

Tahanan News

Bi-annual Newsletter of Save A Tahanan, Inc.

Taha'nan n. [Filipino] home.—root word, **tahan** v. to live, to reside, to stop crying

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LORENZ LAPID'S STM EXPERIENCE

by Roselli Tria

In late September 2003, Lorenz Lapid and son Patrick joined Honesto and Rosie Tria on their visit to STM Chapters in the Philippines. Two months later, I spoke with Lorenz about her experience.

"In seven days, we went to many towns. When I travel the Philippines, I usually experience jetlag. But during this trip, I didn't feel jetlag because I was very excited. At the end of each day, I would think about what

would happen the next day."

"We saw a couple who lived in a small house surrounded with lots of plants. They grew peanuts, cacao, ginger, sugar cane, and eggplant. They raised ducks, geese, and pigs. They seemed very self-sufficient. Patrick took lots of pictures because it was an incredible sight. You can really see the fruits of their labor."

"We met with a Management Team

composed of younger as well as older members who work with other NGO's. They have lots of projects like Dressmaking classes."

"There is a group that has a stall at the local market. There they sell their member's products. They also sell household items bought in bulk. This way, they help their members and their members help sustain the group."

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BASKETS OF HOPE

by Freddie Esteves

Searching for more funds to sustain the operations of each chapter and reaching out to more families in the Philippines are always in the hearts and minds of Save a Tahanan, Inc. members. A constant part of every meeting includes finding creative ways to attract more donors or avenues to raise funds.

With the spirit of Christmas hovering around us and gift giving not far away, a suggestion was made to approach companies to order their gift baskets from STI. There was agreement.

The first hurdle was who to approach. One company in Sacramento that sends gift

baskets to their valuable clients every year came into mind. They were approached and shown samples. Impressed with the samples, they made their order.

The next hurdle was the manpower to make the fifty baskets ordered. The solution came in the form of friends who gave their spare time and had the heart to help. All baskets were made and delivered. From this, a decent amount was raised.

This is a testament to the strong commitment STI members have - members who will find all possible ways and means to achieve

its goals. No great number of hurdles can make them quit. They look at these challenges as a first step towards realizing their dreams.

So the next time you are in need of gifts to give, or are in need of services such as event planning, think of the STI family. You will not only be satisfied by the quality of service you receive, but you will also be rewarded with the knowledge that you made a big difference in the lives of underprivileged *kababayan*s[☺]



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Lorenz Lapid's STM Experience (con't)

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"This group does not remove members who cannot repay their loans. Instead, they give them the opportunity to contribute by, for example, giving them handbags to make."

There were also some challenges. "We visited a town that was having difficulties collecting loan payments. It was a fishing town where the men faced with competition from illegal trawl fishing. Their chairman has been looking for different projects for the group. I was told that this town was one of the best performers last year."

"People explained how they became part of a community by joining STM. They formed new friends, learned about accountability and financial responsibility. They are happy, like being part of a family."

Lorenz could not remember the names of all the towns they visited. "We were constantly on the road. We had lunch with one chapter and dinner with another. We had a full schedule."

"From what I've seen of what we've done and of the success we've had, this is a very nice project. We can help people and we can see that these people strive hard."

"I was very impressed with what I saw and by the people we met. We heard testimonies on how STI helped improve their lives. These beneficiaries were so moved by their experience that they were practically in tears while sharing their stories."

"I learned a lot from my visit. I saw how they operate. I learned that we can really help the poor. Of course, it's a two-way street. They also have to work hard."

"I learned a lot from my visit. I saw how they operate. I learned that we can really help the poor."

In reflecting on her attitude towards charity work: "When it comes to giving, I am different from Pete. Pete liked to help and when he gave, he gave wholeheartedly. I do it to get it over with so I could go on and do something else. However, with Save A Tahanan, I now understand how Pete felt. With Save A Tahanan, we can really see how our projects impact the lives of the beneficiaries."

"I am also involved with Medical Mission. However, with Medical Mission, we don't have the opportunity to get to know the people who ask for our help. We don't know what happens to the ones we've helped. With Save A Tahanan, we can really see how our projects impact the lives of beneficiaries. This is the big difference."

"It's not easy to ask for help from Filipinos



Dressmaking Class in Tabaco, Albay

because of the politics involved. But I think people will give if they know where their money goes. Here I am all excited by what I saw and getting my friends intrigued. Yet, they keep asking, 'How do you know the money will go there?'"

"The newsletters help. I shared the newsletter on the Santa Rita Chapter with the Santa Rita group that Pete belonged to and they were surprised at the progress that STM has

made. They didn't expect that."

"I've been thinking about what I would do when I retire and I think it will be working with STI."

After two months, Lorenz still shows a lot of emotion when sharing her experience. I really felt how moved she was by what she saw during her STM tour. She has become a true believer.

Lorenz is the widow of the late Pete Lapid. ❧



LBK participant in Calabanga, Camarines Sur

Seventy Five and still counting . . .

by Freddie Esteves

The key to being happy is doing what you love, but first you need to find out what you love to do. For Honesto Tria, he knows what makes him happy --- being around family and friends, and lending a helping hand. One day, some 60 years ago, while walking from his residence in Diliman, Quezon City, to school, Far Eastern University, in Morayta, Manila, Honesto made a commitment to share his blessings with others, if given the opportunity.

