desire to meet his basic

needs, he found himself behind bars again after getting involved in illegal activities.

After a few years on the street, his health took a hit when he contracted pulmonary tuberculosis. The polluted city air did him a lot of violence; often, Melvin, who was also asthmatic, struggled just to breath. God obviously had other plans for him when he joined the KALINGA formation batch 5 in January 2022 after being extracted from Lawton, Manila. Melvin would also get much-needed treatment for his tuberculosis with the help of the foundation.

'Faces from yesterday'

January 25, 2024. This was the day Melvin stepped back into the land of his young self. It was also the date he would see for himself if his relatives would finally accept him. This day would dictate the new path he would walk. Fear, nervousness, and lingering shame filled his heart as he stepped into the former shack that was now a concrete house.

Melvin's family prepared a full-blown welcome party for him at the family compound in Albay.

VENICE NARISMA

Tears fell from his eyes when he saw people who loved him as a child waiting for him, faces from his forgotten yesterday. They were the same people who welcomed him back and embraced him. It's like the Biblical story of the Prodigal Son, who thought he would never be accepted; but the whole clan opened their arms to him.

Today, Melvin has his own place, near his aunt's house. He also raises pigs and sells them as his means of livelihood, while his uncle sends him a monthly allowance to start his new life. Many things can change; we can change, but home remains home.





Program Paghilom



Program Paghilom

7 PHASES OF INTERVENTIONS

Program Paghilom follows the inspiration of Kalinga and offers dignified, systematic, and Holistic Phases of Interventions for EJK victims & families.

Phase I: Vetting & Needs Analysis

- Food packs are distributed to PagHILOM families to help meet their daily needs, especially during the COVID-19 crisis.
- 8-10 kgs of rice are distributed monthly to every EJK family.

Phase II: PSI, Teatro, & Retreat

- 9 Saturdays of grief counseling sessions
- 3-day Retreat in Tagaytay City
- 3-day Theater Workshop and Showcase

Phase III: Legal Assistance

- Legal documentation services are offered to the beneficiaries so that they acquire supporting documents for the EJK cases
- Beneficiaries who are in need of legal aid services are also connected to our partner lawyers
- Trainings on basic human rights are also provided to the beneficiaries

Phase IV: Educational Assistance for the orphans

- Monthly allowance for one scholar per family



- Tablets were given to the orphans under our care to facilitate their online schooling
- Scholarships for college students seeking to finish their degrees

Phase V: Livelihood Assistance

- Paghilom Livelihood-Loan Program (PLLP) is a livelihood program to help beneficiaries acquire loans to start or support their microbusiness

Phase VI: Capacity Building & Monitoring

- Area Coordinators (ACs) & Assistant Area Coordinators (AACs) are assigned to the communities of the beneficiaries
- These ACs & AACs are also beneficiaries who showed interest to help guide and lead their fellow wounded, as they become “wounded-healers in their wounded communities.”

Phase VII: Project Arise

- Because of a lack of resources, many EJK families are forced to bury their loved ones in “apartment tombs” for five years. Because public cemeteries are often congested, the end of the lease, remains are often dumped into mass graves.
- Project Arise aims to address this situation. The remains of the victims are exhumed, cremated, turned over, and finally laid in a permanent, dignified resting place at the “Dambana ng Paghilom”, La Loma Catholic Cemetery, Caloocan City.



Program Paghilom

2024 IMPACT *(January to December 2024)*



143

EJK families who received legal assistance from the DLSU Tañada-Diokno School of Law



150

EJK scholars receiving financial assistance



108

EJK victims' remains exhumed under Project Arise



101

EJK victims' remains cremated & turned over to their families



4

Youth-focused activities like 'Teatro Kabataan' & youth leadership training



3

Capacity-building trainings held for Paghilom members



41

Urns of EJK victims' remains interred at 'Dambana ng Paghilom'



36

Reloans & new loans availed of by members for livelihood ventures

“Recreating & Empowering the lives of the wounded”

How Paghilom is Helping Families of Drug War Victims Find Their Voice

By Jobart Bartolome



Like many of the attendees of the Psycho-Spiritual Intervention (PSI) sessions, Anna (not her real name) hardly said a word on the first day. She was reluctant to speak, especially in the big group. Likewise, Faye (not her real name), who belonged to a previous batch, didn't open up until the seventh and last session, despite being nudged to share in all the sessions.

