



PGMA leads gift-giving rites at DepEd to some 2 million schoolchildren nationwide

MANILA, Dec. 19 (PGON) - President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo led this morning the nationwide gift-giving to some two million elementary schoolchildren to mark the Christmas season. Assisted by Education Secretary Jesli Lapus, the President distributed the red gift bags containing rice, groceries, educational toys, school supplies and reading materials at the Bulwagan of the Department of Education (DepEd) in Pasig City to some 600 public school children, including those from the Philippine School for the Blind, Philippine School for the Deaf, and Muslim communities.

The gift-giving, dubbed as “Tuloy ang Pasko ng mga Bata,” was done simultaneously in DepEd regional, division and district offices nationwide. The DepEd said the recipients include those who “belong to the indigenous people, children with disabilities, street and working children, children of poor families and children in calamity-affected areas.

A choir clad in pink sayas from the Bagong Silangan School in Batasan, Quezon City serenaded the President – herself in light pink blouse and pants ensemble — as she distributed the red bags to the elementary pupils from several school divisions, among them the Divisions of Pasay City, Navotas City and Taguig-Pateros.

The gift-giving was preceded by a Mass presided by Fr. Archie Corpuz of the Servant of the Risen Christ and two assistant priests. The gift items were partially funded by DepEd units, canteen funds and the Parents-Teachers and Community Associations (PTCAs), with local governments and other private groups pitching in “to benefit more students.” The choice of beneficiaries was delegated to the school district supervisors.

The “Tuloy ang Pasko ng mga Bata” was first launched in 2006 by the DepEd to engage support for about 1.8 million school children affected by typhoons Reming and Seniang. Last year’s beneficiaries were schoolchildren from Legazpi City, Albay, Catanduanes, Sorsogon, Camarines Sur, Masbate, Marinduque, Mindoro, Romblon, Aklan, Antique, Guimaras, Leyte and Eastern Samar.

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