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# Manila Women's Forum

A Network of Women Professionals

May 2012

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## 100 Years of Love and Life in the Philippines

By Anjali Kumar



*Photo at left: Jessie Coe Lichauco (seated, in blue dress) with MWF Chair Lisa Lumbao (standing, second from left) and other MWF members. Photo at right: Jessie with Irene Marcos Araneta and the evening's host, Liza Araneta Marcos.*

**J**essie Coe Lichauco, a resplendent centenarian, regaled the women of Manila Women's Forum with her indomitable sense of humor and zest for life. Our proverbial Grandmother with a fairytale smile and twinkling eyes turned 100 in January this year. She was born an American in Cuba, married Filipino Marcial P. Lichauco and has

lived in Manila for over sixty years, adopting the country and the people as her own.

Her late husband Marcial, the first Filipino to graduate from Harvard, was a corporate lawyer, the first government corporate counsel, and a diplomat who helped achieve Philippine independence. Jessie has been a witness to modern Filipino history—having known Presidents Quezon and

Roxas, General Douglas MacArthur, all the U.S. governor generals and ambassadors since 1933, and seen the atrocities of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines.

It was in the house of gracious Liza Araneta Marcos that women of all nationalities and different walks of life converged on the evening of March 19 to meet with Jessie, her daughter Sylvia  
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**May MWF Meeting** ■ **When:** Monday, 2012 May 21, 6:30 p.m. ■ **Where:** Home of Liliana Marulanda, 2 San Ignacio St., Urdaneta Village, Makati. ■ **What:** As a follow up to the February meeting in which numerous charities expressed their need for volunteers, the May meeting will introduce two groups that bring volunteers to the Philippines from other countries. Jonas Tetangco, CEO of DevConcepts PH, will speak about the Australian Volunteers for International Development, which places skilled Australian volunteers with local host organizations to help build capacity and achieve sustainable development. Juliette Kwee, Country Director of World Activity, will speak about how her organization provides support for those who want to volunteer or do internships in the Philippines. Their clients are mainly from Europe, and they also place people who would like to teach English as a foreign language. Juliette Kwee and Klaartje Laan of WorldActivity Philippines will speak about how the organization provides support for those who want to volunteer, do internships, or teach English as a foreign language (TEFL) in the Philippines. Their clients are mainly from Europe, especially the Netherlands. ■ **Bring:** Something to share for the potluck dinner. ■ **June Meeting:** Monday, 2012 June 18.

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Lichauco de Leon, founder and president of Lola Grande Foundation, and her granddaughter Sunshine de Leon.

The pleasant evening's agenda was to hear Jessie—ever so curious, active and caring—talk of a book, taken from a series of letters by her husband about living in Manila during the Second World War from a civilian's perspective and of her own experiences as an American woman married to a Filipino having spent her life helping Filipino women and children. The book is called "Dear Mother Putnam" and was sold to those interested before and after the meeting.

Granddaughter Sunshine, third of Jessie's 18 grandchildren and seven children, described her grandmother as a true humanitarian and said she had been following her around with her tape recorder for years, hoping to document and preserve her memories in a book or on film so "people can remember the beauty of the past yet also learn from it to create an even better future." Sunshine tried to show a short teaser movie clip from her work in progress, however, technology

played spoil sport and we could not enjoy the same as a group. There were also some problems with the audio system, but Jessie was not deterred. She answered many questions from the audience about her life and personal philosophy.

She said she was with us all that evening of her "free will and with joy in my heart," so true, for it was indeed joyous to hear her talk of the international group she was amongst and as she explained "pigmentation is the only difference among the different races."

She went on to explain what led her to this amazing life. She said "I met a young man, secretary-general in Washington, who was a wonderful speaker and decided to get married. I travelled by ship to the Philippines." She shared the secret of her happy married life, saying "Love the individual and the purpose of his life." She also advised, "Don't be in a hurry to have babies, take time to get to know each other first."

All of nineteen when she arrived, she said she "felt completely at home in the Philippines. Many more people spoke Spanish and life was gentle."

Asked for the secret of her longevity

and her intrinsic beauty, Jessie said, "I apply fresh coconut oil on my face," and she never drank or smoked or ate too much pork. She also said she has always tried not to worry about those things over which she had no control.

She connected with each one in the audience in a special way. Her sincere eye contact, easy manner, quick retorts, happy demeanor, linking all seemingly unconnected thoughts to facts of life—everything belied her age. "With an ability to speak to anyone any time, and to gather their life story within minutes, she bonds with people with inexplicable ease," says Sunshine of her grandmother.

We pray for many more years for our young lady and hope to meet her another evening or even to drop in on her at her house by the Pasig and hear her paint history with her colorful words.