This isn't uncommon, regardless of whether their loved ones were killed in the early days of Duterte's drug war or under the current administration. Since face-to-face PSI sessions resumed last year, a good number of attendees were from families of victims who were killed in 2016 or 2017. And for most of them, Paghilom was where they first shared their stories.



We must not forget the context, and their situation before joining Paghilom. They belong to the *laylayan*, the poorest of the poor. Some of the victims were indeed drug users; while others were completely innocent. Either way, the violent killing of their loved ones was heart-wrenching and unjust, making their lives even worse.

Having lost their breadwinners, many families don't just struggle financially because of death and burial expenses, they also grapple with social stigma and intimidation.

Their neighbors—and sometimes even relatives—shun them and talk behind their backs. Trust became nearly impossible; the government, its institutions, and people in general were all suspect. But they have children and grandchildren to feed and care for, several of whom are also bullied by classmates and peers.

Many of them continue to be haunted by angry thoughts and desires to avenge the deaths of their loved ones. Guilt plagues many of them, who often blame themselves for what had happened.



Months—and even years—would go by as they went through the different stages of grief: anger, denial, bargaining, depression, etc., without fully making sense of it all. “Mayroong may tampo sa Diyos, bakit pinayagan na mangyari ito sa kanila?” (Some resented God, questioning why He had even allowed such a thing to happen to their family.)

We would soon discover that we were practically the first ones to ever hear them tell the stories of how their loved ones were killed. It’s striking that they were only able to do so because they were in a safe space. One EJK mother shared: “Kapag may nakikinig pala, nagiging bukas ka at nakukuwento ang lahat ng nararamdaman.” [I realize that if someone is willing to listen, you are able to tell your story and how you really feel.] We couldn’t help but notice how their faces softened and changed as they got used to sharing their stories, especially their feelings, while we listened. Anna, along with many others, soon began to smile as they revealed even more details.

During the culminating activity, the 3-day retreat, Anna disclosed that before attending Paghilom sessions, she refused to comb her hair, had no desire to mingle with others, and mostly, just kept to herself.



Her house, she said, was always dark and dead quiet. Taking a chance with Paghilom, she said she couldn’t believe how the experience changed her—her feelings, outlook in life, and even her posture. It was also during the retreat that Faye began to share the back story of her hard life. Her face had also brightened up. I guess that she found a “family” she can trust.

“We lost a loved one, yet gained a loving family,” as Paghilom members usually say.



*One EJK mother
shared: ‘Kapag
may nakikinig pala,
nagiging bukas ka
at nakukuwento
ang lahat ng
nararamdaman.’*



"Dambana ng Paghilom"

The "Dambana ng Paghilom" is the first EJK memorial site & columbarium in the country.

'The truth always comes out': 'Dambana ng Paghilom' Wins

By Nirva Delacruz

On May 1, 2024, the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation inaugurated "Dambana ng Paghilom," the first ever EJK memorial site in the Philippines. According to one of the EJK widows present at the event, the site's existence would help expose the truth about former President Rodrigo Duterte's violent and bloody drug war.

"...[W]hen this project came about, I was so happy because this would be the way for the truth to come out, that my husband did not die from natural causes but from gunshot wounds," shared Aurora Blas, an EJK victim who shared her message to around 250 guests present at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery for the event.

