



GAZETTE

The PCSNJ, Inc.

Fall Edition

November 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Erlinda B. Juliano, MEdD, Professor Emerita, UPenn



Magandang buhay sa inyong lahat (long live to all)!

I am deeply honored and delighted to share with you a brief report on the first year of my term as President of this prestigious organization. It has been truly a year of meaningful initiative and remarkable growth in our community. Despite the challenges faced along the way, we successfully carried out our planned community projects through the unwavering dedication of our volunteers and steadfast support of our members and community partners.

Throughout the past term, our calendar of activities was administered with great enthusiasm, unity and a shared sense of fulfillment. Enumerated below are some activities completed:

□ Halo-Halloween – A fun and creative hybrid workshop led by the Philippine Community Youth (PCY), where participants donned Halloween costumes while selling and enjoying halo-halo, a popular Filipino dessert made with crushed ice and evaporated milk.

□ Launch of Four Grant- Assisted Programs –

1. Asian American Cultural Celebration (May 12): A vibrant event showcasing the cultural richness of various Asian communities.

2. Filipino American Heritage Month Celebration (October 18): Featured high school students performing and presenting different Asian traditions and cultural practices, including Filipino patriotic songs and Balagtasan—a traditional Filipino lyrical debate between teachers and students.

3. Filipino American History

October is a special time to celebrate the rich, diverse, and inspiring contributions of Filipino Americans to the fabric of the United States. From early pioneers and laborers to modern-day leaders across different fields, Filipino Americans have played a vital role in shaping American society. This month commemorates their history, resilience, and achievements—highlighting stories that inspire future generations. Let us honor this vibrant community and recognize the ongoing legacy of Filipino Americans nationwide.

4. Pagpag Workshop- We also had a workshop on “Pagpag” depicting poor people collecting and recycling left over food for sale for poor families. As a response to this workshop, a “Balikbayan” was set up to help the children and parents of an indigenous community in Tanay, Rizal. We continue to create sustainable impact to our “kababayan” in the Philippines.

5. Parol Making to be launched on November 29, 2025

We appreciate Camden County Cultural and Heritage Commission with the support from New Jersey Historical Commission for approving our grant proposal of \$6,000 for the year 2025. Grant application has been launched for 2026.

We are making impact this year through the implementation of the following activities and projects, namely:

□ Youth Empowerment Workshop Series – 90% of attendees reported increased confidence in their leadership skills.

□ Induction Ball (August 2024) – Successfully raised over \$10,000, which was allocated to support various committee activities.

□ Membership Update – The organization currently has 339 members, including 2 annual members, 29 senior members, and 8 honorary members.

□ Weekly Line Dancing – Held every Wednesday at the Philippine Community Center, this fun and engaging activity welcomes everyone to learn both new and classic dances.

□ Senior Citizens' Monthly Get-Together – A once-a-month luncheon at a local restaurant brings our senior members together. Proceeds from these gatherings go toward assisting needy elders and the underprivileged through balikbayan box donations.

□ Volunteer Recognition Initiative – This monthly acknowledgment program has significantly improved volunteer retention and morale.

□ Financial Status – The organization remains financially sound, maintaining balanced operations and diversified funding sources.

Next year, we will focus on expanding outreach to underserved communities, strengthening our digital engagement and securing multi-year funding commitments.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our officers, members and community leaders and collaborators for sharing their volunteer time, talent and treasure in making our activities and events well supported and successful.

Mabuhay ang PCSNJ!

From the Membership Chair By Bingle Tagle, Membership Chair

PCSNJ has always been actively soliciting members. The membership committee with the guidance of the current officers has updated the various membership categories and fees:

Individual Lifetime Membership - \$100.00
Yearly Individual Membership - \$ 25.00
Former PCY Lifetime Membership prior to age 21 - \$50.00
Yearly PCY Membership - \$5.00
Senior Life member (62 and above) - Free membership (no voting rights)

Lifetime members - 343 Annual Member - 2 Senior members - 29 Honorary Members - 5

Qualifications for paid membership (annual and lifetime) are as follows:

- 1. Must be at least 18 years of age**
- 2. Is recommended for membership by at least two paid members of the association**
- 3. Submits an official application form to the Membership Committee**
- 4. Pays the approved dues within 60 days from date of application. Membership will become effective upon full payment of approved dues and approval of the council.**

Welcome to our newest members:

Lifetime Member - Nick Bisio from Newark , DE
Annual Members - Drs. Mark and Rose Mason from Cherry Hill, NJ

If you have any special talents you would like to share, please contact me at: bingle05@gmail.com.

Check our website for
upcoming activities and more!



www.PCSNJ.org

Follow us on social media!



PCSNJ, Inc.



@pcsnjinc

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR TENANTS**Editorial Board**

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Emil Rotaecche, Efren Salugao, Bingle Tagle, Femy Whitzell

ERRATUM

We are pleased to present the official newsletter of PCSNJ, INC. GAZETTE, which showcased events and activities during the last quarter of Year 2025. The technical staff took time to prepare, design layouts and review this 24 page newsletter.

We sincerely offer our apologies for any error that may occur by omission or commission.

EDITORIAL BOARD

**Jerome Ancheta**

As President-Elect, I assume the responsibilities of the President in her absence and carry out all associated duties of the office. In addition, I supervise building operations and facility maintenance to ensure that our premises remain in excellent condition, providing a clean and welcoming environment for all visitors.

Below is an overview of recent building maintenance activities: On July 27, immediately following the FECGP election, there was continuous heavy rainfall. During this time, Wah-Gi-Wah informed me that their room had flooded. Upon inspection, I initially suspected the water was entering through the roof. I requested Eddie, our maintenance technician, to investigate the source of the leak. He determined that the water was coming from the backyard and discovered that the sump pump was malfunctioning. Eddie purchased a replacement pump and installed it, so the system is now operating properly.

Last month, per Egg-Gali's report, the PCSNJ signage was damaged when a large truck passed through the parking lot and struck its wiring. Eddie efficiently replaced the wire connecting the signage to the main power supply, ensuring that it returned to normal operation. To prevent similar incidents in the future, Senen has installed a "No Thru Traffic" sign at the entrance of the parking lot to restrict truck access. Additionally, the lighting in the women's bathroom was upgraded to LED fixtures after it was determined that the previous lights were not functioning properly.

