

# THE NORTH AMERICAN FILIPINO STAR

Volume LXIV No. 6 June 2026

Montreal's only Filipino-Canadian newspaper

## Raising the flag, lifting the Filipino-Canadian community



**Pierrefonds-Roxboro Ceremony:** Mayor Dimitrios (Tim) Beis, Marvin Rotrand, and FHSM Chairman Al Abdon gather with community members at the flag raising ceremony held on June 1, 2026 at 6 p.m. (M. Rotrand Facebook)

The two distinct images gracing our front page from the Philippine Independence Day and Filipino Heritage Month celebrations capture an era of profound municipal acceptance and mutual respect. From

an intimate, dedicated gathering at the Pierrefonds-Roxboro borough on June 1st, to a massive turnout of approximately 120 community leaders at the FAMAS Center on June 12th, Montreal's political and civic



**FAMAS Center Milestone:** MP Anthony Housefather, Councilor Sonny Moroz, Marvin Rotrand, and FAMAS leaders celebrate with approximately 120 attendees at the June 12, 2026, flag-raising and breakfast reception. (Photo: Marvin Rotrand / Facebook)

landscape came together in solidarity.

Standing alongside organizers were prominent figures including Mayor Dimitrios (Tim) Beis, MP Anthony Housefather, Councilor Sonny Moroz, and United Against Hate

Canada Director-General Marvin Rotrand, who documented these historic milestones. Together, these events prove a vibrant diaspora has

See Page 4 Raising the flag

## A Rainy Night of Radiant Legacies: Gilmore College Convenes Leaders and Alumni for Historic Non-Profit Launch, See Page 2



**Advocating for Immigrant Education:** Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi (3rd from left) with Marvin Rotrand, Hélène Klodawsky, and Sonny Moroz at the Stolen Time event. After 36.5 years of self-funding Quebec's first private Filipino-led school, the founder calls on community leaders for public and foundation backing. (Details on Page 2).



**From left to right:** Michael Davantes, Ethel Tugna, Fely Rosales Carino, Helene Klodawsky, Janet Mahilum Haydock, Leandra Garing and her daughter, and Marvin Rotrand. Their presence in spite of the inclement weather on May 29th launching of Gilmore Academy of Arts & Social Sciences is greatly appreciated and signifies the community's support of the learning center for all immigrants.

# A Rainy Night of Radiant Legacies: Gilmore College Convenes Leaders and Alumni for Historic Non-Profit Launch

MONTREAL - Torrential rains and fierce winds could not dampen the spirit of community transformation on Wednesday, May 29, 2026. Despite the inclement weather—which left school founder Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi soaking wet while personally unloading catering for the evening's light supper—political, cultural, and educational leaders packed the hall for a monumental free screening of the documentary "Stolen Time." The evening served as a dual celebration: honoring decades of grassroots success and launching Gilmore College's historic transition into a registered provincial non-profit corporation.

## Distinguished Guests and Filmmakers:

The high-profile guest list underscored the civic importance of the event. Former long-time city councillor Marvin Rotrand and director-general of United Against Hate Canada; Snowdon councillor Sonny Moroz attended to show solidarity with the immigrant community's educational struggles. Renowned filmmaker Helene Klodawsky, director of *Stolen Time*, was present to share her powerful cinematic exploration of systemic institutional battles, mirroring the very challenges Gilmore College has fought against for years. Prominent community pillars also stood in support, including acclaimed



**Recipients of the Certificates of Appreciation (L to R) Leandra Garing, UCMAS Brossard owner; Al Abdon, Chairman, Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal; Janeth Mahilum Haydock, founder of Janeth Mahilum Haydock Foundation and Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi, Director-General, Gilmore College International to be renamed Gilmore Academy of Arts & Social Sciences as a non-profit learning center for all ethnic groups (Photo by: Cristy Hunter)**

artist Avy Loftus and Mrs. Ursulene Farmer, CEO and President of College Prep International. Mrs. Petra Sentes, former Gilmore College French teacher, and currently Department Head at College Marie de France, and Prof. Kazue Takamura, Senior Faculty Lecturer for International Development of McGill University.

## Honoring Alumni Pioneers:

The emotional peak of the evening arrived when Mrs. Ferry-Kharroubi presented formal Certificates

of Appreciation to outstanding Gilmore College alumni who have transformed their education into incredible community leadership:

**Leandra Garing:** A Gilmore French language alumna (2003–2006 era) who broke through systemic barriers to become a successful entrepreneur. She is now the proud owner of UCMAS Brossard.

**Janeth Mahilum Haydock:** Founder of the Janeth Mahilum Haydock Foundation. Since its inception, her

foundation has provided critical school supplies to impoverished children and run vital feeding programs for seniors and youths in her Philippine hometown.

## The Backbone of the Mission:

Special recognition was also given to Al Abdon, Chairman of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal. Mr. Abdon has long served as the technical backbone of Mrs. Ferry-Kharroubi's media endeavors, managing technical production for her former community television show and flawlessly executing the audio-visual operations for the screening night.

Former MMTV Mabuhay TV crew members Michael Davantes, Tenne Rose Dayandante, and Derwin Collantes also braved the storm to stand by their mentor, demonstrating the unbreakable, lifelong bonds forged through Mrs. Ferry-Kharroubi's service.

By the end of the evening, the message was clear: while the weather outside was turbulent, the future of immigrant education in Quebec has never looked brighter.

**LAUNCHING A NEW SERIES: REMEMBERING THE PAST, BUILDING THE FUTURE** - Don't miss the debut of our exclusive monthly series featuring the historic speeches from the April 2026 Filipino Community Diaspora, read the autobiography of school founder Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi, narrating her immigrant journey and educational mission on page 9.

## Célébration du Mois du patrimoine philippin et de la 128e Fête de l'indépendance des Philippines! Happy Filipino Heritage Month and 128th Philippine Independence !

Le Mois du patrimoine philippin est l'occasion de célébrer les contributions durables, la culture et le patrimoine des communautés philippines. Nous sommes fiers de reconnaître et d'honorer la communauté philippine au Québec.

Filipino Heritage Month is an opportunity to celebrate the enduring contributions, culture, and heritage of Filipino communities. We proudly recognize and honour the Filipino community in Quebec.



## Mabuhay!

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

## Moving Beyond Celebration: The Diaspora, the "Middle Power," and the True Meaning of Heritage

Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi

Every June, millions of Filipinos across the globe unite to mark two defining milestones: the anniversary of Philippine Independence Day and the celebration of Filipino Heritage Month. From the street festivals of Montreal to diaspora hubs across Europe and the United States, our vibrant culture, traditional attire, and culinary legacy take center stage. Yet, as the global Filipino diaspora continues to swell, we must look past the superficial pageantry. We must ask ourselves a critical, uncomfortable question: Are these celebrations helping us advance the cause of true freedom, economic equality, and systemic integration, or have they become mere nostalgic routines?

**The Reality of "Brain Waste" in a Middle Power**

Former central banker and our Prime Minister, Mark Carney frequently defines Canada as a critical "middle power"—a nation positioned between superpowers that exerts global influence through strong institutional stability, robust international diplomacy, and economic collaboration. A middle power thrives not on raw military might, but on the high quality of its human capital, innovation, and diverse workforce.

For immigrants, however, arriving in a middle-power country reveals a glaring paradox. While Canada relies heavily on skilled newcomers to sustain its global

competitiveness, the systemic reality is often one of "brain waste." Highly educated Filipino professionals—doctors, engineers, teachers, and corporate managers—arrive only to find their foreign credentials ignored. They are frequently funneled into survival jobs and menial labor.

True freedom is not just an abstract historical concept born in 1898; it is the concrete economic liberty to practice one's profession, achieve financial dignity, and enjoy equal opportunity in the workplace today.

**Mobilizing the Power of the Diaspora**

To move from survival to systemic influence, the increasing Filipino population must shift from isolated community groups into organized, collaborative networks. We can no longer afford to operate in silos. Mobilization requires three distinct actions:

- 1) Institutional Synergy: Forging active partnerships between community associations, businesses, and educational platforms like our newly structured Gilmore Academy of Arts and Social Sciences.
- 2) Strategic Mentorship: Creating formal pipelines where established Filipino-Canadian entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, and academic professionals actively mentor younger or newly arrived immigrants.
- 3) Civic and Political Engagement: Encouraging our community members

to run for public office, participate in municipal governance, and sit on school boards to ensure our voices shape regional policies.

**Contributing Talents, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship:**

The Filipino spirit is defined by resilience, creativity, and a relentless work ethic. Our diaspora possesses an incredible pool of untapped entrepreneurial spirit. We see this vividly in our own community pioneers, such as our Gilmore alumni who have broken barriers to establish local businesses and international charitable foundations. By channeling our

creative talents into registered businesses, localized healthcare solutions, and non-profit learning centers, we do more than just integrate—we actively build the nation. We contribute directly to making this country a beacon of global equity and a true, compassionate middle power.

This June, let us celebrate our history by actively building our future. Let us transform our heritage from a recollection of the past into an active, everyday crusade for economic equality, educational access, and shared prosperity for all immigrants in Quebec. #

## Stop "Brain Waste": Help Immigrants Reclaim Their Professional Destinies

**Gilmore Academy of Arts and Social Sciences is recruiting licensed teachers:**

Holders of a Brevet d'enseignement from Quebec or Certified Teacher license from another province that will be converted under the probationary teaching license by the Ministry of Education of Quebec.

Please send your CVs with the Permit No. and scanned copy of your document to: [zbk@gilmorecollege.com](mailto:zbk@gilmorecollege.com) or mail them to: 7159, chemin de la Cote des Neiges, Montreal, QC H3R 2M2 on or before July 31, 2026.