'Natural causes'

Blas, who joined Program Paghilom after her husband's killing, talked about how her husband's death certificate indicated

"pneumonia" as the cause of death despite sustaining gun shot wounds, specifically on the right side of the head.

"Even if the truth was as clear to me and to my children as daylight, because I was no longer thinking straight and because of my desire that his body be released and prepared as soon as possible, I turned a blind eye and signed," she added in Filipino, detailing how she was also made to sign a waiver that said she would not press charges or pursue a case against her husband's killers.

After a ribbon-cutting, EJK family members witnessed the inurnment of 11 urns of the loved ones they lost to Duterte's drug war.

Statement of hope

For Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation (AJKFI) founder/president Fr. Flavie Villanueva, SVD,



the memorial site and columbarium symbolizes more than just a final resting place for those killed. “Dambana ng Paghilom is also a statement of hope. Evil will never persist if men, women, senators, ambassadors, people of good conscience, HR advocates, seminarians, sisters, religious, people at the margins will continue to stand firm for life, truth, and peace,” he said.

The priest, who started Program Paghilom in 2016, shared about EJK victims’ plight of being unable to prioritize securing their loved ones’ remains because of poverty. EJK family members take a selfie with the newly-interred urn of their loved ones who were violently killed during Duterte’s war against drugs.

Messages of support

Dambana is now a concrete answer to their needs. “This was once a hope, and it is now real,” he added. For freelance photographer, journalist, and advocate Raffy Lerma, who has been covering the drug war for the past 8 years, the most disturbing thing he has witnessed is people’s indifference to the issue. “What’s the most that I could not take is that we, Filipinos, allow the killings...Sa ating bansa, hinayaan natin na magpatayan tayo,” he said.

The following were also present to give messages of support to the EJK families:

- former Senator Leila De Lima;
- European Union Ambassador Luc Veron;
- German Ambassador Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke;
- Dutch Ambassdador Marielle Geraedts;
- British Ambassador Laure Beaufigli; and
- Senator Risa Hontiveros.

“When this project came about, I was so happy because this would be the way for the truth to come out, that my husband did not die from natural causes but from gunshot wounds.”



Our Team



January to December 2024



Lecel Alfaro
Administrative Assistant



Teresita Castillo
Managing Director



Geraldine Catral
AJKC Formation Head



Rogelio Celeste
Administrative Support Staff



Jovanni Crisostomo
Administrative Support Staff



Nirva Delacruz
Marketing & Communications Officer



Randy Delos Santos
Paghilom Field Coordinator



Carmela Estacio
Finance & HR Officer



Fatima Fernando
*Paghilom Assistant
Field Coordinator*



Carmelita Galano
AJKC Program Director



Mark Lim
*Project/Grant Monitoring Coordinator &
Paghilom Technical Support Staff*



Liberty Cielo Llagas
Social Worker



Jasmin Luyun
Accountant/Bookkeeper



Josephine Moria
Administrative Support Staff



JL Orque
Paghilom Program Officer



Albert Rañeses
Administrative Assistant



Jeffrey Sario
Administrative Assistant



Wingard Saturnino
Driver



Stella Mariz Talco
ALS Facilitator



Wendale Victorio
AJKC Operations Officer

Stella: Changing Lives, One Lesson at a Time

By Nirva Delacruz

“INFJ.” Of the 16 Myers-Briggs Personality Types, the “Introvert-Intuitive-Feeling-Judging” type is the rarest personality, making up 1 to 2% of the population. INFJs are mysterious, mostly silent, swan-like entities who are, according to the MBTI, the most purpose-driven people you’ll ever meet. A strong belief system is at the core of the INFJ.

You can say that Stella Mariz Talco, Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center’s Alternative Learning System (ALS) Learning Facilitator, is AJKFI’s resident INFJ. One of the youngest in the AJ Kalinga fam, this Gen Z represents a vibrant cross-section of the diverse team of the Foundation that has practically all the other generations represented: Baby Boomers; Gen X, and Millennials.