Two weeks ago, I purchased two laptops: one for our Recording Secretary and one for our Corresponding Secretary. These devices are intended exclusively for PCSNJ use, ensuring that personal computers are not utilized for official tasks. Both laptops have been installed with Microsoft Office 2024, including Word and Excel, which are essential tools frequently used during meetings. This initiative aims to enhance recordkeeping, streamline documentation of meeting minutes, and facilitate effective communication among members. By providing this equipment, we can support all necessary official activities and minimize reliance on personal devices for work purposes. This acquisition was formally approved by Council members and officers.



Furthermore, the height of the current dumpster creates challenges in safely and efficiently disposing of heavy waste bags. As a result, I have asked Senen to assess the possibility of replacing the existing unit with a smaller dumpster that would better accommodate the decreased volume of waste.

Bingo for Charity by: Purie Ancheta

The Bingo for Charity event took place on April 6, 2025 at the Philippine Community Center from 1:00 to 5:30 PM. The \$20 entrance fee included food and drinks, with bingo cards costing \$1 for five regular games and \$10 for six big prize games. Exceeding attendance expectations, attendees enjoyed a variety of prizes, surprises, and food options. Thanks to everyone's support, the event was highly successful. Philip Reyes donated photos for the website, Carmen dela Torre sold cards, Purie Ancheta collected money, Joe Maccherone started calling balls, followed by Jerry Ancheta, and Annabelle Maccherone called for the final big prizes. The event fostered camaraderie among participants. Special thanks to Senior Citizens and donors for their contributions. Everyone enjoyed it, and we will do it again as requested.



A total of \$1,582 was raised, consisting of \$680 from cash donations, \$342 from card sales, and \$560 from attendee contributions. The expenses included \$165 for bingo cards and balls, and \$114 for soda, chips, and hoagies. Prize baskets and food items were donated. Consequently, the net amount generated was \$1,303.

PRESENTING 2025 PCSNJ Filipiniana Awardees

Sharlene Cani - Highland Regional High School

Madison Kanter - Gloucester Institute of Technology

Ian Marquez - Eastern High School

Mary Pauline Gayagoy - Egg Harbor Twp High School

Nathaniel Goldwasser - Cherry Hill West High School

Mikee Alvarez - Cherry Hill East High School

Christian Manalo - Deptford High school



PCY Officers, Adviser Reggie Ramos and PC President Linda Juliano

Scholarship Committee : Reggie Ramos

Ederlinda S Crotty

Philippine Community Youth Engagement at the Ronald McDonald House

PCY officers volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House in Camden on March 8th. The Ronald McDonald House is a nonprofit organization that helps and hosts families whose loved ones are undergoing medical treatment. The PCY officers Isabel Della Torre, Nolie Juliano, Roman and Zoe Fox-Ramos, and Leah Ramos helped prepare and serve breakfast for 40 people. They made bacon, scrambled eggs, potatoes, sausage, yogurt parfait, and pancakes. Andrew Aquino, Paolo, and Carmen DelaTorre, and Reginald Ramos accompanied them. The PCY learned how to cook breakfast, cleaned up after preparing a meal, while giving back to the community and families in need. It was a rewarding experience for all the volunteers. Afterward, they were given a tour of the facility and were invited to host more events for the families in the future.



Nolie Juliano

PCY President 2025-2026

Senior, Lenape High School

Sportscaster, LHS

Good afternoon everyone. I'd like to welcome you all to our program today. Thank you for being here as we celebrate Halloween as well as one of the most meaningful traditions in Filipino culture Undas, or All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day.

In the Philippines, Undas isn't just a time to mourn, it's a time to remember and reconnect. Every year on November 1st and 2nd, families come together to honor their loved ones who have passed away. Cemeteries come alive with candles, flowers, prayers, and laughter. It's like a family reunion, one that connects the living with those who came before us.

During this time, Filipinos travel home, clean and decorate graves, and share food and stories. Even though it's about remembering the dead, Undas is also a celebration of love, family, and faith. It reminds us to stay connected to our roots and to carry the memories of our loved ones with gratitude.

Once again, welcome everyone

Halo Halloween Report 2025 By: Reggie Ramos

The Philippine Community Youth hosted their annual Halo Halloween on Sunday, Oct 26th. The PCY officers played a big part in organizing and running the events. PCY President Nolie Juliano welcomed the audience and spoke about the connection between the Filipino tradition of Undas and Halloween. The guests enjoyed spooky games, like Halloween Bingo, Monster Musical Chairs and Toilet Paper Mummy. There was a haunted hallway and scary stories for those brave enough to venture. Of course, halo halo was served. With that said, Halo-Halloween at the Philippine Community Center is becoming a “trick or treat” tradition one scoop at a time.



What is “Balagtasan”? By: Ruben Alvarez

Recently The Philippine Community of Southern New Jersey presented a balagtasan as part of its cultural presentation. Many young people in the audience heard a balagtasan for the first time and asked where did this art form come from.

In the early 1940s and 1950s houses did not have televisions. Instead all houses have radios. The radio was the main source of entertainment at night. Radio shows became very popular. There weekly shows like “Mga Kwento ni Lola Basyang” (The Tales of Grandmother Basyang), “Principe Amante” (The Prince of Love) and of course the balagtasan. Initially balagtasan was held on stage during barrio fiestas. The first balagtasan was held April 6, 1924.

Balagtasan is a traditional form of debate done in rhyming verses named after Francisco Balagtas, the father of Philippine literature. It is a poetic debate where debaters argue topics using rhymes, meter and literary devices conceived on the spot. It is an art form for entertainment and at the same time a platform for discussing social, political and cultural issues similar to modern spoken words or rap battles.

The balagtasan has set structures. Besides the debaters there is also a moderator called the “lakandiwa” who makes sure the debaters are given equal times to present their arguments and counter points. The lakandiwa explains the topics of the debate and introduces the debaters. The lakandiwa may also declare winners on the basis of the applause of the audience. Just like the debaters, the lakandiwa must also speak in rhymes.