For more information, please call 514-485-7861 and leave a message to be called back.



Founder and Director General Zenaida Kharroubi checks the homework of a student while another student waits. This illustrates her personalized and student-centred approach which focuses on each student's learning style and guided by the philosophy of the communication method of teaching. Each language level is designed for a duration of 3-hour sessions once or twice weekly.

**THE NORTH AMERICAN**

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## President Marcos cites stronger ASEAN-Russia cooperation, reaffirms PH ties with Moscow after Commemorative Summit

(Manila, June 19, 2026) In his arrival statement, President Marcos said the summit, which marked the 35th anniversary of ASEAN-Russia relations, provided an opportunity for leaders to assess the progress of the partnership and outline future cooperation amid an increasingly complex global environment.

President Marcos and his delegation arrived at 4:02 p.m. at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

The President noted that discussions covered significant regional and international developments, including the situation in the South

our bilateral partnership across trade and investment, energy security, agriculture, science and technology, education, and people-to-people exchanges," President Marcos added.

The President also noted that ASEAN and Russia reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing practical cooperation on shared security challenges, including terrorism, transnational crime, cybercrime, and other non-traditional threats, while sustaining engagement across ASEAN's political security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars.

The summit adopted several key

Comprehensive Plan of Action 2026-2030, which will serve as the roadmap for cooperation over the next five years.

President Marcos also underscored the growing interconnectedness of regional processes across Eurasia.

"In this spirit, I had constructive engagements with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union including through the Eurasian Economic Commission covering inter-regional dialogue and practical cooperation in trade and investment, energy security, connectivity, agriculture, tourism, and addressing transnational challenges," the President added.

According to the President, discussions

focused on inter-regional dialogue and practical cooperation in trade and investment, energy security, connectivity, agriculture, tourism, and addressing transnational challenges.

On the sidelines of the ASEAN-Russia Commemorative Summit, President Marcos also met with President Putin to discuss the future of Philippines-Russia relations and explore opportunities for expanding bilateral cooperation across key sectors.

"On the margins of the summit, I held a very productive bilateral meeting with President Putin where we reaffirmed the friendship and cooperation between Russia and the Philippines as we look forward to the next 50 years in our relations," the President emphasized. (PIA)



**President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Friday highlighted the importance of deepening cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Russia following his participation in the ASEAN-Russia Commemorative Summit in Kazan, where he served as co-chair alongside Russian President Vladimir Putin.**

China Sea and the Middle East, as well as ways to strengthen cooperation in areas that directly affect the stability, resilience, and prosperity of the participating nations.

"We discussed ways to further advance

outcome documents, including the Kazan Declaration 2026; ASEAN-Russia: Unity in Diversity – 35 Years Together; the ASEAN-Russia Joint Statements on Cultural Cooperation and Energy Cooperation; and the ASEAN-Russia

definitive proof that Filipino-Canadians are actively shaping the laws, equity, and future of this country.

When a Canadian municipality officially hoists the Philippine flag, it structurally acknowledges that Filipino heritage is permanently woven into the Canadian identity. It reminds every immigrant that their roots are a source of immense strength to be celebrated alongside their passionate citizenship. Let these milestone celebrations serve as an open call to action. We encourage all our readers to stay informed, stay engaged, and bring their unique talents, rich culture, and unmatched energy to the forefront—working together to make Canada the most inclusive and prosperous country in the world. #

From Page 1 Raising the flag

firmly moved into the heart of Canadian civic life.

These ceremonies are far more than a beautiful annual tradition. They reflect the surging influence of a community that stands as Canada's third largest source country for new immigrants, with a population now exceeding one million strong nationwide. Today, this demographic growth translates directly into historic political currency and representation. A shining example of this progress is Rechie Valdez, the first Filipino-Canadian woman appointed to the federal Cabinet, who continues her vital work after being chosen again to lead the Ministry for Gender Equality. Her ongoing leadership stands as



En l'honneur du  
**Mois du patrimoine philippin et  
de la Journée de l'indépendance  
des Philippines,**

la ville de Côte Saint-Luc était fière  
d'organiser une cérémonie de levée  
du drapeau des Philippines le 12 juin  
devant notre hôtel de ville.

In honour of  
**Filipino Heritage  
Month and Philippine  
Independence Day,**

the City of Côte Saint-Luc was  
proud to hold a Philippine flag  
raising ceremony on June 12  
in front of our City Hall.

Des photos de l'événement sont  
disponibles sur [facebook.com/  
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View photos of the event at  
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# A Legacy Reborn: From Private Sector Success to the Gilmore Academy of Arts and Social Sciences

By North American Filipino Star staff  
MONTREAL — An inspiring new era has begun for a cornerstone of community education. The private institution that successfully trained

school has been incorporated as a non-profit learning center dedicated to serving all immigrants: the Gilmore Academy of Arts and Social Sciences. To fuel this transition,



**Honouring a legacy of community devotion.** Kimberly Gultia presents a birthday cake to Janeth Mahilum Haydock, a Gilmore PAB graduate who founded her own non-profit in 2009. Cancelling her birthday party to attend our *Stolen Time* screening, Janeth's selfless spirit embodies the exact mission of our reborn Academy.



**Enduring solidarity for a reborn legacy.** Former City Councillor Marvin Rotrand & Director-General of United Against Hate Canada; Snowdon Councillor Sonny Moroz, Tenne Rose Dayandante, and Derwin Collantes smile for the camera. Their long-term advocacy anchors Gilmore's new chapter in arts and social sciences. (Photo credits: M. Rotrand, Kimberly Gultia & Cristy Hunter.)



**A view of the audience listening to the film director, Helen Klodawsky as she explains the documentary film *Stolen Time*.** Mrs. Ursulene Farmer is seen standing behind on the right while Derwin Collantes is also standing behind on the left.

thirteen batches of dedicated Préposés aux bénéficiaires (PAB) from 2005 to 2017 is officially evolving. The

leadership is actively pursuing financial support from prominent government agencies and philan-



**A shared vision for social sciences and care.** A partial group of guests pose for a souvenir photo of their presence that marks the historic transition of Gilmore Academy from a private enterprise into a community-owned beacon for immigrant education.



**The spontaneous spirit of professional collaboration.** Derwin Collantes and Al Abdon flash a thumbs-up before the screening begins. Derwin, our former Mabuhay Montreal TV video editor from 2013-2016, instantly stepped up to help Al set up equipment—a perfect symbol of honest, non-profit teamwork.

thropic organizations. This funding momentum achieved a major milestone on June 2nd, when the highly respected Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation formally responded to the Academy's strategic vision.

## A Star-Studded Launch: The *Stolen Time* Screening

The community response followed closely on the heels of an exclusive, free screening event held on May 29th. The Academy hosted 35 distinguished guests for a presentation of the compelling documentary *Stolen Time* which focuses on the vital need for dignity, ethics, and professional justice in senior healthcare. The high-profile guest list brought together influential political, civic, and academic leaders, including: Marvin Rotrand (Former City Councillor and Director-General of United Against Hate Canada), Sonny Moroz (City Councillor), Al Abdon (Community Leader), Professor Kazue Takamura (McGill University), Hélène Klodawsky (Acclaimed Filmmaker), Numerous PAB Graduates who were trained by the school between 2005 and 2017

and are now gainfully employed across the healthcare sector.

## Promoting French Integration: Free Courses for Newly Arrived Seniors (65 & up)

In alignment with its new non-profit mission, the Academy is launching a targeted language initiative. We are offering an entirely free Level 1 French Course (45 hours) tailored for newcomer seniors aged 65 and older from all ethnic communities.

•Language Prerequisite: To ensure effective classroom communication, participants must have a basic background in the English language, as English will be used as the shared language of instruction.

•Details: Eligible students only cover the basic textbook cost. Classes are held on weekends and evenings.

## How to Support and Register

•Partnerships & Grants: Contact administration at [fipinostar2@gmail.com](mailto:fipinostar2@gmail.com).

•Senior Registration: Space is limited to 20 targeted students. Classes begin the 3rd week of July 2026. Email [zbk@gilmorecollege.com](mailto:zbk@gilmorecollege.com) or call 514-485-7861 for an appointment. #



# ONTARIO COMMUNITY NEWS

**Tony San Juan, OCT**

## Fil-Can Community Day Ushers Filipino Heritage Month in Toronto

On June 6, 2026, the Filipino-Canadian communities in the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario, proudly gathered and celebrated to kick off "June as Filipino Heritage Month" with a distinctive "Filipino Community Day" event. This year's apt celebratory theme was "Makiisa, Makisaya, Makibahagi", and the occasion was

also in commemoration of the 128th "Kalayaan ng Pilipinas" on June 12, 1898 and the 165th (June 19, 1861) birth anniversary of the national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal. The whole-day festivity was organised under the auspices of the Philippine Consulate General in Toronto in co-operation and collaboration with leading Filipino-



**Emcee Ryan Orlanda, Federal Minister Rechie Valdez, Philippine Consul General Kristine Salle and Emcee Gizele Mirasol.**

held at Earl Bales Park in North York, Toronto.

Historically, the significant milestone was proclaimed on October 30, 2018, by the Parliament of Canada, through House of Commons M-155 sponsored by Salma Zahid, Member

of Parliament for Scarborough Centre-Toronto. Since then, the month of June has been celebrated 'from coast to coast' across Canada. The lively event at the park was



**Dignitaries at Dr. Jose Rizal statue: Emcee Ryan Orlanda, MPP Michael Kerzner, MP Vince Gasparro, ConGen Kristine Salle, Minister Rechie Valdez, KOR Placido Mique & Emcee Gizele Mirasol.**

of Parliament for Scarborough Centre-Toronto. Since then, the month of June has been celebrated 'from coast to coast' across Canada.