The family home by the Pasig River on Pedro Gil Street in Santa Ana, Manila served as a refuge for many during the Japanese occupation in 1945. The house now is designated as a "Heritage House" by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) thanks to the hard work of Jessie's daughter Sylvia. ■

## CIDG-ATCCD rescue male minor from pedophile in Cubao hotel

January 05, 2012

Operatives of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) Anti-Transnational and Cyber Crime Division have rescued a male minor last night from a homosexual government official who brought the victim inside a hotel in Cubao, Quezon City for sex.

CIDG chief, Police Director Samuel D. Pagdilao Jr. identified the suspect as Victor Suma, alias Varic Lee, 42, Employment Officer III of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and a resident of 24C Matiyaga St. Pinyahan, Quezon City.

The suspect was arrested inside room number 502 of Walnut Hotel located at New York St. Cubao, Quezon City while in the company of a minor. The CIDG has charged the suspect with violation of anti-child abuse law.

Also arrested during the operation were four employees of Walnut Hotel who were charged for promoting and facilitating activities that constitute

child prostitution.

Pagdilao identified the four employees as Anthony Benitez, 25, room boy; Michael Torcuator, 27, acting supervisor and cook; Jennifer Fajardo, cashier; and Mike Ron Santos, 21, room boy.

According to ATCCD chief, Police Senior Superintendent Gilbert Sosa,

*... the arrest of the suspects stemmed from the complaints of Paolo Gumaro and six other including three minors through the assistance of Fr. Matthieu Dauchez, Executive Director of Tulay Ng Kabataan Foundation, a non-government organization social welfare and development agency.*

The complaint was coursed through the cyber tip line of CIDG's Special Project "Angel Net", a 24/7 operation center and website that also serves as

serves as a center for protecting children from internet pornography and other form of abuses.

Investigation disclosed that the victims were befriended by the suspect through texting and social network chatting. The suspect allegedly lured the victims with money in exchange of sexual services. The victims told the CIDG that the suspect often use the Walnut Hotel as venue.

Sosa said that Suma was supposed to meet one of the male victims for the second time last December 30, 2011 but the meeting was rescheduled last night, January 4. The suspect and the victim agreed to rendezvous at a fast food restaurant in Kalayaan Avenue, in Quezon City.

Around 7:30 last night, the suspect on board a Suzuki Celerio hatchback (PIH 381) arrived at the said restaurant and picked-up the victim and proceeded to Walnut Hotel where they checked-in at room 502. Immediately after the suspect has brought the victim inside the room, the CIDG operatives carried out the rescue operation and arrested the suspect.

(For more information visit <http://cidgangelnet.ph/main/?p=379>)

# The Generosity of Street Children

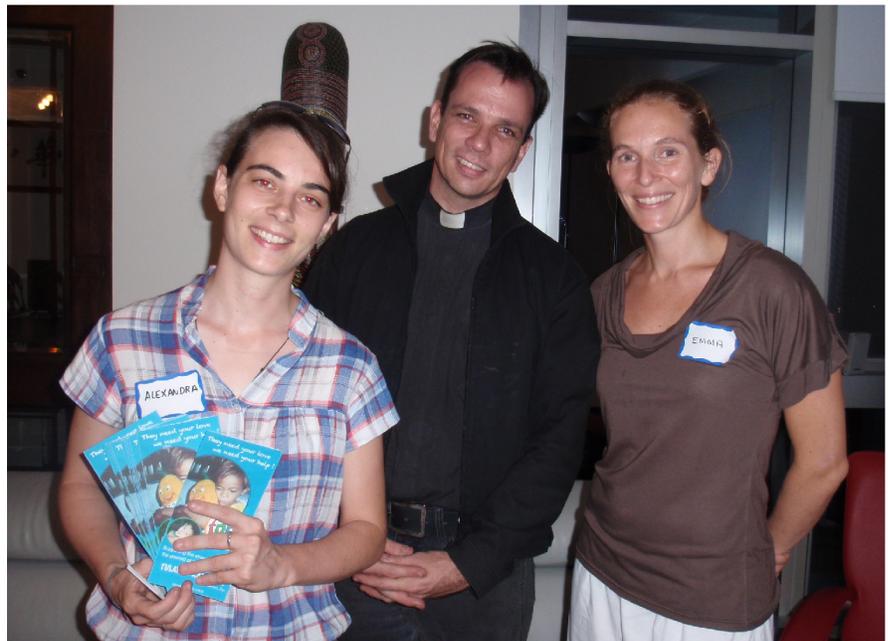
By Alexandra Chapeleau and Emmanuelle Fallourd

**F**ather Matthieu Dauchez, director of Tulay ng Kabataan Foundation, gave an inspiring presentation at the April 16 meeting about the generosity and joy of the street children he has encountered, and their need to be loved and give love.

Fr. Matthieu came to the Philippines from France as a volunteer in 1998 at the age of 23 during his seminary period, and decided to come back and stay for the Tulay ng Kabataan (A Bridge for Children) Foundation. He was ordained in Manila in 2004 and serves as the resident priest at the EDSA Shrine.