In the present days debaters using rhymes made up on the spot are extremely rare. But there is a move to preserve this art. Hence there are writers who actually write balagtasan and people perform it like actors. PCSNJ is one of those organizations who try to preserve this art.



Mrs. Virgie Luz and Dr. Resty Estacio honored at the PCSNJ Induction Ball by: Arelyne Pacho-Ramos, MD

Mrs Virginia Olivar-Luz was honored for her leadership, her legacy, and for being a role model in aging gracefully as a nonagenarian.

Virgie came to the United States in 1960. It was in Boston where she met and married Zosimo Luz in 1965 and were blessed with 3 children- Cecilia, Tricia and Mimi.

Despite her busy work as a dietician at Nazareth Hospital in Philadelphia, she was an active leader in the Filipino- American community, being a multiterm president of FAAP and as a founding member of the UP Alumni Association in America (UPAAA) Pa Chapter.

As Virgie was a good ballroom dancer, she decided to form the Mutya Philippine Dance Company in 1990 with the mission to preserve, promote teach and share the Filipino Culture through dance. The Mutya continues to encourage young Filipinos to learn native dances. She has been given God's gift of long life as she turned 90 in 2024. She attributes her longevity to good genes and compliance with doctor's orders.

This year in 2025, she and her husband, Zosimo also celebrated their 60th wedding Anniversary.



Doc Resty is a graduate of the University of Sto Tomas who came to the United States in the 1960s, and established his medical practice in South Jersey. His medical career included a private practice in Family Medicine, as well as part of the Medical staff at JFK and a medical officer in the Philadelphia Naval Base, among many assignments.

He served as the second Vice President of the FECGP, held leadership positions in the Delaware Valley Association of Pilipinos (DVAP) and was instrumental in giving life to a dying church in Philadelphia, ie St Augustine Church. After three decades, this church thrives with the help of a vibrant and supportive Filipino American Community.

In 1997, when an impending purchase of a building as a Philippine Community Center in Voorhees caused a furious fundraising effort, Doc Resty unhesitatingly and generously donated \$5,000.

A widower for many years, he is now happily married to Ms Tetchie Alaras, Doc Resty is a nonagenarian committed to PCSNJ.

Sinulog By: Ruben Alvarez

The word "sinulog" is a Cebuano term that refers to the action of the waves in the ocean. It is a movement that is imitated in the ritual dance to honor the Infant Jesus. When Christianity was brought to the Philippines in the 1500s, Queen Juana of Cebu was presented with the statue of the Infant Jesus. This event is now celebrated by holding yearly Sinulog Parades in Cebu usually in the month of January.

Various private Sinulog clubs take meticulous care in designing elaborate costumes for the parade. Its grandiosity can be compared to the Philadelphia Mummers parade.

The Sinulog Parade is a yearly draw from tourists coming all over the Philippines and even from abroad. In the USA

Sinulog has been adapted. Instead of street parades various sinulog clubs parade into a church before mass. The dancers in their elaborate costumes each carry the statue of the Infant Jesus doing their two forward and one backward steps to the altar. The men who may also join the dance are dressed like warriors of the during the Spanish times. Queen Juana dances in the middle of the group. Their dances in front of the altar are a shortened version of their choreography. After the mass there is usually a reception during which the various Sinulog clubs present the full choreography of their dances. Sinulog affairs had been held at various churches like St. Andrews, Our Lady of Hope, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and St. Peter in Philadelphia. It is a Filipino ritual that is spreading all over the USA. PureJ of PCSNJ is a regular sinulog participant in the surrounding churches In New Jersey.





AIDA GOMEZ CAMBA 2025 LOVE AWARD

Motivated by Love. Well before Aida Gomez Camba served as President (1984-85) of the Filipino-American Society of South Jersey (FASSJ), and the subsequent founding of the Philippine Community of Southern New Jersey (PCSNJ) in 1986-87, her actions were motivated by a deep love for the Filipino community. Since FASSJ's early days in the home of Founder and Former President, Dr. Miguel Ruelan (1974-76), Aida had been an active officer and member. In the subsequent years that followed, Aida became a devoted friend and mentor for many Filipinos seeking to belong. She became a trusted realtor and businesswoman to those hoping to own their first home in Cherry Hill or nearby townships. Today, Aida is an enduring leader among the Philippine and American communities.

Our "Manang Aida". Manang Aida can effectively mobilize anyone, especially for initiatives that were aligned with her vision. She focuses on serving not only her local community, their youth and senior citizens, but also those in the Philippine provinces. Her persuasive influence brought fruition to many "firsts" as a proactive President, an innovative Executive and a fundraising Leader. She helped to establish, among others: a scholarship program to advance excellence among Filipino-American youths; a Community Center to promote Philippine culture; a new chapel and cathedral in the Philippine provinces to instill faith. These are just a handful of examples that became a reality because of Manang Aida's persevering love. She also supported Catholic seminarians, as well as young families arriving in the US for the first time. She became their adopted mother, and likewise, they became her adopted sons and daughters. New and old friends still continue to reach out to Manang Aida, asking for special prayers, or to lead Novenas as she touched countless lives.

*Adelaida ("Aida") Gomez Camba
garnered the "2025 Love Award" from the
Filipino American Society of South Jersey
(FASSJ), for her generosity of spirit,
guiding light and genuine commitment to
serve the Filipino-American community
for over fifty years.*

A Mother and Lola. Aida's values are rooted in faith and family in her role as a Mother and Lola. Foremost, she nurtures mutual devotion through her nearly 60 years of marriage to Domingo Camba, a perpetual inventor, gardener, cook and "DIY-er". A Chemical Engineer by profession, Doming aspired to achieve greater opportunities in the US for his family. In 1974, Aida followed Doming to Cherry Hill, NJ, after three years of living apart in Manila as a single mother of four children: Lory, Teresa Linda, Romy and Jocelyn. Aida arrived to build a new life together with Doming, as they exemplified their Philippine and Visayan heritage for their children. Lolo Doming and Lola Aida are an inspiration to their children and ten grandchildren, for they continue to live a life of persevering faith, hope, and above all, love. Now at the age of 90 and 85 years, respectively, Doming and Aida remain dedicated to the Filipino-American Community.