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also in commemoration of the 128th "Kalayaan ng Pilipinas" on June 12, 1898 and the 165th (June 19, 1861) birth anniversary of the national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal. The whole-day festivity was organised under the auspices of the Philippine Consulate General in Toronto in co-operation and collaboration with leading Filipino-

Among the dignitaries who attended and gave their greetings were

the Member of Parliament for Mississauga-Streetsville and Minister of Women & Gender Equality, Honourable Rechie Valdez, the MP for Eglinton-Lawrence, Vince Gasparro, and the MPP for York Centre & Ontario Solicitor General, Hon. Michael Kerzner.

The prominent participating organisations were the Philippine Independence Day Council, Kalayaan Cultural Community Centre, Knights of Rizal Central Canada, Pinoy Ontario Vendors, Philippines Integrated Network for Advocacy & Solidarity,

welcome remarks, delivery of special messages, parade of community organisations, and is highlighted by the unfurling of the huge Philippine Flag by representatives of participating organisations. The second part of the day-long event engages the crowd with cultural performances, including folk dances, traditional songs & music, native games, and martial arts demonstrations. At noon, the guests, attendees, and parkgoers were treated to a "salosalo kainan ng lechon, adobo, pansit, inihaw, lumpia, kakanin", atbp. generously hosted by



**Proud Fil-Can children pose at the Filipino Day Celebration Streamer**

University of the Philippines Alumni Association- Toronto, Philippine Chamber of Commerce-Toronto, Filipino Canadian Association of Vaughan, Seeds of Hope Pinakbet International, Alliance of Ladies of Knights of Rizal, Annak Ti Batac, Elite Eagles Club, BIBBAK, Combat Science-Warriors Art of Asia, and other community-based associations.

Ably and jointly hosted by popular community emcees Gizele Mirasol and Ryan Orlanda, the morning program includes the singing of the national anthems, land acknowledgement, wreath laying,

the Philippine Consulate and joined in with a potluck food shared by respective community organisations.

Notable Filipino businesses have booths for sampling, selling and promoting their products and services. One of the popular tents was the PINAS space, where multiflavoured "sorbetes sa kariton" were freely handed out by the friendly "Mamang sorbetero". It was indeed a remarkable Saturday showcase of Filipino pride, spirit, sharing, fellowship and talents of all things "tungkol sa ating mahal na bayang Pilipinas"!



**HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION: Community leaders and elected dignitaries gather on stage at Mackenzie King Park following the Philippine Independence Day parade on June 14, 2026. Pictured from left to right are Fely Rosales Carino, North American Filipino Star community news editor; Amy Manon-og; Gerry Danzil, Knights of Rizal Regional Commander; James de la Paz, CCFAQ Founder; Dario Boco, CCFAQ President; Marvin Rotrand, Director-General of United Against Hate Canada; Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga; Elisabeth Prass, MNA for D'Arcy-McGee; and Anthony Housefather, MP for Mount Royal. The festival was a key highlight of the Ambassador's official community tour (see full feature on the opposite page).**

# Faith, Freedom and Fellowship: Filipino Community Marks Heritage Month at Saint Joseph's Oratory

By Z.F. Kharroubi

MONTREAL — In a powerful, multi-stage celebration of faith, community, and national pride, the Thanksgiving Heritage Mass was coordinated by three churches, Saint Kevin's, St. Malachy's and the Filipino Catholic Mission of Montreal (FCMM) with the partnership of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal. The event was headed by Fr. Nico M. Sengson SVD and coordinated by Sister Grace Salvaña SPC. The mass was held at the iconic Saint Joseph's Oratory



**Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga delivers remarks during the Thanksgiving Mass at St. Joseph's Oratory.**

Basilica on Friday, June 19. The high-profile service marked a profound spiritual milestone for Quebec's Filipino Heritage Month and the 128th anniversary of Philippine Independence, drawing hundreds of faithful from across the Greater Montreal Area.

The marathon four-hour mobilization brought the local diaspora together in a vibrant display of devotion that lasted from 6:00 p.m. until nearly 10:00 p.m. The day's events also included a historic afternoon archival presentation at the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) on Holt Street, where legacy copies of the North American Filipino Star were formally presented to diplomatic leaders (See accompanying detailed report of this event on page 8).

## A Grueling Ascent to the Altar

The sheer scale of the historic mountain basilica presented both a spiritual and physical journey for the arriving parishioners, community leaders, and media representatives. Due to the Oratory's external shuttle buses being temporarily unavailable for the evening, dedicated attendees—many dressed in traditional Barong Tagalogs and elegant Filipiniana dresses—completed a grueling physical trek to reach the main sanctuary.

Worshippers resiliently scaled the property's famous 75 steep stone steps and rode five massive escalators to reach the upper basilica. Despite the exhaustion of the climb and the dim, atmospheric indoor lighting that challenged local photographers, the energy inside the sanctuary remained exceptionally high as the pews quickly filled to capacity.

## Liturgy and Diplomacy Intertwined

The Eucharistic centerpiece of the evening officially commenced at 7:00 p.m. Local Filipino and Canadian clergy concelebrated the Holy Mass,

impactful 7-minute speech under the event's official spiritual theme, "Blessed are the Peacemakers," the Ambassador's presence underscored the deep, enduring ties between the Philippine diplomatic corps, regional civic organizations, and the vibrant Quebec diaspora.

Though the basilica's grand acoustics made audio transcription challenging for onlookers, the core of Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga's message resonated deeply with the crowd. He passionately advocated for:

- Preserving Spiritual Roots: Urging families to actively pass down their deep faith and cultural traditions to the next generation of youth leaders.

- Unity in Diversity: Reminding the various regional associations that originating from different provinces in the homeland should enrich, rather than divide, the collective community.

- Civic Visibility: Encouraging Filipino-Canadians to maintain strong participation in both local Canadian civic life and Philippine national interests, including overseas voting registration.



**Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga (2nd from the right) with Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal Chairman Al Abdon (on the left) and other leaders.**

weaving traditional hymns and prayers into a solemn liturgy centered on community solidarity and thanksgiving.

The service featured a highly anticipated special guest address by His Excellency José Victor V. Chan-Gonzaga, the Ambassador of the Philippines to Canada. Delivering an

## A Summer of National Mobilization

The Ambassador's marathon visit to Montreal is part of an extensive, high-energy tour across Canada this June to mark Filipino Heritage Month—a cultural designation officially approved by the Parliament of Canada in October 2018.

Prior to arriving at the basilica, Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga has been actively engaging with diaspora communities on both civic and national stages to champion Filipino visibility. His recent cross-country itinerary highlighted a series of major milestones, including:

- 1)The Parliament Hill Flag Raising: Leading a historic flag-raising ceremony in Ottawa, where he spoke on national sovereignty, identity, and the growing contributions of the over one million Filipinos currently residing in Canada.

- 2)The CCFAQ Montreal Parade: Joining the Council of Canadian Filipino Associations of Quebec (CCFAQ) on June 14 for their annual cultural parade and multicultural festival at Mackenzie King Park. In spite of sudden rain, the parade drew a fiercely loyal following of community supporters and enthusiastic cultural dancers.

- 3)Economic Advocacy: Speaking at regional cultural celebrations, including the Ottawa Fiesta Extravaganza, to advocate for the expansion of Filipino-owned businesses and micro-entrepreneurship across provinces. Guarding the Legacy of Quebec's Diaspora

For Montreal's local Filipino population—which now numbers well over 35,000—the powerful collaboration between spiritual missions like the FCMM, regional councils like the CCFAQ, and legacy institutions like the Filipino Association of Montreal and Suburbs (FAMAS) represents decades of resilience, integration, and community building.

Hosting landmark events at world-renowned venues like Saint Joseph's Oratory firmly establishes the community's prominent, permanent place within Quebec's multicultural landscape. As Filipino Heritage Month draws to a close, the spiritual and cultural momentum generated by this year's landmark basilica service is expected to carry forward into a busy summer of local community initiatives and youth engagement programs.#



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# BAnQ Preserves History of Quebec's Filipino Community Press

By Kimberly Gultia

MONTREAL — The rich, multi-generational history of Filipino Quebecers has officially secured a permanent home within the province's historical record. On May 1, 2026, a landmark collection of community newspapers was deposited at the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ). The profound cultural weight of this preservation milestone was honored on June 19, 2026, during an official visit by the Philippine Ambassador to Canada, Jose Victor V. Chan-Gonzaga, who reviewed the archive and commended ongoing efforts to protect Filipino-Canadian history. The diplomatic event brought together key community leaders, scholars, and institution directors. In attendance alongside the Ambassador were Lisa Miniaci (Director of Conservation and Digitization) and Mireille Laforce (Director of Legal Deposit and Acquisitions) representing BAnQ; Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM) Chairman Al Abdon; newspaper collector and donor Ricardo Ribaya; Antonio Jose Valdez Fernandez (representing the family of publisher Antonio Pasion Fernandez); and prominent academic community members Prof. Erik Kuhonta and Prof. Kazue Takamura.

## Resolving the Historical Record: From Collapse to Continuity

While the physical archive presented to Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga showcased early, historic community publications—including Bulalakaw, The Tamaraw Times, and The Filipino Forum (which debuted in 1992 but published irregularly every two to three months before disappearing entirely)—the modern timeline of Quebec's Filipino press requires crucial historical accuracy. The original Filipino Star, established



**Official visit of His Excellency, Philippine Ambassador Jose Victor V. Chan-Gonzaga (6th from the left) on June 19, 2026 at the BAnQ Library on Holt St. (Photo credit: Michel Legendre)**

and published by Alberto Abiera from 1982 until November 1997, collapsed completely under intense financial distress and ceased all operations. The unbroken voice of the community only survives today because Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi stepped in to personally rescue the newspaper. Ferry-Kharroubi, a pioneering Filipino-Canadian immigrant who arrived in Canada on November 20, 1965—and who also founded Quebec's very first private school in November 1989—personally financed the entire revival in April 1998. She cleared all outstanding debts owed to the original printer, Payette & Simms, and independently relaunched the publication under its current revised name: the North American Filipino Star.