Through hard work, dedication, and a bit of luck, Honesto slowly made it to the top. From joining Manila Electric Company (MERALCO) as a cadet engineer, he rose to become Assistant to the President. With all of his blessings, Honesto never forgot his commitment to help. His house was open to fellow Bicolanos needing a room to stay in Manila. He gave referrals to deserving applicants seeking employment at MERALCO. He freely gave advice to subordinates needing help. He also helped in other ways, such as doing electrical wiring of friends' homes.

Honesto married the former Rosie Falcon in 1958, and have three daughters - Roselli, Ayet, and Florian. Time with his family was interrupted from 1972 to 1978, when Honesto decided to stay behind in San Francisco after then President Marcos declared Martial Law. He endured being away from his family until 1978, when Rosie and their children joined him. By this time, Honesto was working for PG&E.

Honesto was able to devote his passion for public service full time when he retired. In 1986, Honesto and Rosie, together with six other couples from Bay Area with roots in Calabanga, searched for a worthy project and this created Save-a-Tahanan, Inc. (STI). The aim of STI is to help alleviate the standard of living of our kababayans through

microfinancing incorporated with values-oriented and skills-enhancement seminars. STI's first chapter was set-up in Calabanga, Camarines Sur.

Honesto was dedicated to STI from the start. It was his dedication that helped STI endure its difficult years. Each of his numerous trips to the Philippines included a survey trip of at least one chapter. Unlike his business trips during his MERALCO days, these travels are full of sacrifice and patience. He would visit remote areas to look for deserving individuals who will qualify to be a member of STI. Lodging would not be in hotels but in friends' homes or in makeshift rooms.

Honesto's perseverance, together with STI's volunteers, donors and friends, paved the way for more than 700 families in 15 chapters to have steady source of income, food on the tables, decent houses, and the ability to send their children to school. Most

important of all, they are able to be in happy families.

Last June 21, Honesto was treated to a big party for his 75th birthday. Being one who shied away from the limelight, he agreed to a big celebration on condition that guests were asked to donate to STI instead of other types of presents. He saw a great opportunity to have all the things he loved at one time - to be together with friends and family, and to help raise funds for STI. The celebration was a great success. Everyone saw the happiness in Honesto's face throughout the celebration. In addition, the donations made will benefit more families.

His romance with public service started on that day he made a commitment to himself. Honesto is 75 and is counting more - to share opportunities that will eventually help others fulfill their dreams and as well as their passions. ▣



With a handful of friends



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WE NEED YOUR HELP

Your Contribution Will Make a DIFFERENCE

Be a Donor of SAVE-A-TAHANAN, INC. (STI) and help provide opportunities for our underprivileged *kababayans*

- \$ 100.00 will sponsor a family with 5 to 6 children
- \$ 50.00 will start up loan for a mother or father with 1 or 2 children
- \$ 20.00 will help with other family development cost

Any amount will help.

Please make your check payable to Save A Tahanan, Inc.
Your donation is tax-deductible.

Save A Tahanan, Inc. (STI) is a tax exempt, 510(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization. It was founded in 1986 by a group of Filipino-Americans based in San Francisco, California, a group of seven families who originally came from Calabanga, Camarines Sur.

Its mission is to mobilize resources to improve the lives of families through training and microfinancing and to empower them as responsible members of the community.

Its vision is to promote self-sufficient and stable families, leading communities to develop opportunities and collective solutions to issues of poverty, and upholding respect for all people of economic levels. STI believes that a self-sufficient tahanan (home) is the foundation of a strong society. It is guided by the principles of sharing and participation that instills accountability.

STI works in close partnership with its target beneficiaries, community leaders, and other stakeholders to implement its various programs in the project areas.

Musings from an STI Donor

Anonymous

Living comfortably with my family here in the United States for almost a decade, I could not care less for what is happening back home. Sure I hear and read horrible stories, but not since personally witnessing these horrible stories during my trip there did I realize I have to take an extra step. I have to take the risk. I have to set aside my apprehensions and doubts. I have to do something for our kababayans. And my next dilemma is, how?

With a dozen of non-profit organizations to choose from, which one

can I trust with my hard-earned money? Then, a friend introduced me to Save A Tahanan, Inc. where she is a volunteer. I soon found myself researching about the project. Reading about the program and talking to the people in charge of operations diminished my fear of taking the risk. I got hooked.

What made me choose STI? What hooked me to the program is their skills and values formation seminar that they give their would-be beneficiaries. The seminar teaches the potential beneficiaries the value of

diligence and productiveness, honesty and integrity, along with honing their crafts and improving their business. The seminar changes attitudes and improves self-confidence among them. In addition, the camaraderie among the would-be beneficiaries impressed me a lot. But the most wonderful thing that impressed me is STI's care for the people they help and those who help them help these people.

You could really see the difference STI is making in the lives of our *kababayans*. Talk to them and their smiles are

enough evidence of gratitude for providing them with opportunities to live a decent life. The chance to be a part of this endeavor makes me feel good deep inside. This is not just a learning process for them but for me as well. I found out that you also feel secure by reaching out. Supporting programs like this one purged my fear demons of out me. I took that first step towards bringing and helping them make a better future for themselves. In return, rewarding myself with a heightened self-worth