



O.B. MONTESSORI CENTER

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Volunteerism for 50 years and beyond

By Megan Antonio
12 Jose



The United Nations (UN) has recorded more than one billion individuals around the world who engage in volunteerism such as programs eliminating poverty, improving health services, providing education, resolving environmental issues, and other humanitarian activities. The UN considers volunteerism as “a basic expression of human relationships” that helps foster one’s sense of belongingness to a community, and OB Montessori Center strongly shares this same perspective.

One of the many things OBMC is known for is *Project Kaibigan*. It started as a donation drive for the institution’s *Pagsasarili* Preschool handing out school supplies, food, and clothes, among other things. Eventually OBMC extended its assistance to communities devastated by calamities such as the 1991 Mt. Pinatubo eruption, Typhoon

Ondoy in 2009, and Typhoon Yolanda in 2013. Other recipients include the AFP Medical Center’s Neonatal Unit, the SAF 44, victims of the Marawi siege, orphanages, homes for the aged, indigenous groups, and the school’s service personnel.

In addition to these things, OBMC has furthered its partnership with the Armed Forces of the Philippines through the school’s innovative cadet training program. As a result, our Chief Operating Officer Mrs.

Sara Soliven-De Guzman was conferred with the

honorary rank of Commodore by the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary. (See story on page 4.)

For more than 50 years, OBMC has been living up to its name, *Operation Brotherhood*, through these philanthropic endeavors. The sense of volunteerism is present in whatever activity the school organizes. For the UN, these acts hone the values of “solidarity, mutual trust, belongingness, and empowerment, all of which contribute significantly to quality of life.” This is for the next 50 years and beyond!



NEWS



The Grade 6 students had their annual **BARN DANCE** last September 20. It was an experience they were looking forward to as they showcased their ballroom and square dances after rehearsing for weeks. The Barn Dance was also a farewell program of the Grade Six students as they passed on the Montessori Flame of Brotherhood to the Grade Five class mayors, who are the incoming sixth graders of the next school year. *Report from Gerard De Guzman and Alastaire Mateusz Sulit, 6 Venus*



OBMC-LP celebrated a Mass followed by the **PET BLESSING ACTIVITY FOR THE FEAST DAY OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI** last October 4. The Casa and Intermediate students brought to the campus their collection of pets, which ranged from the usual to the unique: the dog of James Pamintuan, the lizard of Christen Aaliyah, the tortoise of Cres Toledo, and the snake of Denise Cruz. Christen met her lizard the day before the pet blessing underneath her staircase, while Cres got his tortoise four years ago from his trip to Japan. *Report from Christian Manansala, 8 Sapphire*



The Grade 8 students held their **TEA PARTY** last October 15 and 16 with a “sweet 16th birthday party” as the theme. The classes were divided into two groups, the first one being the guests and the other as servers on the assigned day. “Serving made me more aware of my movements, since I spilt a little bit of water by accident,” said Antonio Almero of 8 Ruby who served as a bartender on the first day. “But being a guest helped me refine my movements more,” he added. *Report from Gabrielle Jagunap, 8 Sapphire*



NEWS

A Whole New Kind of Fun!

The Casa Family Day and Primary Fun Day were events organized in September and October by OB

Montessori Center. This year, the Primary Fun Day’s main theme was based on the film, “Aladdin.” From the music to games, everything about the Fun Day was a tribute to the beloved Disney classic. Children danced to “Prince Ali” and “Arabian Nights” and played games like magic carpet race.

“My favorite game was the hula hoop,” said Katie Jayme of 2 Nightingale, referring to the hula hoop game of Till It Drops. Many students in her class shyly exclaimed that they had a great time at the Fun Day. Parents were key participants in the event,

► *By Ciara Russegger (9 Emerald)*

with many games requiring them to cooperate with their children and other parents to help their team win.

In an age where parents and children may grow further apart, it is imperative that students and their parents mingle together and enjoy quality time facilitated by the school. The Family Day and Fun Day help get both children and parents exercising and being active.

That nails the real purpose of the events: exercise, energize, and bond. Such is something much needed today! *(with reports from Zafina Tenorio and Mikkel Yu)*



Blue Thumpers
Photo by Ciara Russegger

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FEATURES

A Fun Mart Day at OBMC!