Ferry-Kharroubi initially kept Abiera on a fixed salary for six months to assist with

production. However, when he took a holiday in November 1998, she stepped up to manage production single-handedly, mastering the painstaking, traditional "cut-and-paste" layout method by hand. In 2000, she successfully migrated the printing operations to Hebdo Litho Inc., where she adopted QuarkXPress desktop publishing software—the exact platform she continues to use to lay out the newspaper to this day. Under her unbroken 28-year management as publisher and editor, it stands proud as the single surviving monthly Filipino newspaper in Quebec.

## Bridging the Past to the Digital Era

A major omission in previous reports was the true source of the archive's digital continuity. In 2000, Ferry-Kharroubi expanded the paper's reach by launching its digital platform

at [www.filipinostar.org](http://www.filipinostar.org).

When FHSM launched its Newspaper Collection and Preservation Project in 2021, building on initial collections by Ricardo Ribaya and Paul Imperial alongside Cornell University librarians Jeffrey Petersen and Emily Zinger, it was Ferry-Kharroubi who personally granted FHSM Chairman Al Abdon and researcher Kimberly Gultia permission to access and utilize her digital archives. Her continuous digital records spanning from 2000 to the present day were vital to completing the historical collection. To formalize this integration into Quebec's permanent documentary heritage, Ferry-Kharroubi officially signed the required authorization forms with BAnQ. This ensures the provincial library has legal, ongoing access to the North American Filipino Star, guaranteeing that her life's work and the living history of the community remain accessible to future researchers, educators, and the general public.

## A Legacy Woven into Quebec's History

Though earlier institutional funding applications with BAnQ were unsuccessful, the unwavering commitment of Directors Lisa Miniaci and Mireille Laforce ensured that negotiations successfully renewed this year, cementing a permanent home for these archives. Ambassador Chan-Gonzaga's visit served as a celebratory validation of a 28-year labor of love led by Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi. The comprehensive archive proves that the story of Filipino Quebecers is deeply woven into the fabric of Quebec itself, deserving of accurate documentation, respectful study, and permanent preservation for generations to come. #

# HAPPY FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH!

We celebrate the invaluable contributions  
of the Filipino community to our city and our shared heritage.

*Nous célébrons les contributions inestimables de la communauté philippine  
à notre ville et à notre patrimoine commun.*



**Stephanie Valenzuela**  
Mairesse d'arrondissement  
Borough Mayor  
[stephanie.valenzuela@montreal.ca](mailto:stephanie.valenzuela@montreal.ca)



**Sonny Moroz**  
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# Voices of the Filipino Community in Quebec: Memorializing the Past, Building the Future

By: Zenaïda Ferry-Kharroubi

(Editor's Note: The following speech is what I delivered for Panel #1 ("Remembering the Past") at the Filipino Community Diaspora Conference, held at the Université de Montréal, April 11, 2026. This address marks the launch of our new monthly series featuring the speeches from the conference's three panels requested by Prof. Kazue Takamura and Kimberly Gultia who will submit other speeches in the next editions of this newspaper).

Magandang umaga, bonjour tout le monde, hello everyone. It is a joy to speak to you today in the beautiful, multilingual landscape of Montreal. My journey to this stage began 61 years ago, on October 27, 1965. Seeking personal freedom, I boarded an ocean liner named the President Cleveland for a 15-day voyage across the sea, arriving in Canada with just fifty dollars in my pocket on Saturday, November 20, 1965.

Back in the Philippines, I learned the value of relentless hard work early. I began working at age 16 after winning a gold medal in stenography. As a working student, I



**Oct. 25, 1997 - Graduation and 8th anniversary of Gilmore Business Institute (changed to Gilmore College International in October 2000) at the Phil. Village Restaurant, Van Horne Ave. Photo shows: L to R: Anne Quesnels, Lilia Esguerra, Frank McInnis, Zenaïda Ferry-Kharroubi (founder & director-general), Jeanne Registre, and Djaoïda Kadri.**

Adjustment Bureau, Reader's Digest, and the Canadian Pacific Railway. But

school, dedicated to personal improvement education.

My life has always been

stepped in to save it in June 2006. I poured my own line of credit—the equivalent of five years of my home mortgage—into the cooperative, desperate to unite our diaspora and build a self-sustaining community economy. During this same period, I organized a local scouting group, and my own students generously volunteered their days off to work as cashiers at the store.

Regrettably, our community continued to buy their groceries from corporate supermarkets rather than patronizing their own cooperative. Today, the store is gone, and the scout groups have disbanded. Looking back at a lifetime of uncompensated labor, it is easy to feel that these sacrifices bore no long-lasting fruit, leaving behind only memories. It has often brought a heavy, honest question to my mind: Did I make a mistake by staying too busy? Perhaps, I did as I could have done better if I were not too busy, but then I also believe that things happen for a reason. Even though I still have not realized my dream I believe while there is life there is hope. Dreams are what make us remain optimistic and resilient. It does not cost anything to dream, and



**First vacation in 1966 (Oct.est) while I was with the Readers Digest and visited the East Coast with my roommate, Fe Limbo who took this photo.**

balanced three roles at once: secretary, college student, and weekend dressmaker. Through sheer determination, I put myself through university, earning a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature. I worked for the Lions Club of Manila and a pharmaceutical firm with a German executive but I did not choose German as a foreign language in my optional course at the University of the Philippines but instead I chose to study French—never realizing the universe was preparing me for my future home in Quebec.

Upon arriving in Canada, I spent seven years navigating corporate life, working for the Underwriters'

my true calling was education. Thanks to a Quebec government bursary for individuals with industrial experience, I completed a diploma in education at McGill University under its 1-G program in June 1972 and later earned a TESL certificate in 1979 and my Master of Arts degree in Educational Studies from Concordia University in October 1990.

I dedicated 25 years of my life to teaching in the public school system from 1972 to 1997. However, when unstable government pedagogical reforms in the late 1980s disrupted our classrooms, I chose to forge my own path. In November 1989, I obtained a permit to establish my own private



**Filipino caregivers enrolled in French, full of youthful energy and enthusiasm to learn (I still recognize some of them like Lilia Baldesco, Cristy Blanco, Cosette Pena, and Juvy Vales while I have lost track of the others as they may have moved or they also have changed so much that I do not recognize them anymore even if I see them. This photo was taken in 1990 or 1991 at 4246 Girouard Avenue where I started Gilmore Business Institute in 1989.**

defined by doing too many things at once, driven not by financial gain, but by the educational pleasure of service. Since 1998, I have balanced two full-time roles: running my school and publishing our community newspaper. From my pre-retirement in 1997 to 2010, I threw myself into constant volunteer work.

The peak of these sacrifices occurred between 2003 and 2010. Seeing our local Filipino Solidarity Cooperative store facing bankruptcy, I

if we continue to work hard in realizing our dreams, perhaps, we can achieve them sooner or later.

While the structures we built in the past did not all survive, the spirit of our labor remains unbreakable. We are not just memorializing the past; we are actively building a fairer, stronger future for all immigrants in Quebec which includes building a learning center to help them develop, refine, or update their professional and personal skills to succeed in Canada. #

# From "Stolen Time" to Shared Dignity: Gilmore Academy Steps Up to Transform Immigrant Education and Reclaim the Heart of Senior Care

On May 29th, community leaders, academics, and change-makers gathered for a powerful screening of *Stolen Time*—a documentary exposing how corporate nursing homes exploit marginalized immigrant workers while neglecting vulnerable seniors. The event marked a historic turning point: the official transition of Montreal's first Filipino-Canadian private school into the Gilmore Academy of Arts and Social

Sciences. Moving forward as a non-profit learning center, the Academy directly answers this systemic crisis. Through our specialized PAB (Healthcare) and General Adult Education programs, we provide

immigrants with top-tier, dignified training—ensuring our healthcare system is staffed by protected, highly skilled professionals who put the care of our seniors above corporate profits.



