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## Filipino Delegates Join the Discovering Deaf Worlds Empower Program

By: Mackie Calbay, Rey Alfred Lee, Rowella Tanjusay-Par, Naty Natividad, and Raphy Domingo

Four DLS-CSB staff and faculty members recently joined the [Professional Fellows EMPOWER Community Program](#), funded by the U.S. Department of State (DOS)'s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Through this program, 10 Filipino Deaf leaders and one hearing representative participated in a three-week professional development training with [Discovering Deaf Worlds](#) in Rochester, New York, and Washington, D.C, in the U.S. from May 5 - 26, 2013.

A similar number of American participants will visit the Philippines in November 2013 for follow-on programming. The aim of the program is for Filipino and American participants to share and exchange knowledge in the areas of Deaf education, policy, advocacy, culture, organizational development, and community services. This program is part of an ongoing collaboration between Discovering Deaf Worlds and the Philippine Federation of the Deaf (PFD), aimed at the improvement of Deaf lives and communities.



Dr. James DeCaro, Vice President of DDW's Board, explains how to develop the Vision and Mission in a Strategic Planning Seminar



David Justice, Executive Program of Discovering Deaf Worlds, introduces Dr. Denise Thew -- speaker on "Deaf Wellness."



Allie Rice, Youth Program Coordinator under the National Association of the Deaf in the US. She presented about the Youth Program, working with Youth organization, providing events/activities, advocacy lobbying with government; leadership training and service for the Deaf youth.



Group picture with the National Technical Institute for the Deaf Student Life team

This program provided leadership training for Filipino Deaf leaders by meeting influential and successful Deaf leaders and hearing advocates abroad who gave lecture sessions and workshops on topics like Organizational Development, Social Entrepreneurship, Strategic Planning, Project Evaluation, Grant Writing, Fund Development, Disability Law and Rights, Advocacy Planning, and others. These workshops made an impact and have solidified the participants' passion in serving the Deaf community.



Jessie Flores asks a question relating to Community-Based Rehabilitation



Lunch time together with Discovering Deaf Worlds members and Filipino Delegates.



Discussion Group on the objectives of Philippine Federation of the Deaf's Vision and Mission



The group visits The Capitol in Washington, D.C.



Raphy Domingo, Coordinator, Education Access for the Deaf - asking a question about Project Management and Planning

Aside from lectures and workshops, the group also toured around famous landmarks like Niagara Falls and the Rochester Lilac Festival. We visited organizations and institutions like the Rochester Institute of Technology-National Technical Institute for the Deaf, University of Rochester, Rochester School for the Deaf, St. Mary's School for the Deaf in Buffalo, New York, Gallaudet University, National Association of the Deaf, Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Federal Communication Commission, and the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C.



The Filipino delegation with lecturer Prof. Guillaume Chastel, ASL Program, University of Rochester, New York



Natividad Natividad introduced the Discovering Deaf Worlds and Filipino Delegates to all ASL class members



Patrick Ablaza providing an explanation on Mental Health



Sharing experiences of Miako Rankino, PhD, CI/CT on "Interpreter Ethics and Practices"



Proud Filipino 10 Deaf Leaders and 1 Hearing Advocate stand along with Discovering Deaf Worlds Executive Director and Program. [From left to right David Justice, Mackie Calbay, Rowella Tanjusay-

Par, Patrick Bryan Ablaza, Rey Alfred Lee, George Lintag, Raphy Domingo, Natividad Natividad, Jessie Susan Flores. Jesdelton Romo, Hazel Bual, Yvette Apurado-Bernardo, and Davin Searls]



Filipino Delegates revising the Philippine Federation of the Deaf's Vision and Mission guided by Davin Searls, Executive Director of Discovering Deaf Worlds

One of the most important things we learned is how we need to first gather Deaf leaders together with diverse skills, then meet and agree on a common vision and mission for the community. Then the next step is to set up a strong foundation within the organization with effective policies and guidelines on the organization's internal operations. It is important for Filipino Deaf leaders, including us, to begin working at the grassroots level and climb up towards our goals. With a strong organization we can collectively find and create solutions to the different challenges facing the Deaf community in the Philippines.



With inspiring lecturer of "Deafhood and Empowerment" by MJ Bienvenu, PhD



Howard Rosenblum, Chief Executive Officer of National Deaf Association, shared the introduction of NAD, working with Disabilities Law, and inspiring great experiences.



Rey Alfred Lee, President of Philippine Federation of the Deaf (PFD), providing an explanation on Strategic Planning





Learning about the "Disability Law" by Michael Schwartz, DDW Board Member and Associate Professor of Law in Syracuse University, Rochester, New York

These are just a few of the many insights that we have gained from the EMPOWER program. We shall bring these lessons home and share with the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde-School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies and Center for Education Access and Development (DLS-CSB SDEAS and CEAD) through a learning session. We can also apply these learning experiences to our work for the benefit of SDEAS and CEAD stakeholders.



Deaf Youth leaders contributed ideas about the Philippine Federation of the Deaf Youth Section's Vision/Mission and Objectives



Discovering Deaf Worlds Farewell Party.  
Thank you to Hairston Family for hosted this wonderful party!

We are grateful to the U.S. Department of State and the Discovering Deaf Worlds for this valuable opportunity. Truly, this has been an empowering experience! We all are fired up to roll up our sleeves and begin the task ahead, remembering Helen Keller's words, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."