LenteLitrato

Aida Gomez, recipient of the Love Award, surrounded by her loving husband Domingo, children and grandchildren during the FASSJ 2025 Valentine celebration.

Honoring Hearts That Serve

♥ Genuine Service

This annual award honors one individual each year for their dedicated and selfless community service.

🌱 Inclusive

Recipients are chosen regardless of education, profession, religion, or social status.

🔥 Inspired by Love

Transforming the spirit of Valentine's Day into lasting compassion.

Gloria De Vera Salugao - Mother Of The Year 2025 Autobiography

I was born in Mangatarem, Pangasinan Philippines on March 26, 1947 and raised in Bacood, Sta. Mesa, Manila.. My dad Tomas de Vera and mom Socorro Benavidez both from Pangasinan. I Attended Tomas Earnshaw Elementary School from grade 1 to grade 6. Received 2 and honors upon graduation. Attended Ramon Avancena High School, graduated 4 th year and also received second honors as I graduated. Went to University of the Philippines for pre-nursing course then attended Philippine General Hospital, received Graduate in Nursing. Went back to University of the Philippines for Bachelor of Science in

Nursing and received my BSN from the College of Nursing. Started working at PGH then to Manila Medical Center, Ospital ng Maynila and did private duty nursing as well. I started BS in Psychology at the Lyceum in Manila but was ended because my US visa was approved and got ready to travel abroad.

Came to the US as an immigrant on an early fall of 1971 along with my husband Efren who hails from Kawit, Cavite and our eldest child Jericho who was only three months old at that time. Started working at Jefferson Hospital, then to St. Joseph Hospital and to the Philadelphia Veterans Hospital. Did some private duty Nursing as well to supplement our growing family. Eventually worked at Hahnemann Hospital and retired after 44 long years of work.

Me and my husband joined the PCSNJ, Inc. community group since it's inception in 1986. Served as the second president from 1987 to 1988 and we are also one of the founding members. Also served as one of the vice-presidents of the Filipino Executive Council Of Greater Philadelphia. I volunteered as an Extraordinary Minister at Mary, Mother of Mercy Church in Glassboro, NJ and at the Senior Center In Washington Township in Sewell, NJ.

We are truly blessed with five children Jericho, Ederlinda, Priscilla, Peter and Efren Jr. and thirteen grandchildren PJ, Julian, Alaina, Elisa, Daniel, Annabelle, Julia, Kai, Evan, Ethan, Melinda, Jonas, and BG. Our daughter-in laws Sue, Cathee and Janet and last but not the least our son-in-laws Bill and Dan.



Memorial Service and Senior Citizen Committee Report by: Femy Whitzell, RN, BSN

The Memorial Service is yearly activity of the Senior Citizen Committee of PCSNJ. This year it was held November 1st at the center. An unusually large crowd attended the event. Femy Whitzell chaired the event. Fr. Mike de Leon provided the service with the SJ Apostolate choir providing the music. People who passed away in the last year had their pictures displayed on a table in front of the crowd. Various people read the names of those who passed away in 2025. Special mention were the members of PCSNJ who had departed. Some people gave eulogies of their dearly departed relatives. Among them were Judith Belonia who spoke about the spirit of volunteerism of her departed son Ron, Ruben Alvarez who spoke about the exemplary trust and faith in God of his maternal grandmother, the grandson of Engr. Florante Soberano who spoke about the passion of his grandfather on his job as a nuclear engineer. Michelle, the daughter of Linda Ricacho, a founding member of PCSNJ spoke about her mother's passion for life and her fondness for telling jokes as she loved making all people laugh.

Fr. Mike de Leon reminded all that as mortals death comes to all. But as Christians we also share in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and we will one day enjoy the company of all who were once united with us in life. One day we will all just be memories so let us make sure they are good memories. Kate Ilagan and some members of the choir rendered some songs for entertainment during lunch.

As a whole, the affair was a great success. All the guests have positive remarks. The audience was also reminded of forthcoming events of the PCSNJ like the Christmas Extravaganza and the PureJ Anniversary Ball on December 6, 2025.

The Senior citizen committee has a monthly fundraising luncheon and birthday celebration at different venues. September luncheon was held at the Peking Buffet Restaurant at Glassboro, NJ. In October, the group met at the residence of George and Ceres Garcia where Fr. Boyet Concepcion also officiated the mass. The Senior committee made a monetary donation to benefit Fr. Boyet's church initiatives in the Philippines.



AAPI Celebration was a Success By Arelyne Pacho-Ramos, MD

PCSNJ held a successful celebration of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Month on May 24, 2025 at the Philippine Community Center, Stratford NJ. Table centerpieces of bright flag displays of the 50 countries within the Asia Continent greeted attendees who wore different Asian costumes.

A one hour lunch from 1–2 pm prior to the program offered cuisine from different countries aside from the Philippines. The Pakistan and India dishes were contributions from nearby restaurants Egg Gali and Wah Gi Wah. Members' favorite Philippine dishes were shared with the community while those ordered from the Filipino restaurants were paid by generous sponsors.

The program included a musical performance by high school students from Cherry Hill East, song renditions by Halo halo youth choir, dances by 2 Filipino groups and Indian groups, an explanation of the Philippine mural display inside the Center, a show and tell of Philippine artifacts and ornaments. Attendees response to the event was positive and enthusiastic.

This program was made possible with support coming from the Camden County Cultural and Heritage Commission (CCCHC), a partner of NJ Council of The Arts and Historical Commission.

Thank you, CCCHC. We thank everyone who helped to make it a resounding success.



Philippine -American War Exhibit on the USS Olympia by: Senen Fontanilla

The exhibit opened aboard the USS Olympia at the Independence Seaport Museum in Philadelphia on October 9, 2024 telling about the rarely discussed story of the Philippine-American War and the symbols that arose through the complicated relationship between the United States of America, the Philippines and the Filipino people. The exhibit was made possible with the collaboration between the Filipino Executive Council of Greater Philadelphia and the Independence Seaport Museum and will be on the USS Olympia till October 2026.