**Honouring history, building shared dignity. Celebrating our new non-profit learning centre alongside Snowdon Councillor Sonny Moroz and Mrs. Farmer, CEO and guardian of a 1944 high school legacy. A cherished supporter since I founded my school in 1989, her presence underscores a lifelong partnership championing community care and education.**



**A legacy of trust and community advocacy. Standing with filmmaker Helene Klodawsky, Councillor Sonny Moroz, and former City Councillor Marvin Rotrand. A steadfast ally who has attended every milestone for 36.5 years, Rotrand formally recognized Gilmore College International as the only Filipino-owned school outside the Philippines. Last November 2025, he presented us with the inaugural \$500 Bert Abiera Foundation scholarship. Honouring the late publisher whose newspaper I revived in 1998, this award preserves Abiera's legacy by funding Filipino students pursuing higher education.**



**United for community, education, and shared dignity. A historic gathering of the community leaders, educators, and allies who made our non-profit learning centre launch possible. Though a few key supporters are missing from the frame while capturing this moment behind the camera lens, their shared commitment remains permanently woven into the foundation of our new public legacy.**



**A testimonial of academia, journalism, and partnership. Standing alongside McGill Professor Kazue Tamakura, legendary community columnist Fely Rosales Carino, and former Gilmore teacher Petra Sentes (now head teacher at Collège Marie de France). Their enduring support beautifully represents the collective community alliance carrying our public legacy forward.**



**A tapestry of arts, media, and trade alliances. (L-R) Artist Avy Loftus, filmmaker Helene Klodawsky, Pinoy Pa Rin TV host Michael Davantes, longtime columnist Fely Rosales Carino, QCPCBT President Remedios Monteagudo, and McGill Professor Kazue Tamakura. From media collaborations to trade alliances, each advocate represents the diverse pillars supporting our public, non-profit vision.**



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## VEGETARIAN RECIPES



### Black Bean and Tortilla Soup

2 tbsp olive oil  
1 chopped onion  
2 chopped peppers  
3 crushed garlic cloves  
2 tsp ground cumin  
1 tsp garlic granules  
1 tsp chilli powder  
2 tbsp tomato purée  
1l veg stock  
400g can chopped tomatoes  
2 tbsp cornmeal  
or polenta  
2 tbsp chopped pickled jalapeños  
2 x 400g cans black beans  
jalapeño brine  
4 small corn tortillas  
chopped coriander  
avocado, crumbled feta and pumpkin  
seeds, to serve, if you like

**Method**  
step 1  
Heat the olive oil in a deep pan over a medium heat. Add the onion, peppers (any colour you like) and garlic cloves with a big pinch of salt. Cook for 10 mins, until starting to soften, then add the ground cumin, garlic granules and chilli powder along with the tomato purée. Cook for 5 mins, until the purée has caramelised.

step 2  
Pour in the veg stock, chopped tomatoes, cornmeal or polenta, chopped pickled jalapeños and black beans, along with the liquid. Add a splash of jalapeño brine and bring to a simmer. Cook for 45 mins, until thickened and reduced. Season, then scatter in the corn tortillas, cut into small strips. (Use flour tortillas if that's what you have.) Rest for 5 mins before serving. Serve with chopped coriander, avocado, crumbled feta and 60ml olive oil

2 aubergines  
cut into chunks  
1 large onion



### Aubergine and artichoke hearts rice

**Ingredients:**  
60ml olive oil  
2 aubergines  
cut into chunks  
1 large onion  
finely chopped  
2 garlic cloves  
crushed  
small pack parsley  
leaves picked, stalks finely chopped  
2 tsp smoked paprika  
2 tsp turmeric

**Method**  
step 1  
Heat 2 tbsp of the oil in a large non-stick frying pan or paella pan. Fry the aubergines until nicely coloured on all sides (add another tbsp of oil if the aubergine begins catching too much), then remove and set aside. Add another tbsp of oil to the pan and lightly fry the onion for 2-3 mins or until softened. Add the garlic and parsley stalks, cook for a few mins more, then stir in the spices and rice until everything is well coated. Heat for 2 mins, add half the stock and cook, uncovered, over a medium heat for 20 mins, stirring occasionally to prevent it from sticking.

step 2  
Nestle the aubergine and artichokes into the mixture, pour over the rest of the stock and cook for 20 mins more or until the rice is cooked through. Chop the parsley leaves, stir through with the lemon juice and season well. Bring the whole pan to the table and spoon into bowls, with the lemon wedges on the side.



### Lentil and broccoli stir fry

**Ingredients**  
4-6 cups broccoli florets  
2 (15 oz) cans brown lentils, drained and rinsed  
Rice for serving  
Thinly sliced green onion and toasted sesame seeds for garnish

**Sauce:**  
1/3 cup water  
1/3 cup low sodium tamari  
1/3 cup pure maple syrup  
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil  
1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
1 -2 cloves garlic, finely grated  
1 teaspoon finely grated ginger  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Chili sauce, to taste (I used about 2 teaspoons)

**Instructions**  
Add all the sauce ingredients to a medium sized bowl and whisk until completely combined. Set aside until ready to use.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add the broccoli florets and about 1/3 cup of water. Place the lid on and allow broccoli to steam until just fork tender, about 5 minutes. The water should all be evaporated, but if not, you can carefully drain the remaining water out.

Add in the lentils, give lentils and broccoli a quick mix and then pour in the sauce. Cook everything together until sauce has thickened and coats the spatula, about 5 minutes, stirring often.

Serve lentils and broccoli over rice and garnish with thinly sliced green onion and toasted sesame seeds.



### Avocado Alfredo

**Ingredients**  
Kosher salt  
1 pound fettuccine  
2 ripe avocados, peeled and pitted  
2 cups heavy cream  
2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped  
1/2 cup finely grated pecorino (about 2 ounces), plus more for serving  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Finely grated lemon zest, for serving  
Thinly sliced fresh basil leaves, for serving

**Directions**  
Bring a large pot of water to a boil over medium-high heat and season generously with salt. Add the fettuccine and cook, stirring occasionally, until the pasta is barely tender, about 12 minutes. Reserve 1/4 cup of pasta water, then drain the pasta well and reserve the pot.

Meanwhile, combine the avocado, cream, garlic, 1/2 cup pecorino, 2 teaspoons salt and several grinds of pepper in a blender and blend until very smooth, scraping down the sides

of the carafe with a rubber spatula as needed.

Pour the avocado sauce into the pot the pasta cooked in and place over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the sauce is warmed through and just simmering, about 5 minutes. Add the pasta and reserved pasta water and toss to coat. Taste and adjust seasoning with more salt and pepper if needed.

Transfer the pasta to a large serving bowl. Top with the lemon zest, basil and a sprinkle of pecorino. Serve immediately.



### Roasted Vegetable Bolognese

**Ingredients**  
4 portobello mushrooms, sliced  
1 red pepper, sliced  
1 large red onion, sliced  
2 small or 1 large carrot, halved lengthways  
3 Tbsp Olive oil  
1 Tbsp Balsamic vinegar  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
2 tsps Dried Italian herbs  
2 Tbsp Tomato puree  
400 g (14 oz) Tinned tomatoes  
300 g (10.5 oz) dried spaghetti, to serve

**Instructions**  
Preheat your oven to 200C / 390F. On a large baking sheet, lay out your mushrooms, peppers, onions and carrots. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, then season with salt and pepper. Roast for 35 mins. Once finished, allow the roasted vegetables to cool for about 5 minutes. They don't need to be cold, but we don't want them to let steam out in the blender which would encourage the mixture to puree.

Now add the vegetables to the food processor and pulse until finely minced. Do not leave the motor running – just use the pulse button for short durations and make sure the mixture is churning properly so that it doesn't start to puree at the bottom.

In a large saucepan (or a shallow casserole dish that can be used on the hob / burner), heat another glug of olive oil and sauté your garlic for a few moments until soft and fragrant. Add the vegetable "mince" and the dried herbs. Sauté constantly, being careful not to let any stick to the bottom, until the garlic and herbs are well mixed in.

Add the tomato puree and continue to sauté and stir until it's all mixed together before adding the canned tomatoes.

Allow to simmer on a very low heat while you prepare your spaghetti according to package instructions. Drain spaghetti and serve roasted vegetables over it.#



## Social Tidbits Montreal Community News Fely Rosales Cariño

To my dear Tidbit friends, I hope you are enjoying this wonderful season. Aren't you glad you can put away your winter clothes and take a good stroll or do errands without heavy coats/boots? And for most of us, Filipinos, this is good news indeed. Thank you, Lord, for blessing us with warmer weather when it's more fun to get together. June is a busy month and let's see what our kababayans (compatriots) are up to.

### Hot News

I am privileged to tell everyone of the hottest news, a dream-in-the-making for almost four decades, the Legacy Education, the brainchild of Zenaida Kharroubi. Held last May 29, 2026 at Gilmore College International at 7159 Cotes des Neiges, Zeny presented to a select audience her vision of Gilmore College attaining the status of an academy in the very near future. She is raring to go and is assembling personnel to assume the different levels of responsibility. Determined and resolute, Zeny feels strongly that this is a mission she's called to do. A unique goal indeed! If anyone can achieve this, it would be Zeny, who dares to go where no one does. We do not know how we deserve your generous spirit and boundless perseverance. Thank you, Zeny; we are behind you as you reach for the stars.

### First LKOR Queen

On May 30, 2026, the Ladies of the Knights of Rizal (LKOR) Montreal Chapter, a counterpart organization of the Order of the Knights of Rizal (KOR) held its Induction Ball and Coronation of the LKOR Queen. This double celebration was enjoyed by family, friends, and guests at Ruby Foo's on 7655 Decarie Boulevard. The Honourable Stephanie Valenzuela, Borough Mayor of CDN-NDG held the Induction of the ladies in their new responsibilities: Marilyn de Luna (President), Blandyna Khita (VP), Maria Grace Tambalque (Treasurer), Mildred Cataford (Asst. Treasurer), Alberta

Casayuran (Secretary), Amelia San Juan (Asst. Secretary), Elvira G. Osis (Executive Secretary), Evelyn Ilagan (Auditor), Marilyn Mendoza (Chancellor), Elena Balaus (Archivist), Amy Menzi (Deputy Archivist), Luz Domingo & Fely Rosales Carino (Advisers), Luzviminda Abad & Berlita Pasion (Press Relations Officers). Members are Ruth Valencia, Angie Borja, Ruth Pangilinan, Joan Cea, Menchu Cea, Jaimelyn Ujvary, Fe Abaya, Jovita Deladia, and Thina Laguitao. What a list. We wish the ladies wisdom and strength as they commit themselves to serving the Filipino community.

The guest speaker of the evening was Anthony Housefather, prominent in Filipino celebrations, who holds dual titles: Member of Parliament, Mount-Royal Riding and KOR Honorary Member. The crowd was treated to special entertainment numbers by: LKOR Presentation, FAMAS President Jojo Laud, Lady Evelyn Ilagan, D'Easy Dance Line Group, Sir Jerry Osis, Sir Julius Abad, and SNR Dance Group. And it was also a delight to see Reuben Mendoza & wife leading the dancing on the floor.