The purpose of his speech wasn't to present the problems of the Philippines, nor all the details of the foundation's work. Instead, he talked about how we can try to understand what is happening in the hearts of the children, how we can help them, and how they can teach us about generosity and joy. After a short video introduction, he presented the three programs of the foundation: street children, children in slums, and scavengers' children. Then he told us how dedicated the 115 Filipino employees of the foundation are to the children. Five French volunteers with long-term contracts are also dedicated to the foundation's mission. The street educators deal with children all over Metro Manila, covering 99 places. Some children live in the foundation's residence homes where there is a family atmosphere. In the slums and on Smokey Mountain, TNK provides health, pre-schooling, and nutrition to poor children.

Fr. Matthieu talked about how amazed he is by the mothers he encounters in the slums. They are pillars of strength and resourcefulness for their families; on the other hand, many of the men drink too much and neglect their families. The mothers fight for their children. Fr. Matthieu then shared a few numbers regarding the foundation: 265 children living 24/7 at the foundation, 4 tons of rice is used per month to feed all the children, 90% of the children were beaten/battered children when they came to the center, and 75% were sexually abused.



*Alexandra Chapeleau, Father Matthieu Dauchez, and Emmanuelle Fallourd*

## **Sleeping among the garbage**

Fr. Matthieu showed a picture of a boy sleeping among the garbage in front of a KFC restaurant in Monumento to illustrate how low the self esteem of street children can be. Most of the children leave home because they believe they are not loved. It's likely the boy chose to sleep among the garbage rather than

in a cleaner area because he views himself as worthless and has a deep wound in his heart. Fr. Matthieu said this cannot be.

## **Jonathan: "a heart beating again"**

Fr. Matthieu then shared the story of Jonathan. Working in Divisoria and totally neglected by his family,

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*(The Generosity . . . from page 3)*

Jonathan arrived at the foundation a few years ago. He was 10 years old and had never celebrated Christmas with his family. At the foundation, he celebrated his first Christmas and received his first gift (for Christmas, each child at the foundation receives one gift).

Fr. Matthieu was amazed when he saw Jonathan give his gift to a poor child passing by the street in front of the center. When he asked Jonathan why he had done that, he said “he has nothing.” This was the beginning of the resurrection of Jonathan, proving that despite everything he had been through, there was something deep inside that can’t be broken. Fr. Matthieu was even more amazed by this act of generosity when he remembered his own childhood in France, when he received many gifts each Christmas but would not part with even one of them. This is surely the experience of children growing up in middle class and wealthy homes.

Whatever has happened in the life of these children, they want to tell us that their hearts are still capable of love. It’s usually hard to convince street children to go to the foundation—but they are willing to go if they realize that they will be loved there. Fr. Matthieu said he witnesses miracles every day at the foundation, even if the situation of a child is terrible. With their smile, the children show us there is true joy within them.

The motto of the foundation is: “They need your love, we need your help.” Helping without love is not fruitful.

During the question and answer



period, Fr. Matthieu explained that about 90% of the foundation’s P40 million annual budget comes from France. Someone asked how she can make donations in kind. Alexandra Chapeleau, a volunteer from France who is working to increase donations, said TNK can pick up donations in Makati on a regular basis. Those who are interested can drop off their donations at Emma Fallourd’s house (1827 Santan Street, Dasmariñas Village, Makati) or Lisa Lumbao’s house (26B Casa Real Townhouses, Real Street, Urdaneta Village, Makati). Fr. Matthieu said his dream is to have people who would commit to regular donations, such as one sack of rice a month, rather than one-time donations. Regular donations show our love, and love is lasting!

In conclusion, Fr. Matthieu said the most important thing is not to feed the maximum of children and for the children to study hard and become lawyers or doctors. Success for the TNK team is the reconciliation of a

child with his family or with life. What a victory when a former street child says: “When I have children I don’t want them to suffer as I suffered and to live the way I have been living.”

If you would like more information on the foundation and ways to help, please contact Alexandra Chapeleau:

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+632 491 7374  
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www.tnkfoundation.org

## Manila Women’s Forum

**Manila Women’s Forum (MWF)** is a cross-cultural network for women. It provides opportunities to build friendships, talk to women of various cultures, and share information about resources. Our meetings are intended to provide intellectual stimulation and lead to personal and professional development. All women are welcome to join.

The current officers are: **Lisa Lumbao**, Chair; **Julia Holz**, Treasurer and Membership; **Beulah P. Taguiwalo**, Newsletter; **Lisa Stuart**, Message Board Moderator; **Evelyn Mendiola**, Membership; **Shari Virjee Tañada**, Message Board; **Caroline Wright**, Message Board; **Camille Dalmacio**, Message Board.

Cost of membership is P300 per year. Members receive a copy of the current mailing list in addition to the newsletter, which is also sent to non-members. A contribution is collected at each monthly meeting: P20 for members, and P50 for non-members. For more information about MWF, please contact Lisa Lumbao at Tel. 813-0168, or at [lumbao@mozcom.com](mailto:lumbao@mozcom.com).

### MWF Newsletter

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