



From left Washington DC Philippine Embassy Consul General Domingo "Ding" Nolasco, Jocelyn Wing, Mrs. Cecile Nolasco, outgoing President and new Chairman of the Board of Medical Mission of Mercy USA, Henry Balagtas, House Delegate Kris Valderrama, 26th Legislative District, MD., MMMUSA incoming President and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Joseph Arzadon, and his wife Dr. Catherine Panlilio-Arzadon, Asst. Chief Medical Officer and Cocoy Reyes- a representative for Romblon, Philippine Congressman Eleandro Jesus "Budoy" Madrona.

MODERN DAY HEROES TOUCHED OVER 38,000 LIVES

Washington, DC, USA – The Philippine American Medical Mission of Metropolitan Washington, DC, Inc. d/b/a and popularly known as MEDICAL MISSION OF MERCY USA a 501(c)(3) IRS tax exempt non-profit, all volunteer charity organization based in Metropolitan Washington, DC, successfully sponsored its 2009 Fundraising Gala and induction of officers on Saturday, November 14, 2009 at Hyatt Regency in Crystal City, Virginia, around 250 guests graced the event.

The new set of officers for the year 2009 through 2011 are the following: President, Joseph M. Arzadon, MD, DDS; VP, Marlin Rekow, DDS, MBA, FAGD; Secretary, Maria

Sison-Wright; Treasurer, Jhett A. Epp; Director of Community Affairs, Chuck Fazio; Parliamentarian, Roland Lee, Esq; Chief Medical Officer, Joseph M. Arzadon, MD, DDS; Asst. Chief Medical Officer, Catherine Panlilio-Arzadon; Youth Volunteer Representative; Katherine Amigo; Board of Directors: Chairman, Henry M. Balagtas; Mil Arcega; Abraham Bacara, MD; Robert Bunn, DDS; Jose Diaz; Samuel Dulay, MD; Teresita Gastilo, RN; Richard Goldin, DDS; Rudy Ocampo, CRNA; Ferdinand Pamintuan, MD; Ramon Panlilio, MD; Celine Pico, RN; Phillip Steiner, OD; Kriselda Valderrama; Virgilio Victoriano, MD.

Mr. Henry Balagtas, the founding officer of the Mission and who had served as President for 8 years stepped down and take a role as Chairman of the Board of Directors. He is a husband, a father, and a successful business man. Grace Valera of Migrant Heritage Commission commented to him that he is “Man of the Decade”. The praise is well worth it being said because of his unwavering dedication in making every Medical Mission to the Philippines a success, in reaching out, as many as they can serve, the under-privilege in need of immediate medical attention.

In his message as an Outgoing President, he said, “I am truly humbled and blessed to be able to work with the many volunteers who always invigorate me with their enthusiasm. Through the years, they have demonstrated a genuine concern and compassion for the poor people here and abroad. Their professionalism and dedication inspired me and helped me structure an organization that meets and exceeds the needs of these poor people. I applaud and salute them for a job well done. They have become real life heroes. And in the eyes of God, they are His “Beautiful Angels of Mercy.”

Mr. Balagtas utmost respect and gratitude goes to the new President and Chief Medical Officer of Medical Mission of Mercy USA, Dr. Joseph Arzadon. He said, “Without him, the organization would not come about. Dr. Joe Arzadon, you have provided the idea, initial research and inspiration. You are a man of unwavering resolve. My experienced with you relates to your concern for the underprivileged. You are truly a role model.”

Dr. Joseph “Joe” Arzadon is a respected and well known Maxillofacial Surgeon in Metropolitan Washington, DC area. Dr. Joe is humbly using his God given talent to give back to his country by leading the medical team from the very beginning. He is married to Dr. Catherine Panlilio-Arzadon, Assistant Chief Medical Officer. The couple met in Guagua, Pampanga on their first medical mission to the Philippines. They are blessed with 2 sons and a daughter.

Much has been said about their success but Mr. Balagtas said “Ultimately there are people who are to be thanked for – our supporters and benefactors; I owe a debt of gratitude. You have laid a strong foundation that helps us into the future. I am deeply touched by the people’s desire to help those in need, even when faced with their own difficulties.” End quote.

The Medical Mission of Mercy USA is perhaps one of the largest Filipino-American charitable organizations in America, with 80 to 90 volunteers. They treat 3,500-4,500

patients annually on their week-long medical mission to the Philippines. Since 2001, they have provided over 800 major surgeries, (cleft lip/palate, general, orthopedic, GYN) about 3000 minor surgeries, (cyst, lumps and bumps, circumcisions) over 200 cataract surgeries, over 1,000 optometry services (eyeglasses and eye exams) over 10,000 patients seen for adult and pediatric medical consultations. They have treated over 38,000 patients in 9 years. They also brought over hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of medications with their own pharmacy department dispensing prescription medication to hundreds of people waiting in line daily. They have donated anesthesia machines, lights, monitors, portable dental units, medications and supplies to the hospitals in the area where they conducted the mission. When their supplies run out some of the volunteers donate from their own personal funds to purchase much needed supplies and medicines locally. They also provide medical education through formal seminars given by their members and exchanges ideas and knowledge with the local doctors and nurses who join their mission. The team is a real Modern Day Heroes of over 38,000 people and counting.

The dynamic duo, Mr. Henry Balagtas and Dr. Joe Arzadon were awarded a **Governor's Citation** from Governor Martin Omaley in recognition of a special tribute to honor their leadership and service in behalf of the Philippine-American Medical Mission of Metropolitan Washington, DC, Incorporated and Official Citation from the Maryland House of Delegates signed by Kriselda Valderrama, House Delegate 26th Legislative District Prince George, MD, in recognition of His Outstanding Achievements and Service with the PAMMMWDCI both as past President and Incoming Chairman of the Board. The PAMMMWDCI was also given a "Governor's Citation" as a whole which comprises of all leaders, members and volunteers who tirelessly and selflessly joined the team year after year in their effort to reach out during their mission.

Mr. Balagtas pledges to support the organization as Chairman of the Board, selflessly. He quotes, "God speaks to us in a thousand voices, each of the same clear messages "Love One Another as I Love You. If each of us can tap in someone's life and make that person smile, the reward can be rich, indeed". End quote. With that in his mind, let us all support him and the new President of the organization, Dr. Joseph Arzadon, in their journey in reaching out to the people who are desperately in need of our help. These men really deserve to be called the "Filipino-American Men of the Decade" as they approach their 10th year in a bigger and bolder perspective of human service.

Dr. Joe Arzadon quote on his messages "Like many other third world countries, the Philippines lack the resources to provide adequate health care to the majority of its population. People in the Philippines still die from preventable and treatable diseases, such as pneumonia, influenza, diarrhea, bronchitis and tuberculosis. Fortunately, the poverty in the Philippines has been declining and more emphasis is being placed on preventative care. But with a country constantly ravaged by natural calamities, disasters and political uncertainties, good health remains a luxury. During these difficult times, medical mission is crucial in augmenting the overburdened government institutions directed to provide basic health care services. Each province presents different medical concerns and needs and thus the services we provide change accordingly."

The team is preparing for their next medical mission to Romblon province in February, 2010, their third in 2 years. Their focus will be on the much needed surgical, dental, and ophthalmic services not only in their base hospital but to the distant islands as well by sending satellite teams to the more distant islands, towns and barrios.

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