Now for some royal news. LKOR President Marilyn De Luna bestowed the distinct honor of being the first LKOR Queen of 2026 to Lady Emily Casayuran! Congratulations, Emily! Her royal court consisted of Lady Emma Patinga (1st Princess), Lady Yehling Maglalang (2nd Princess), and Lady Rose Baguipo (3rd Princess). Each was awarded a crown, trophy, sash, and bouquet. And Sir Rowel Pangilinan delivered a serenade to the Queen. And a shout out to Lady Rose Baguipo who bagged two awards: Ms. Congeniality (for most Ads solicited) and Ms. Charity (For most dinner tickets sold). Lady Yehlin Maglalang garnered the award for Ambassador of Goodwill (for visible representation of LKOR).

Before serious dancing began, inspirational talks were delivered by

LKOR Advisers Sir Felix De Luna, Sir Julius Abad, and Sir Gerry Danzil (Canada Regional Commander). And let's not forget Daisy Salon (make-up artist), DJ Bernie (Sound & music), and Ana Mhey photography.

### 128th Phil. Independence Day

The Seniors of West Island and Suburbs (SWIS) celebrated Philippine Independence Ball on June 5, 2026 at the Olympia Reception Hall on 3855 St. Jean Boulevard. Emcees Fely Rosales and Jean Boucher kept the program at a good pace. While guest registrations were going on, dancing was already in place. Kudos to DJ Dennis Mayuga whose tunes ensured the dance floor was always full. People eagerly waited for the next music to dance to and Dennis did not disappoint.

The official start of the evening was marked by the entrance of the SWIS Executive Officers: Lolita Odulio (Chairwoman), Tessie Igrobay (Vice Chair), Evangeline Salvador (Secretary), Nora Arcalas (Asst. Secretary), Theodora Isada (Treasurer), Estrelita Bote (Asst. Treasurer), Celestina Dagsaan (Auditor), Anita Poitras (Press Relations Officer), Fely Rosales Carino (PRO, Filipino Community Services), Roger Ajero (Senior Adviser), and Connie Fabro (Adviser, Outreach Chairwoman). And Speaker of the Board Jeannette Perignon leads the Board of Directors: Emy Bayan, Carlito Catuncan, Pete Ison, Elvira Maximo, Andy Odulio, Lucy Salazar, and Edith Valenzuela. Chairwoman Lolit Odulio gave the welcome address while Lucy Parial delivered the invocation.

The main entertainment was presented by the SWIS Dance Group led by choreographer Nita Advincula. Under her guidance, Tiklos was performed by these lovely dancers: Nerie Ajero, Emy Bayan, Connie Fabro, Tessie Igrobay, Lolit Odulio, Myrna Rocillo, and Mameng Transfiguration. Their beautiful Filipiniana attires added to their grace and the crowd responded appreciatively. Stay tuned for their next activity as this group likes to party.

### FHSM Heritage Month

On June 6, 2026, the faithful trekked to the Grand Salon of 6767 Côte-des-Neiges to celebrate the Filipino Heritage month. This is under the banner of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM) led by its indefatigable leader FHSM Chairman Al Abdon and its Executive Board as well as dedicated members. Chairman Al gave his welcome address to officially start the event. Edith Fedalizo, pianist of Panday Tinig, was busy

multitasking. She was also an exuberant emcee, coaxing and teasing the audience for their participation. And the presence of Marvin Rotrand, Founder and Director-General of United Against Hate Canada (a nonprofit organization combatting antisemitism and all forms of hate), gave credence to the occasion. Marvin reminisced and stated that in February 2018, he and Councillor Lionel Perez introduced to the local CDN-NDG council the naming of June as Filipino Heritage Month. He then threw a challenge to community leaders - Rey Balansi, Dario Boco, Gerry Danzil, and Minda Mazzone to name a few, to alleviate Philippine underrepresentation in local/national affairs. In addition, Marvin alluded to Chairman Al as a special partner-in-crime, so to speak; he credits the Chairman as a strong promoter of Jewish Heritage Month. Then the star of Filipinos, Stephanie Valenzuela, picked up the mic and all were able to see her pride and joy, Scarlett, just a few months old. Certainly, the youngest member of the FHSM already making her mark! Making history as the first Filipino mayor representing the borough of Côte-des-Neiges/Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (CDN-NDG), she stated her credentials as growing up in the neighborhood and never questioning her identity as a first generation Filipino Canadian. Completing the trio of bigwigs was Sonny Moroz, Councillor for Snowdon District. He is accessible, endearing, and supportive of Filipinos. The sole Jewish voice on Montreal City Council, Sonny stands true to his ideals and is no less a passionate defender of cultural preservation and integrity.

The entertainment was led by Paul Imperial directing Panday Tinig's performance of 'Ti Ayat ti Maysa nga Ubung' and 'Mabuhay ang Pilipinas,' as well as 'Lupang Hinirang' and O Canada. Panday Tinig couple Ruel & Lilibet, singing with the group for 40 years (that's a record, folks), treated the crowd with 'Gumising Ka, Kaibigan.' Cebuano Ray Omictin gave a history lesson, the history of lechon in fact! He said lechon is the biggest barbecue in the Philippines (if not the world) because it's a pig in the biggest bamboo skewer on an open fire. How creatively stated.

But the main draw was Professor Maria Cecilia Hwang (Ph.D., Brown University). She is Assistant Professor at McGill University's Department of East Asian Studies and the Institute for

See Page 18 Social Tidbits

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# FILIPINO STAR

## SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

### Kim Chiu marks 20 years in showbiz, reflects on living life she once prayed for



**Kim Chiu**

Kim Chiu is overwhelmed with gratitude as she celebrates her 20th anniversary in show business, saying reaching the milestone “still feels unreal.”

The actress-TV host looked back on how her career began and how her life has changed since, through her Instagram page on Wednesday, June 3.

“Today marks my 20th year in showbiz. Honestly, it still feels unreal,” she said. “As I sit here and look back, I can’t help but remember being that young girl from Cebu.”

She recalled how her mom would always bring her to church and tell her to pray for her goals.

“So I did. I prayed for good grades. I prayed for someone to help send us to school. I prayed for a house we could finally call our own. I prayed that one day we’d never have to keep asking for help. I prayed that I would have enough so I could help my family,” she wrote.

“Back then, some of those prayers felt impossible. And yet, years later, here I am. Living the life I once prayed so hard for,” she reflected.

Chiu then credited her

supporters, ABS-CBN family, and brands who have loved and believed in her for the past two decades.

“And most importantly, thank

“Maraming, maraming salamat po. Cheers to 20 years and hopefully more and more!”

Chiu started her showbiz



You, Lord, for every answered prayer, every closed door that protected me, and every blessing that changed my life,” she stated.

“I always say this, but it’s true: Kung may sobra pa sa salitang ‘SALAMAT,’ ‘yun po ang gusto kong sabihin sa inyong lahat,” she added.

career after she joined the reality TV show “Pinoy Big Brother” in 2006. She has since starred in several hit films and TV series, including her recent ones “The Alibi,” “My Love Will Make You Disappear,” and “Linlang.” ■

### Michael Pacquiao skips Jimuel’s wedding to help earthquake victims



**Joyce & Michael Pacquiao**

Michael Pacquiao skipped the wedding of his older brother Jimuel Pacquiao in the United States to focus on helping victims of the recent earthquake in General Santos City, according to his girlfriend Joyce Tan Custodio.

In an Instagram post on Sunday, June 14, Custodio said Michael chose to stay behind and assist residents affected by the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck parts of Mindanao earlier this week.

“Missing an important family moment was not easy, but your commitment to serving others speaks volumes about the kind of leader and person you are,” Custodio captioned her photo with Michael.

“When the 7.8 magnitude earthquake [hit] Gensan, your thoughts immediately turned to the people who depended on you,” the celebrity girlfriend added.

Custodio also defended Michael against criticism surrounding his public service efforts, saying she supports his dedication to helping others.

“Even when some people have negative things to say about the way you serve, I know your heart and the intentions behind everything you do,” she said.

“No matter what challenges come our way, I will always be here beside you and believing in you,” she added. ■

## Aiko Melendez, son Andre Yllana fulfill dream of working together



**Aiko and son Andre Yllana.**

Celebrity mother-daughter duo Aiko Melendez and Andre Yllana will be working together on an acting project for the first time.

The public servant and award-winning actress excitedly announced that one of her and Andre's wishes has come true — to be given the chance to work together in front of the camera.

In her Instagram post, Aiko shared about the microdrama series she and Andre did for Viva Movie Box (VMB), "A Mother's Sacrifice."

"As a mother, there is no greater love than the love we have for our children," Aiko captioned the post.

"Through every challenge, every sacrifice, and every silent prayer, a mother's heart will always choose her child," she added.

Aiko is very grateful to Viva Entertainment for choosing them to star in the VMB vertical series.

"This project is extra special to me because it is not only a story about love and sacrifice, it is also a moment I get to treasure as a mother working alongside her son," she said.

The actress and councilor is also super thankful to the series' director, Joy Aquino, for giving her and Jomari Yllana's son the opportunity to work with each other for the first time.

"There are opportunities in life that come only once, and this is definitely one of them. Thank you to Director Joy Aquino and the entire team for making this memorable experience possible," she said. ■

## Judy Ann Santos, kids meet Chris Hemsworth



**(From left) Judy Ann, Yohan, Lucho, Chris Hemsworth and Luna.**

Judy Ann Santos and her children Yohan, Lucho and Luna were visibly delighted after they got to meet and had a close interaction with Marvel actor Chris Hemsworth.