► *By Zafina Tenorio (9 Emerald)*

The Junior High School (JHS) of OB Montessori Center-Las Piñas held their annual Food Fair and Minimart last December 12 with OBMC Founder Dr. Preciosa Soliven gracing the event.

“We are celebrating self-sufficiency—that means we are educating ourselves to become independent economically,” Dr. Soliven said in her opening remarks



to the JHS students as they readied themselves for the day’s work. She continued to share that the minimart activity helps to satisfy the adolescent’s need for economic independence, develop the skills to become self-sufficient for life, and apply the basic concepts of entrepreneurship.

“You are now entrepreneurs,” declared Dr. Soliven. “Let’s have fun the whole day as we show off to our visitors how self-sufficient we are ... Our gardens produce vegetables and fruits, as far as our farm in Cavite, and we are going to sell it here.”

She visited each stall at the Multi-Purpose Hall, while Christmas songs were playing as mood music. The stalls were creatively designed, some with Christmas decorations to make them distinct from the others. Save the Earth Club members of



the Intermediate Department had their own stall that sold agricultural products from the campus’s very own self-sufficiency farm.

Las Piñas City First District Councilor Rex Riguera, CAA National High School Principal Dr. Efren Parilla, and other visitors also came over to enjoy the fruit of the JHS students’ labor.

Even as the entire event tired the students out, everyone was able to enjoy this fulfilling pre-Christmas activity with smiles on their faces. Just the perfect fun!

Building Entrepreneurship in Each Student

► *By Andrea Garfin (10 Ruby), Photos by Christine Manansala*

The highly-anticipated Swap Meet took place last September 11 at the Multi-Purpose Hall. Parents, personnel, and students flocked to the gym for good deals and good fun. This year, the sellers were not limited to the High School Department. Students from the Intermediate level also participated for a day-in-the-life experience of a salesperson, just like

their *ates* and *kuyas*.

Students reported that they obtained a newfound respect for salespeople, entrepreneurs, and businessmen, as the activity required them to fill out documents, work on pricing schemes, and deal with different types of customers.



dropped by got in on the fun too. “I’ve always looked forward to the Swap Meet. It’s great to see how the kids can be so professional, yet friendly and approachable,” said one of the alumni-turned OB parent.

This year’s Swap Meet was once more a success. All the students were able to sell their items, work together to create profit, and have fun while doing it. The 9 Emerald class was able to obtain the highest number of sales, reaching roughly P18,500. When asked what they will do with their earnings, Ciara Russegger (9 Emerald) said, “I’ll buy more books, although some of my classmates are saving.”



Business as usual.

“I’m already tired. They [salespeople] do it all day, every day. It’s really a difficult job,” commented Diane Serdeña of 9 Emerald. Finally, the personnel and parents who

FEATURES

The Honorary Commodore from OB Montessori

► By Ma. Bianca Dagle (10 Emerald Greenhills)



by the cadets with a salute and by the band with the performance of a unique piece. The honorary commodore of the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary (PCGA) who is being commended with Arrival Honors—not in one institution, but in each of the five OBMC campuses under her charge—is none other than Commodore Sara Soliven-De Guzman, the Chief Operating Officer of OB Montessori Center.

Promotion to a high honorary rank such as Commodore does not just happen overnight. Ms. Sara Soliven-De Guzman gained merits that slowly built up toward the promotion. Philippine Coast Guard Captain Jose Mari Dela Peña shares how, for many years, OB has offered a cadet program for

Over a hundred cadets in gray and white regalia stand in position. Band members, instruments in hand, wear their butterfly uniform reserved for notable occasions in a campus filled with honorary embellishments. A

momentous one-star flag flying in front of them accentuates the anticipation and excitement in the air as they all await the one who is coming. The arrival of a commodore wearing a light blue polo shirt and navy-blue skirt is heralded

its Junior High School students which focuses on the values of honor, duty, and service to country, and its C.O.O has furthered the partnership of her institution with the Armed Forces of the Philippines by consistently exposing the Montessori students to different units of the AFP.