The next big event for the Filipino community is the annual flag raising on the USS Olympia on June 6, 2026.





Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month





Filipino-American History Month Celebration at PCSNJ



Honoring Heritage, Community, and Pride



The Philippines & Pride: The Philippine Community of Southern New Jersey, Inc. (PCSNJ) kicked off its Filipino-American History Month Celebration on October 18, 2025.

The event reflected the community's shared pride in Filipino heritage, with smiles, laughter, and stories that connected generations. It was a beautiful reminder of how cultural roots continue to strengthen Filipino-American identity and camaraderie.

Culture in Motion: Grace and tradition came alive as dancers in elegant Filipiniana attire performed during the Filipino-American History Month celebration at PCSNJ. Each movement told a story of resilience, beauty, and pride – honoring the deep cultural roots that bind the Filipino-American community together.

The performances of Mutya Dance Troupe and Pure Ener J reminded everyone that preserving and showcasing Filipino art is more than entertainment – it is a celebration of identity and a tribute to generations of heritage.



Leaders in Tradition: In this photo are Senen Fontanilla, Ruben Alvarez, Arelyne Pachon-Ramos, Gloria Pineda and Linda Juliano- true advocates of Filipino culture and tradition. With grace and wisdom, they brought to life the essence of the "Balagtasan"- a true celebration of Filipino artistry and eloquence! The Maestro and Maestra, the Students and the Jurado showcased the brilliance of the Filipino language through poetry, wit, and passion. Their performance honored a time-honored tradition of debate verse-rich with respect, intellect, and love for our native tongue.



A Taste and Tune of Filipino Love: Filipinos are known for their deep love for music and the arts, as seen in the heartfelt performances of Lucas Ortega who serenaded the audience with "Dungawin Mo Neneng," a traditional harana song, and the group Halo-Halo Special who performed the timeless classic "When I Met You" by Apo Hiking Society. These performances beautifully reflected the Filipino's romantic spirit and passion for melody. To complement the celebration of culture, Elvie's Kitchen presented a film showing on how to make caldereta, showcasing another aspect of Filipino pride – their love for cooking and sharing food that brings families and communities together.

FUN AND FACTS OF FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY

Do you know what these words have in common. - Gigil, kababayan, lumpia, salakot, sando, adobo, CR Pasalubong? I will reveal it later.

Every October, the Filipino community celebrates the Filipino American History Month in the US.

It was on October 18, 1587, when the first Filipinos consisting of ship crew and slaves landed in Moro Bay, California aboard the Nuestra Senora de Buena Esperanza, the Manila Galleon trade that traveled from Manila to Acapulco.

Some of these Filipino Sailors escaped and there was a first report of Filipinos in Louisiana in 1700. They were referred to as Manila Men and Tagalas and were associated with shrimp farming.

The second wave came when US annexed the Philippines after the Spanish American War of 1898. In The Philippine Independence act of 1934, quota of those admitted yearly was 50.

The third wave happened after WW II. Filipinos who served in the US Navy and spouses of American service personnel were able to enter US as immigrants.

IN 1946, the Philippine quota was increased to 100 persons admitted per year under the Luce Celler Act. The Information and Education Exchange act of 1948 allowed many nurses to enter US to study and get practical experience. They invariably were recruited by hospitals. And soon many doctors and other health professionals also followed.

The 4th wave started in 1965 when the National quotas ended and allowed almost unlimited number of visas. This was the Hart-Celler Immigration Reform Act. From 1966 to 1991, at least 35,000 Filipino nurses migrated to the US together with. Other health professionals followed.

The acute shortage of Catholic priests was filled by our own Filipino priests.

In 1990, the Filipino population in the country was 1M. Now in 2020, figures show a population of 4M Filipinos in the US.

The category of Asian Americans, which includes Filipinos now number 25 M or 7% of the US Population. We are considered the fourth largest racial and ethnic group after African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Non Hispanic White.

We are not surprised to see many outstanding Filipinos. In entertainment are Lea Salonga, Olivia Rodrigo, Bruno Mars, and more.

In golf is Yuka Saso and in tennis is Alexandra Eala.

In business, is Lita Abele, owner of US Lumber Inc.

In politics, mayor of Bergenfield, Arvin Amatorio now serves his second term.

In the Catholic church, we are proud to boast of Bishop Efren Esmilla in Philadelphia area.

Indeed, we have brought to The US the best in our Culture- our caring attitude and work ethic, our food and dances, Love for family and service to God and church.

What about those Filipino words initially mentioned?

They are all now included in the Oxford English Dictionary, showing further the influence of Filipino Culture on the English Language

We expect to see more Filipinos being recognized on a state or national level.

Submitted by
Arelyne B Pacho-Ramos MD
Council Member 2024-2027
19th President, PCSNJ



WEDNESDAY NIGHT LINE DANCING – by Jerry Ancheta, Chairperson and PCSNJ President Elect 2024-2026

Pure Ener “J” Wednesday Night Line Dancing has actively promoted engagement within the Filipino American community by showcasing line dance skills and honoring cultural traditions. Annabelle Maccherone and Arlene Gonzales are recognized for their valuable contributions to choreography when the group presents dances to various organizations.

A brief overview regarding Wednesday Night Line Dancing: In 2006, I conducted a twelve-week line dancing course at the Philippine Community Center. During this period, Purie and I traveled to several states to study different line dancing techniques to enhance our instructional methods. At that time, resources such as YouTube were not available. Instruction was organized systematically until participants developed adequate confidence and proficiency. Dance sessions initially lasted two hours and were later extended to three, with the first hour allocated to step-by-step instruction for beginners. The participation fee is \$7.00, with 35% allocated to Building Maintenance and 65% directed to the Lily Ancheta Memorial Scholarship Fund. Light refreshments are provided through a member-organized potluck. Monthly potluck events are held to acknowledge team member birthdays and support group interaction. .

Line dancing offers health and wellness benefits, including improved physical coordination, balance, rhythm, overall health, stress reduction, memory enhancement, muscle strengthening, and posture improvement. Participation in group activities supports social connections and reduces feelings of isolation. As a form of exercise, line dancing aids in calorie expenditure and weight management and can positively affect mood. The activity provides an opportunity for personal expression through movement.