Glimpses of the celebrity mom and kids' meeting with the Australian actor were shared by her husband, TV host-actor Ryan Agoncillo, through his

Instagram page on Friday, June 19. It was not immediately stated where the family bumped into Hemsworth.

"The love of my wife and children make me feel six foot four and like Odin's got nothin' on me. P.S. I've only had three hours of sleep when these photos were taken," Agoncillo quipped in the caption. ■

## Heart Evangelista makes heads turn at Shanghai fashion event



**Heart Evangelista**

Heart Evangelista was among celebrities spotted at renowned brand Max Mara's 75th anniversary celebration show in Shanghai, China.

The actress and fashion personality shared the front row with Oscar-winning actress Michelle Yeoh and Hollywood star Katie Holmes during the event held at the Long Museum on June 16.

brand events and international fashion weeks in recent years.

While in Shanghai, Evangelista also shared on social media several fashion discoveries from local and emerging brands, reflecting an interest in labels beyond the established luxury houses she is often associated with.

Outside fashion, Evangelista



Also in attendance were "Euphoria" actress Maude Apatow, Olympic champion Eileen Gu, socialite Nicky Hilton and her parents Rick and Kathy Hilton, fashion influencer Tina Leung, and other figures from the fashion and entertainment industries.

The appearance marks another high-profile fashion engagement for Evangelista, who has become a regular presence at luxury

has remained busy with television work, including her hosting duties on GMA-7's "The People Have Spoken."

Her attendance at the Shanghai event comes as she continues to balance projects in entertainment with appearances on the global fashion circuit, where she remains one of the most visible Filipino personalities invited to major industry gatherings. ■

# Canada's Economic Crossroads: Carney's Trading Vision Faces Fierce Opposition From Poilievre

OTTAWA — June 23, 2026 — As Canada balances on a delicate financial tightrope, the federal government faces mounting domestic pressure and a pivotal geopolitical deadline. Prime Minister Mark Carney's newly minted administration is defending its long-term structural strategy against compounding inflation data and a highly anticipated trade showdown. With the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) review triggering on July 1, the political battle lines on Parliament Hill are drawn strictly around the immediate financial anxiety felt by everyday Canadians.

## The Carney Plan: Resiliency Amid Global Trade Headwinds

The Carney government continues to push a structural overhaul aimed at steering Canada through its current "settling-in" period of slow growth. Acknowledging distinct structural weaknesses, the Prime Minister has linked domestic economic instability directly to volatile global energy markets and unpredictable foreign tariffs.

To stabilize consumer wallets and insulate the country from shifting international trade climates, the government has active measures in motion:

- The Grocery Rebate Program: A major cornerstone strategy distributing a \$2,500 one-



Prime Minister Mark Carney outlines structural policy changes aimed at rewiring Canada's economy amid global market volatility and domestic pressure." (Jeenah Moon/Reuters)

- Market Diversification: Funding accelerated domestic infrastructure developments at rapid speeds to reduce deep economic reliance on the volatile United States market.
- Federal Spending Reductions: Committing to long-term cuts in the operational costs of the federal government alongside strict rollbacks on

further energy and auto market integration as long as unpredictable U.S. sectoral tariffs on Canadian steel, aluminum, and lumber continue to violate the spirit of the deal. Canada and Mexico are aligned in seeking a clean 16-year extension, but trade officials admit a straightforward renewal on July 1 is highly unlikely.

## Poilievre Strikes Back: "Carney Speeches Won't Pay the Bills"

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has launched an aggressive offensive against the government's path, capitalizing on Fresh Statistics Canada data revealing that headline inflation ticked upward to 3.2 per cent, with food inflation climbing to a severe 4.3 per cent year-over-year. Pointing out that Canada contracted economically for consecutive quarters to start the year, Poilievre slammed the Prime Minister for presiding over the only shrinking economy in the G7.

"Our biggest export can no longer be Mark Carney's speeches filled with dazzling buzzwords while workers suffer through a recession," Poilievre told reporters on Parliament Hill. The Official Opposition leader rejects global scapegoating, demanding immediate, foundational domestic corrections:

- 1) Axe the Industrial Carbon Tax: Eliminating taxes on fuel and agriculture to lower overhead costs for food processors, farmers, and fertilizer production, bringing food inflation down naturally.

- 2) Impose a \$31-Billion Deficit Cap: Forcing Ottawa to halt inflationary "money printing" by capping the federal deficit at \$31 billion—partially funded by cancelling high-cost programs like the \$60-to-\$90 billion Toronto-Quebec high-speed rail line.

- 3) Unblock Resource Projects: Fast-tracking natural resource permits to give Canadian workers larger paychecks while strengthening the global purchasing power of the Canadian dollar.

- 4) Reject Condo Bailouts: Opposing any tax-funded government buybacks of unabsorbed developer condo inventory, demanding instead that developers drop housing prices to a level the middle class can actually afford.

Summaries of news from various outlets.



Leader of the Conservative Party Pierre Poilievre speaks in the Foyer of the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, on Monday, June 1, 2026. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Spencer Colby

time check to roughly 12 million low- and middle-income Canadians to counter stubborn

international immigration numbers to ease housing and social demands.

## The July 1 CUSMA Review: A Looming Continental Trade Battle

All eyes are locked on the upcoming July 1 trilateral meeting, which formally triggers the mandatory joint review under Article 34.7 of the CUSMA free-trade pact. While the agreement governs nearly \$2 trillion in annual commerce, cross-border relations have grown intensely rigid. U.S. President Donald Trump sent mixed shockwaves across Ottawa last week, declaring the current trade pact "irrelevant" and stating he prefers termination over a standard extension.

The Prime Minister downplayed the posturing, noting it is "no secret" that the U.S. administration pushes protectionist policies. However, Carney signals a significant shift toward a defensive "Fortress North America" approach. Ottawa is walking a fine line, warning that Canada must remain highly cautious of

# Quebec Election Preview: Premier Fréchette Tackles Montreal Security and Economic Crises as Opposition Platforms Expand

MONTREAL — June 23, 2026 — With a high-stakes provincial election officially scheduled for October 5, the battle for Quebec's economic and social future is intensifying across Montreal. Facing mounting pressure over a stagnant provincial economy and rising urban security anxieties, Premier Christine Fréchette—who assumed office in April following François Legault's sudden resignation—is moving aggressively to deploy targeted affordability relief and visible law enforcement measures. To directly alleviate Montreal's severe housing crunch, the Fréchette government officially broke ground yesterday on Phase 1 of the massive Coulee Grou project in Pointe-aux-Trembles. This initiative will deliver 200 brand-new affordable

housing units specifically designed for low- and modest-income families. Furthermore, to bolster the local workforce and assist immigrant communities, the province confirmed that the popular Quebec Experience Program (PEQ) will formally reopen on July 2, clearing a vital, fast-tracked pathway to permanent residency for skilled temporary foreign workers and international graduates.

On public safety, Fréchette has pledged emergency funding to crack down on Montreal street violence and secure the STM transit system. However, the Premier remains on the defensive after a scathing Auditor General report exposed \$2.2 billion in failed government investments tied to bankrupt green battery manufacturers like Northvolt and Lion

Electric.

Meanwhile, opposition parties are heavily contesting Montreal ridings with starkly contrasting platforms:

## The Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ):

Led by Charles Milliard, the Liberals are actively rolling out their official candidate selections across the city. Milliard is pitching a stable, business-friendly federalist alternative to voters. His platform balances a \$380-million peaceful French-language educational strategy with immediate middle-class income tax cuts and a boosted solidarity tax credit to protect consumer purchasing power.

## The Parti Québécois (PQ):

Surging ahead in recent province-



Christine Fréchette

wide polls, Paul St-Pierre Plamondon's sovereignist party is leaning heavily into nationalism. The PQ plans to release its official independence blueprint tomorrow during the Fête nationale holiday. Economically, they vow to completely block the multi-billion-dollar Toronto-Quebec high-speed rail corridor to protect local agricultural land.#

# Brossard Youth Shine Bright at Massive UCMAS Mental Math Championship

*Editor's Note: The thriving success of UCMAS Brossard holds special meaning for the North American Filipino Star. Franchise founder Leandra Garing is a former French student (2003–2009) of our editor. Seeing her empower local youth beautifully mirrors our own school's current transition into a non-profit learning center dedicated to educating and uplifting immigrants of all ethnicities across Montreal.*

buzzed with high energy as students raced against the clock to solve up to 200 complex mathematical problems in a mere eight minutes. Leading the charge for local representation was the UCMAS Brossard franchise, owned and directed by Leandra Garing and Arlene Clemente Asido. An impressive delegation of approximately 70 Brossard students participated in the regional tournament. The hard work put in by the students, supported by Garing and



**Young competitors each with an Abacus and answer sheet while parents are seated behind, preparing for the exciting mental arithmetic competition**

LAVAL – The Embassy Plaza was packed to maximum capacity on May 30, 2026, as hundreds of Quebec's brightest young minds gathered for the highly competitive UCMAS Abacus & Mental Math Championship. From 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., the venue

her family—including her husband, her son Leandro, and her daughter Sarah Garing, who serves as a core instructor—culminated in a spectacular multi-trophy sweep in their Category D - Construction Module.



**The young quadruple champion Thaddeus holds his trophy flanked by his father, Erwin de Asis and mother, Joy de Asis. He has been a student of UCMAS Brossard since 2023.**



**A proud moment for the young, trophy-winning mathematical athletes representing the UCMAS Brossard delegation. A total of 70 young students from Brossard participated in the championship on May 30, 2026 held at the Embassy Plaza, Laval**



**The Garing family behind the success of UCMAS Brossard: Owner Leandra Garing, her husband, her daughter Sarah Antonette Buenaventura who is an instructor and son Leandro.**



**Leandra Garing (on the right with Zenaida Kharroubi) is a former student of Gilmore College International during the period of 2003-2009 when it was located on 4950 Queen Mary Road. The College is currently located at 7159, ch. de la Cote des Neiges since September 2015.**

Among the standout stars of the day was nine-year-old Thaddeus Kai De Asis. Demonstrating extraordinary focus, the young Brossard student captured a prestigious trophy.