The cadet program puts a premium on Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction, embarking on an Environmental Awareness Program since



2015 in partnership with the PCGA. It has committed its students to their monthly coastal clean-ups and mangrove planting. The school's Cadet Corps also holds an annual Testimonial Parade and Review honoring the men and women of the Armed Services by showcasing the skills and discipline they have acquired through four years of cadetship and student leadership. All this has led to Commodore Soliven-De Guzman being recently

inducted as a member of the AFP General Headquarters and Headquarters Service Command Multi-Sector Advisory Board (MSAB), there providing advice to guide the command in the attainment of its mission and functions, especially when they pertain to the youth. The promotion of Commodore



Soliven-De Guzman not only brings honor to her, but to the whole OB Montessori community. It facilitates our deeper participation in opportunities to engage environmental and other issues, but now on a national level. Our platform toward a wider influence just increased greatly! Thus, the journey of OB Montessori Center and the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary continues.



Operation of Comfort and Joy

► By Abigail Pepino (12 Jose)

Another significant event of OBMC is the Easter Mission in which a Mass is organized to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter, for the Aetas, signifies new beginnings; rising again after the devastation of Mt. Pinatubo and the other

pressing issues of the nation. The community members become exposed to practical life exercises on grooming, hygiene, and housekeeping, as well as literacy exercises in Language, Math, and Cultural Arts using Montessori-based Pagsasarili materials. Nurses and local doctors are also available to attend to the Palan people's minor medical needs. The event would not end without a time of fellowship, with the pilgrims sharing food packs to about 800–1000 indigenous children and adults.



Each year, OB Montessori Center brings the spirit of Christmas to the Aeta community in Sitio Palan,

Zambales, organizing a Mass in December to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. A Nativity tableau is presented by the OBMC staff with the Aetas dressing up as the major and minor characters of the Christmas story. As a result of the tableau, they feel good about themselves as they are seen by their community members in beautiful costumes. This helps them understand and appreciate the meaning of the Christmas story as they experience it on their own. OBMC also prepares for 400 Aeta children and 400 adults individual gift packs, which include groceries, donated clothes, household items, school supplies, and toys for the children.

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FEATURES

Noche Buena for the Downtrodden

By Ciara Russegger (9 Emerald)

On Christmas Eve, a landlord and his family feast on a hearty *noche buena* of lechon and rice.

Yet, in the landlord's cold, grassy field, the farmer—who grew the rice and pig—toils all night as he dreams of seeing his wife and child.

He misses them dearly, and yearns only for one Christmas with them. He shakes it off, knowing he won't be going home until tomorrow. There are quotas to reach, and he fears being fired. How could he think of home when he must make his meager living?

The landlord enjoys the fruits of the farmer's work. The farmer could never hope to earn enough for a *noche buena*.

On Christmas Eve, a policeman enjoys the *noche buena* with his entire clan.



Yet, six feet under, the alleged "addict" he shot some months ago lies ever still.

He no longer moves, thinks or feels. He no longer laughs, prays or cries. He cannot miss his family, because he is dead. Still, his family misses him—*noche buena* will never be complete again.

The policeman lives as though he'd never murdered a man. Still, the man's family knows, and they will never forgive.

On Christmas Eve, the landlord and the policeman call out, "*Merry Christmas!*" when those they have victimized cannot. Family time at Christmas is beautiful, but it is a privilege.

So, Merry Christmas to the downtrodden! This year, pray and fight for justice—for the right to a merry Christmas.

Justice would be the greatest Christmas gift of all.

OPINION

Jeepless Christmas?

By Alliyah Beloso (12 Jose)

With the Christmas season fast approaching, more people will be in and out of malls made more crowded by the influx of shoppers going to and from stores to get presents for loved ones and friends. Heavy traffic is inescapable. So, what's a cheap yet efficient ride that can get people from one place to another this season? The jeepney, of course!

Thank God for our jeepneys, for they help us get to our destinations, especially students who do not drive or own cars. However, the jeepney owners are facing a problem nowadays: the impending jeepney phaseout.