A passion for teaching

First joining the team in April 2021 as an office management staff, Stella was offered to take on ALS as its Instructional Manager in August. “I eagerly accepted, driven by my passion for teaching—a dream I feared might never be realized due to the pandemic,” she recalls. Accredited by the Department of Education, ALS “offers non-formal education to out-of-school youth and adults,” which in the case of the Foundation, includes street dwellers and drug war victims.

It wouldn’t be long before ALS would coax out Stella’s own light and unique gifts, seen foremost in her noble aspirations. She shares: “I am passionate about many things, but what truly ignites my spirit is my love for teaching and sharing knowledge. As a teacher, knowledge is my lifeblood, fueling my desire to inspire and uplift my learners.”



Stella (standing) administers diagnostic tests before the official start of Alternative Learning System (ALS) classes for SY 2023 - 2024.

NIRVA DELACRUZ

Teaching in the ALS program requires an extraordinary level of flexibility and empathy. When a student suddenly stops going to classes, a teacher can call his parents, but when a street dweller misses sessions where do you find him? The irregularity of the lives of the ALS learners becomes a considerable challenge in their academic life.

The missing student

For Stella, the role was no longer just “teacher” but also shepherd and intercessor. She recalls how she earnestly prayed to God that someone would finally find 70-year old Tatay Reynaldo, the oldest ALS learner in their batch, who had been missing for months. 3 months after Stella’s prayer, someone saw Tatay Reynaldo along a major thoroughfare in Manila. “Feeling ko talaga inanswer ako

ni God (I feel like God really answered my prayer)," she shares. The 26-year old cannot deny that her professional growth in AJKFI parallels her spiritual development. When asked about the biggest challenge she had to face during her 3 years in AJKFI, Stella shared about "an intense internal struggle" and the discouraging experience of several learners dropping out, leading to a low number of graduates. "I doubted my calling and felt my faith wavering under the weight of my responsibilities as a 'panganay,'" she confessed.

Her biggest challenge yet

It was during this shaky time

that Stella started praying the rosary and began training as a lector at a nearby parish. "... Through persistent prayers, unwavering love and support from my family, and the invaluable guidance of Kalinga, especially Fr. Flavie, I began to find my strength. Their encouragement helped me rebuild my resilience, reminding me that even in our darkest moments, we can rise and overcome," she added.

This school year 2024 – 2025, Stella welcomed 25 learners, one of the biggest classes to date. The newly-hired Stella is a far cry from today's Stella version 2.0. She can see that she is exactly where she is supposed to be. "Each day, seeing the joyful faces of my learners as they grasp a

new lesson warms my heart. Our endless 'kamustahan' sessions strengthen our bond and remind me of the impact I have...Hearing them say they are thankful to have me as their teacher fills me with immense gratitude and purpose. These moments reaffirm my dedication and inspire me to continue making a difference, one lesson at a time," Stella explains.

Wiser, more grounded, definitely more confident, this INFJ has found a mission to build her life on.



Stella (center) poses with some of Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center's Alternative Learning System (ALS) graduates for School Year 2023 - 2024 after their commencement exercises on May 30, 2024.

The Board of Trustees



(Above left photo, from left to right)

- Mr. Vitaliano N. Nañagas II
- Atty. Ponciano V. Cruz
- Ms. April T. Wycoco
- Ms. Susan Dimacali
- Ms. Amparo Lim

(Seated in foreground from left to right)

- Mr. Edicio dela Torre
- Ms. Teresita S. Castillo



(Above right photo, from left to right)

- Fr. Flaviano L. Villanueva, SVD
- Mr. Michael J. Chanco
- Ms. Faith B. Abaño

(Right photo)

- Fr. Jerome Marquez, SVD

(Bottom photo)

- Fr. Alex Vitualla, SVD



Not in photo: Fr. Mike Layugan, SVD as Provincial Superior

Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation

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