This franchise was established by Leandra Garing and Arlene Clemente Asido in April 2023 and has a current enrollment of 100 students who attend 2-hour weekly sessions on Thursdays at 5855 Boulevard Taschereau, Local 204B, Brossard, QC J4Z 1A5 (Tel. 514-546-5875. Course instructors: Sarah Antonette Buenaventura, Regine Marie Asido and Alejandro Asido.

UCMAS is a globally recognized after-school cognitive enrichment program focused on whole-brain development through abacus-based mental arithmetic. The overwhelming success of the Brossard team in Laval serves as an inspiring

testament to the dedication, talent, and bright academic future of our local youth. UCMAS (Universal Concept Mental Arithmetic System) was founded by Prof. Dr. Dino Wong in 1993 in Malaysia.#

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#### STATEMENT

Canada marks World Refugee Day and reflects on 75 years of refugee protection

Ottawa, June 20, 2026—The Honourable Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, issued the following statement today:

"On World Refugee Day, Canada recognizes the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the international refugee protection system it created, including the principle that people have the right to seek safety from persecution.

"For 75 years, this framework has helped shape how countries support people forced to flee conflict and crisis. Canadians have a long-standing and proud humanitarian tradition. It is part of who we are. It reflects our values and our international commitments. Today, the world is facing a shared challenge: how to protect the rights and well-being of increasing numbers of people, so that they can live and work freely.

"That is why Canada's humanitarian commitment matters. When people are offered safety, stability and the opportunity to rebuild their lives, they become neighbours, workers, students, parents, volunteers and community leaders. They make valuable social, cultural and economic contributions, helping to build our communities and shape the country we share.

"Canada will continue to support people in need while



**Honourable Lena Metlege Diab,  
Minister of Immigration,  
Refugees and Citizenship**

strengthening the integrity of our protection programs. We are doing this by taking a responsible path that upholds our humanitarian tradition and allows us to work with partners to strengthen refugee protection, while keeping the system fair, well managed and sustainable.

"People have always moved to find safety, opportunity, family and a future. Today, and every day, we reaffirm our commitment to those seeking safety, and to the partnerships needed to protect people, strengthen communities and help build lasting solutions."

- 30 -

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From Page 13 SocialTidibts

Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies. Speaking under the Philippine Heritage Month theme, "Lechon, Sugba, at Inihaw: Celebrating Filipino Heritage through our Food Culture," Professor Hwang began by challenging the audience to think differently about the relationship between Filipinos and food. Rather than focusing solely on Filipino cuisine, she asked a different question: How do Filipinos help feed Canada? Drawing on her research and travels across the country, she highlighted the many ways Filipinos contribute to Canada's food system.

While Filipinos are often recognized as the "caregivers of the nation" through their contributions to caregiving and nursing, Professor Hwang invited the audience to consider another important contribution. She credits Filipinos as helping feed the nation in three distinct ways: First, as small-scale entrepreneurs. Filipinos operate restaurants in small towns and rural communities, serving tapsilog alongside other Canadian fare and helping sustain local economies. She pointed to places such as Drumheller, a famous Alberta tourist attraction for "dinosaur aficionados," in her words. Can you imagine sisig and adobo

pizza? There seems to be no limit to Filipino culinary creations. Second, Filipinos are highly visible among food service workers, including employees in establishments such as Tim Hortons. Third, many Filipinos work in meatpacking, dairy production, and fisheries, occupations that are essential to Canada's food supply.

Professor Hwang concluded by emphasizing that while Filipinos help sustain Canada through their labour and entrepreneurship, recognition of these contributions should also be accompanied by inclusion and equality. Yet despite being one of the country's largest and most highly educated immigrant groups, many Filipinos remain overqualified for the jobs they hold. Feeding the nation, she argued, does not automatically guarantee belonging; the challenge is to ensure that those who help sustain Canada are recognized as full members of the country.

We applaud Professor Hwang for the wisdom and the courage to highlight such issues. Such presentations are often not witnessed in our usual gatherings. Her current research focuses on Filipino immigration to Canada, including nurses and garment workers who arrived in Saskatchewan in the 1960s and the 1970s respectively as well as recent Filipino immigrants who settle in

www.filipinostar.org

## 12th Annual D'Arcy-McGee Citizenship Medals, June 18, 2026 Cote Saint Luc Aquatic Centre



**MNA Elisabeth Prass stands with recipients holding their plaques at the 12th Annual D'Arcy-McGee Citizenship Medal ceremony.**

On 18 June 2026, MNA Elisabeth Prass hosted the 12th Annual D'Arcy-McGee Citizenship Medal ceremony. Originally planned for the Pierre Elliot Trudeau park, the event safely moved indoors to the Cote Saint Luc Aquatic Centre, 5794 Park Haven Ave. due to rain. Eight outstanding local heroes were presented with medals in recognition of their extraordinary bravery, advocacy, and lifelong dedication to public service:

• Alexander Look (Posthumous):

Honoured for his exceptional bravery during the 7 October 2023 tragedy surprise attack against Israel.

• Joe Ortona:

EMSB Chair; recognized for championing English speaking community rights.

• Federation CJA:

Celebrated for vital community

advocacy, mobilization, and crisis support.

• Myra's Kids Foundation:

Honoured for providing essential bereavement support to grieving children.

• Yvonne Sam:

Renowned educator and nursing veteran; recognized for grassroots activism.

• Hubert Sison:

Awarded for outstanding civic involvement and local volunteer engagement.

• Michael Goldwax:

Respected executive honoured for lifelong public service leadership.

• Karen Malkin

Founder of EMPOWERink and The BRCA Sisterhood that has helped countless of women and men who have survived breast cancer by connecting them with tattoo artists who transform their scars into beautiful works of art.#

small towns and rural communities. Thank you to Professor Hwang for opening our eyes and helping us attribute worth and appreciation to hard working Filipinos.

The attendance to this event was very good. Seen among the guests were Sir James de la Paz (CCFAQ Founder and 1st President), Sir Dario Boco (CCFAQ President), Sir Gerry Danzil (UPS President), Rowel Pangilinan (Insurance expert), Jojo Laud (FAMAS President), Christos & Lolit Sideris (PAQ President), and many others (Councillor Milany Thiagarajah). The FHSM is a unique association in its openness to invite other organizations to share its love for preserving and spreading our Filipino culture. Again, congratulations to Chairman Al. Another mission accomplished!

#### FAMAS Flag Raising

The entrance to the FAMAS Center was a swirl of activity on the morning of June 12, 2026. Preparations for the flag raising was underway and no doubt FAMAS President Jojo Laud and its members were thanking their lucky stars that the sun shone brightly that day. Invited dignitaries Anthony Housefather (MP, Mount Royal), Sonny Moroz (Councillor, CDN-NDG), leaders of numerous Filipino associations and its members were in attendance. Speeches by FHSM President Al Abdon and others spoke of the

significance of the annual Philippine Independence celebrations. A nice touch was Jojo's rendition of "Ako ay Pilipino". Well done! After the Philippine flag was raised, a sumptuous breakfast was served. Looking forward to next year's flag raising.

The time has come to bid adieu. Let us encourage each other by brightening someone's day. It doesn't take much to please our friends and neighbors for good and build them up. Some of you are already doing that. The Bible says, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Admittedly, sometimes it's not easy and we need help. The bible says that we have a helper: "I lift up my eyes to the mountains, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:1,2).

Until next issue. God Bless!



Man is multiplied by the number of languages he possesses and speaks.  
Jose Rizal



The Gloria Baylis Foundation is proud to recognize Filipino Heritage Month and Philippine Independence Day.

As we celebrate the rich history and cultural traditions of the Filipino community, we also acknowledge the many ways Filipino Canadians help build stronger, healthier, and more inclusive communities for future generations.

**Mabuhay!**



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**Mabuhay!**  
**Happy Filipino**  
**Heritage Month**



**Marvin Rotrand**  
Director General  
United Against Hate Canada



**ANTHONY**  
**HOUSEFATHER**

Member of Parliament - Mount Royal  
Député - Mont-Royal

Warmest wishes to everyone celebrating Filipino Heritage Month. This is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the rich culture, history, and many contributions of the Filipino community, whose dedication and vibrant spirit continue to strengthen our community and Canada as a whole. Mabuhay!

Mes meilleurs vœux à toutes les personnes qui célèbrent le Mois du patrimoine philippin. C'est l'occasion de souligner la richesse de la culture, de l'histoire et des nombreuses contributions de la communauté philippine, dont le dynamisme et l'engagement continuent d'enrichir notre communauté et le Canada tout entier. Mabuhay!



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**Mabuhay!**



À l'honneur : l'esprit, la culture et les traditions de la communauté philippine.  
Bon Mois du patrimoine philippin!

Honouring the spirit, culture, and traditions of the Filipino community.  
Happy Filipino Heritage Month!



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NOUS SOUHAITONS À TOUTES  
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# Une joyeuse Fête de l'Indépendance et un bon Mois du patrimoine philippin !

DE LA PART DE VOS DÉPUTÉS FÉDÉRAUX LIBÉRAUX

WISHING EVERYONE FROM THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY

# A happy Independence Day and a happy Filipino Heritage Month!

FROM YOUR FEDERAL LIBERAL MPs



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