The Jeepney Modernization Program aims to cut noise and smoke

emissions by phasing out the old regular Sarao jeepneys we have always known that reflect our culture, and replace them with new, more environmentally friendly units. But a big difference between the old and the new jeepneys is its price. Yesterday's jeepneys can be bought for only around P800,000 as opposed to the modern type that costs up to P2.5 million. It could be too high for many jeepney owners to afford.

Once the phaseout is implemented we might see less jeepneys in the



future, as there are owners who will be unable to pay millions of pesos for the new units. Could it be our last Christmas with the old jeeps, as the LTFRB has declared that it is firm on its June 2020 deadline for the jeepney drivers and operators to comply with the program? By then, it seems that people will find it more challenging to commute, making it harder for students to get where they need to go.

LITERARY

LITERARY

The Last Letter to Santa Claus

By Danielle Tecson (8 Emerald)

Dear Santa Claus, today is Christmas, my favorite holiday
So much joy, laughter, and singing on Jesus' birthday
A ginormous Christmas tree with beautiful lights
A cold winter breeze but still no snow in sight

I have wished for a box that can sing
A beautiful bag with a sling
I have wished for a horse that I can ride
And a dog to stay by my side

I wished for a ring with jewels and a beautiful crown
I wished for a toy car that's chocolate brown
I wished for an ankylosaurus as my pet
Or at least a dinosaur tooth I can put beside my bed

I wished for a night light to stop night fears
I even wished for some flying deer
I wished that it would snow one day
So I could build a giant snowman and try a sleigh

I gave you cookies and milk before I went to bed
But I still never got what I wanted
So I thought I was on the naughty list
But I always did my best

But now I know you only did what was best
I should put all of these desires to rest
Because all that I need is already with me
A family that finds joy in making me happy.

LITERARY



Our Christmas

By Ma. Francesca Hernandez (10 Emerald)

The joy
The night
The light
Everyone in line under the Christmas light,
Different kinds of food to find along the sidelines.
Gifts under the tree,
A star above thee,
All join under the same cold night sky.
Cheers are heard from door to door,
Firecrackers on the road blocking the driveways of our homes;
Sparks of new memories are seen and felt in this moment.



COMICS

Filipino Moms on Christmas

By Millen Ross Lazaro (11 Amorsolo)



LITERARY



Superhero Halloween at OBMC



► **By Francesca Dipos (10 Emerald)**

On October 25 the Casa and Intermediate students of OB Montessori Center–Las Piñas participated in the annual Trick or Treat before going on their semester vacation. This year’s theme revolved around the superheroes of DC and Marvel Comics: Wonder Woman, Thor, Batman, and Spiderman.



the arriving students their prepacked loot bags.

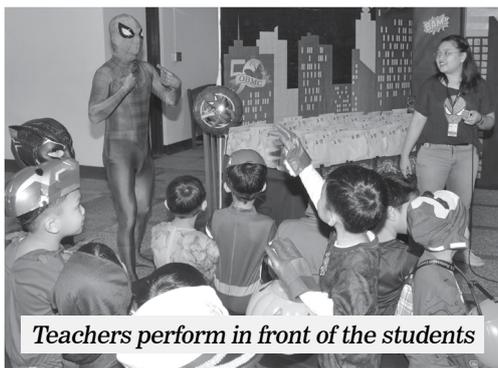
In the gallery the theme was Wonder Woman, where the students watched novice teachers perform. The decorations consisted of comic book pictures of Wonder Woman and an impressive improvised helicopter.

on Spiderman, whose universe was the theme of the Casa and Primary Departments’ building.

In the main building, the lobby was transformed into Thor’s Asgard, decorated with a red runway and props to make it as realistic and striking as possible. The administrative personnel in Asgardian costumes cheerfully greeted and gave

The Gotham City-themed Audio-Visual Room designed by the High School Department had its own Batmobile. The students watched a short clip before being greeted by the costumed teachers and given their treats.

Thanks for all the hard work put into the transformation of the campus facilities! From Casa to High School, everyone had fun with their Trick or Treat experience this year.



Teachers perform in front of the students

The students dressed in colorful superhero, princess, and other popular costumes, with their bags ready to collect treats. They were also provided with different entertainment like watching a short film