Line dancing serves multiple functions: as a recreational activity, therapeutic practice, means of promoting physical fitness, facilitator of community engagement, and a way to enrich participants’ lives. Continued support is valued, and ongoing participation is encouraged.

In response to sustained public interest, weekly sessions were continued through our twentieth year. Sixty-five percent of the collected honoraria is contributed to PCSNJ for the Lily Ancheta Memorial Scholarship Fund, which provides annual college scholarships to one or two qualified students. This initiative supports young Filipinos both in the Philippines and locally, in alignment with Lily Ancheta’s expressed intentions. Purie is responsible for overseeing the collection of funds and ensuring their submission to our treasurer for auditing purposes. Annabelle subsequently joined and assisted in instructing members on new techniques and movements. Participation in these classes contributes to student support initiatives, embodying the principle of “dancing for a cause.”



As participation grew, the group adopted the name Pure Ener “J” Line Dancing to reflect the energy demonstrated by its dancers. The program has successfully produced graduates now serving as high school teachers, accountants, vocational professionals, caregivers, and one individual currently enrolled in nursing school. Ongoing collaboration with Purie aims to further strengthen this initiative and ensure the continued presence of PCSNJ and the Lily Ancheta Memorial Scholarship Fund in both the United States and the Philippines. Special acknowledgment is extended to the Pure Ener “J” Line Dancers for their steadfast participation and support, which have been vital to the scholarship program since 2006 and to the enduring mission of PCSNJ.

While our 20th anniversary officially falls in February 2026, we will commemorate the occasion on December 6, 2025, aligning the celebration with our annual Christmas event. KEEP ON DANCING!

The Philippine Independence Fiesta 2025 by Nilo Mercado

On June 14, 2025, "The Philippine Independence Fiesta" took place at Rizal Monument / Bataan Death March Shrine in Copper River Park, Cherry Hill, New Jersey. The event began with the playing of both the United States and Philippines national anthems, followed by a wreath offering in honor of Dr. Jose P. Rizal. The festival was organized by Roman Ventura, President of the Filipino Council of Philadelphia, with the support from leaders and officials from various organizations including Senen Fontanilla, Gwen De Vera, Linda Juliano, Jerry Ancheta, and Aliena Magpantay. A diverse group of attendees including members of the Filipino communities as well as individuals of different nationalities, many of whom were guests or associates of community members. Booths representing civic and commercial organizations were available during the event. Various Filipino dishes and complimentary items provided by businesses were offered to visitors for free. The distribution of foods and other items were highly appreciated by the attendees. Gwen De Vera introduced and acknowledged government officials who supported the event. The program also featured talent presentations, such as singing, acting, impersonations, instrumental performances, and both modern and folk dances. Pure EnerJ of PCSNJ performed a folk dance that received a notable attention during its nationalistic interpretative segment. The sound system was managed by PCSNJ President-elect, Jerry Ancheta with the assistance of Pablo Gonzalez. The event concluded peacefully and the participants departed after a memorable celebration of Filipino culture and history.



PCSNJ Annual Meeting and Election of Council Members By: Nilo Mercado

The Annual meeting and election of the council members was held at the Philippine Community Center in Southern New Jersey last June 21, 2025, Saturday, 9am – 2pm. The annual meeting started at exactly 9:00am by opening prayer led by Aida Mercado then followed by the discussion of the past and future events of the organization including the past and future expenses. Also mentioned about income generating events/fundraising and other matters.

The election began right after lunch and there were 3 members selected for electoral inspectors, they were: Guia Apostle- chairwoman, Efren Salugao and Chichi Maestrado. The election was attended by 7 past presidents of PCSNJ: Ruben Alvarez, Aliena Magpantay, Domingo Camba, Alfie Masecampo, Ben Ramos, Gloria Salugao and Napoleon Juliano.

There were four members nominated and elected for 4 Council Member positions at the end of the day. They are Ruben Alvarez, Sylvia Tagle, Reggie Ramos and Andrew Aquino. The election was attended and voted by 32 members. The results were confirmed by the 3 electoral inspectors and approved by the officers of PCSNJ.

Filipiniana: by Purie Ancheta

PCSNJ, Inc. was incorporated into multicultural activities, including events with historical significance and Sinulog themes. On October 25, 2025, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Camden hosted a multicultural celebration that featured representatives from ten countries including the Philippines, who presented their cultural products, cuisine, and traditional dances. The Philippine Community of Southern New Jersey, Inc. (PCSNJ, Inc.) offered a variety of Filipino dishes such as pancit noodles, pork and chicken adobo, egg rolls, puto, kutsinta, and bibingka, all of which were well received by attendees.

The group featured historical figures and provided maps as integral components of their presentation. PCSNJ integrated an ice cream cart and barong tagalog into the exhibit. A diverse selection of music, curated by the DJ including bachata, cumbia, merengue, and line dance tracks—was particularly well received by attendees, many of whom participated actively in the dancing.



Understanding Economic Inequality through the Lens of “Pagpag”

by Guia Calicdan-Apostle

Last September 28, 17 Filipino American leaders and guests, members, and youth of PCSNJ, Inc. attended an eye-opening seminar on understanding economic inequality in the Philippines. Facilitated by Dr. Guia Calicdan-Apostle, the participants joined the session without clear expectations of where the discussion would lead. Together, the group explored the meaning of Pagpag—a term that illustrates the realities of poverty that continue to affect many Filipinos today.

Pagpag refers to leftover food collected from restaurants or supermarkets by impoverished communities in urban areas such as Manila. These leftovers are cleaned, re-cooked, and resold as a means of survival. The discussion prompted participants to reflect on the stark contrast between

the relative comfort enjoyed by many Filipino Americans in the U.S. and the daily struggles faced by their counterparts in the Philippines.

This project brought together youth and especially seniors in a meaningful dialogue about economic inequality, poverty, and resilience. The Pagpag Project inspired empathy, self-reflection, and a commitment to social and economic justice. As a collective response, participants decided to send a Balikbayan box—a care package that symbolizes the compassion and connection of the Filipino diaspora—to those in need.

The box has been designated for an indigenous community in Luzon, strengthening ties between Filipino-Americans and the communities they continue to support in the Philippines. Future discussions on inequality should continue as open dialogues between the youth and adults through the exchange of ideas and perspectives and tangible actions to benefit entire the Filipino community.



Veterans Day 2025 by Senen Fontanilla

Veterans Day, celebrated every year on November 11, is a U.S. legal holiday dedicated to American veterans of all wars. In 1918, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, was declared between the Allied nations and Germany in World War I, then known as the "Great War". November 11 In the United States, an official wreath-laying ceremony is held each Veterans Day at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, while parades and other celebrations are held everywhere in the country.

The Camden County Board of Commissioners in conjunction with the Camden County Veterans Advisory Committee holds a Veterans Appreciation breakfast to honor the county's veterans - men and women, past and present, who have faithfully served our nation. The event is called the Padre Peter Molnar Veterans Appreciation Breakfast. State and local officials are in attendance and a medal awarding ceremony part of the annual program. The Filipino-American veterans community is very well represented at this event.

Camden County Veterans are encouraged to apply for the Camden County Military Service Medal. Applications are available online at : <https://www.camdencounty.com/service/veterans-affairs/application-for-medal/>. Awarding will be conducted during the Philippine Independence Celebration in June, 2026. Contact Senn Fontanilla at 609-509-6800 for more information.



PCSNJ, Inc. Treasurer's Report by: Aliena Magpantay

Philippine Community of Southern New Jersey, Inc.		
		Balance
		as of 10/31/2025
Building fund BA		\$15,025.79
TD BANK ACCOUNTS:		
Edddie Cruz Mem. CD Acct (3028)		\$19,412.13
Escrow acct. - Egg Gali		\$4,022.45
Escrow Acct. _ Wah Gi Wah		\$4,645.03
Lily Ancheta Memeorial Fund	\$	16,876.53
Senior Citizen	\$	4,774.06
Operating Account	\$	17,839.02
TOTAL		\$82,595.01

Sergio Gasmen Memorial Lecture by: Bebe Yee, MD President UPMASA Delaware Valley

The Sergio Gasmen Memorial Lecture was held on November 8, 2025 at the Philippine Community Center. It is co-sponsored by the University of the Philippines Medical Alumni Society of America (UPMASA) Delaware Valley Chapter and the Philippine Community of Southern New Jersey, Inc. (PCSNJ, Inc.)

The Sergio Gasmen Memorial Lecture is held yearly in honor of Dr. Sergio Gasmen who was a graduate of the University of the Philippines. He was a long-time director of the UP Comprehensive Community Health Program (CCHP) where clinical clerks and medical interns immerse themselves in barrio life. Ms. Lita Abele was his secretary and she wanted to honor his memory by sponsoring this Memorial Lecture.

Marissa Estiva-Magsino, M.D., FAARFM spoke on Perimenopause, Menopause & Brain Health. There was a lively discussion on hormone therapy and how to improve a woman's quality of life, especially that of cognitive function. Dr. Magsino also sent a list of supplements that will be useful.

The second speaker was Ben Hur Patricio Mobo, Jr., M.D., MPH, FACOEM who spoke on Occupational Medicine and its implications. A lot was learned about cost of work-related injuries to employers. Air pollution, drinking water contaminants as well as greenhouse gases effect on health were discussed at length.

The event was a success and attended by members of both organizations. Filipino food was served in abundance and enjoyed by all.





Future Events

December 6, 2025 - Pure J Line Dancing Christmas Party and 20th Anniversary at The Forum

December 13, 2025 - Christmas Extravaganza at the PC Center

December 14, 2025 - PC Senior Committee Fundraising & Christmas Party

December 21, 2025 - Simbang Gabi at Christ Our Light Church Cherry Hill, NJ

December 21, 2025 - PCSNJ Officers/Chairs Luncheon

May 31, 2026 - PCSNJ Golf Tournament, Valleybrook Golf and Country Club

June 13, 2026 - Philippine Independence Fiesta at Cooper River Park, Cherry Hill, NJ

PCSNJ, INC. OFFICERS 2024-2026

President : Erlinda Juliano

Immediate Past President: Agustina Aquino

President Elect: Jerry Ancheta

Recording Secretary: Annabelle Maccherone

Corresponding Secretary: Aida Mercado

Treasurer: Aliena Magpantay / Asst. Treasurer: Senen Fontanilla

Auditor: Ian Lim

Historian: Nilo Mercado

Council Members

Term End 2026

Maria Camaio

Arlene Gonzales

Merle Nable

Emil Rotaeché

Term End 2027

Purification Ancheta

Emma De Jesus

Arelyne Pacho-Ramos, MD

Gloria Pineda

Term End 2028

Ruben Alvarez

Andrew Aquino

Reginald Ramos

Sylvia Tagle

Philippine Community Center Rental Information

Party/Main Hall and Kitchen

Members: \$400.00

Non-Members: \$450.00
(for 5 Hours)

\$100.00 per additional hour

Meetings/Main Hall and Kitchen

FECGP Member Associations

\$120.00 (2 hours)

\$25.00 each additional hour

Non FECGP Member \$450.00

Conference Room Only \$100.00 (for 2 hours) \$25.00 each additional hour

Main contact:: Jerry Ancheta 856-986-862 ancheta0142@gmail.com

Secondary contact: Senen Fontanilla 609-689-6800 sennfont@gmail.com

Go to : <https://www.pcsnj.org/reserve-request-event-form>

**WE
WILL
MISS
YOU!**



Felino R. (Philip) Reyes

December 14, 1952 - October 16, 2025



Filipino Executive Council of Greater Philadelphia by: Senen Fontanilla

The Filipino Executive Council of Greater Philadelphia coordinates all events by the member organizations located in the Philadelphia Metropolitan area. This area covers Southeastern Pennsylvania, South Jersey and Delaware.

Notable events celebrated annually are:

1. Araw ng Kagitingan (Bataan Day) on April 9
2. Flag Raising on the USS Olympia - 1st Saturday in June
3. Philippine Independence Fiesta at Copper River Park, Cherry Hill NJ - 2nd Saturday in June
4. Philippine Independence Mass - June
5. Philippine Independence Gala honoring Bb. Pilipinas PA - June
6. Flag Raising at Philadelphia City Hall - June 12



FECGP's objective is to bridge the gap between our groups, our youth and our region so we can concentrate our energy in improving the Filipino community. This can be accomplished by coordinating resources through FECGP to minimize redundancies. Putting the community's interest ahead of personal interests is a key to success. With cooperation and sacrifices from each member organization, the FECGP will continue to make improvements which will reap long term benefits.

PCSNJ's immediate past president, Tina Aquino, was elected FECGP President for 2025-2027 at the annual election held on July 27, 2025 at the Philippine Community Center in Stratford NJ. Several PCSNJ members were appointed officers of FECGP namely: Bingle Tagle – Corporate Secretary, Gloria Pineda - Treasurer, Purie Ancheta - Asst. Treasurer, Citas Bowie - Pro PA, Jerry Ancheta - PRO NJ, Jojo Abat – Business Manager NJ and Gwen Devera - NJ Liaison.



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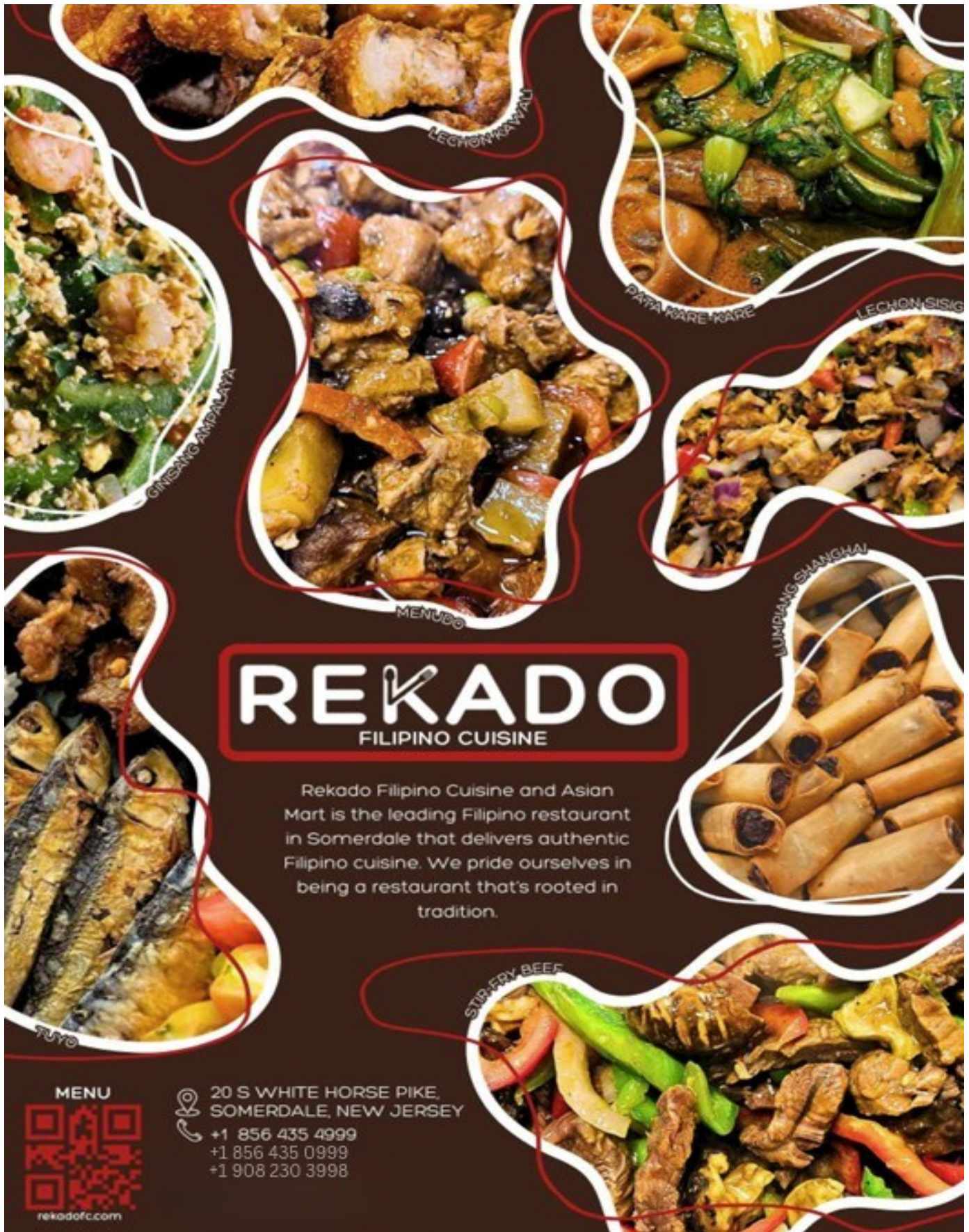
Ben Ramos - 14th President PCSNJ

Nap Juliano - 16th President PCSNJ

Arelyne Pacho-Ramos, MD - 19th President PCSNJ

Senen Fontanilla - 22nd President PCSNJ and Miriam Nable Fontanilla


Erlinda Juliano - 28th President PCSNJ




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September 5 - 16, 2026

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Sunday	Sep 6	At Sea
Monday	Sep 7	Boston, MA
Tuesday	Sep 8	Bar Harbor, ME
Wednesday	Sep 9	St John Bay of Fundy Canada
Thursday	Sep 10	Halifax, Canada
Friday	Sep 11	Sydney Cape Breton Is. Canada
Saturday	Sep 12	Charlottetown Prince Edward Canada
Sunday	Sep 13	At Sea
Monday	Sep 14	La Baie Saguenay River Canada
Tuesday	Sep 15	Overnight in Quebec City Canada
Wednesday	Sep 16	Disembark / Fly to Home City

Starting Cruise Rates per person/double occupancy
(Subject to change based on availability)

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Obstructed Oceanview	\$1676.78
Oceanview	\$1880.65
Balcony	\$3164.10

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