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HAPPY HEART

Macaria Precincla, 94 years old, doesn't feel a day older as she plunks a slice of cake to celebrate her birthday on 10 March 2013. Her family and members of FASCOVI agree! Though she's nearing her centenary, the jolly and perky Kapampangan takes delight on the candles displayed on reverse to make this quintessential woman a year shy of being a golden girl, which is perhaps the actual age of her happy heart. **MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 26.** (Photo by Rolly Sanchez Ferrer)

Pakenham Filo community celebrates Fiesta 2013

THE FILIPINO Community in Pakenham celebrated a Filipino Fiesta in commemoration of San Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino Saint on 24 February 2013 at St. Patrick's Catholic Church Hall. This was supposed to happen in time for San Lorenzo Ruiz's feast day last year but was postponed due to time constraint.

The idea was initiated by parish priest Fr. Bernie Mahoney as a way of showing

the Pakenham parish community the Filipino culture.

An image of San Lorenzo Ruiz with scripts of his life was posted on one display board while the "MABUHAY" greetings with photos about the Filipino culture were on the other display board.

Fiesta program included Holy Eucharist officiated by Fr. Bernie Mahoney, tradi-

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The Paru Parong Bukid Girls Dance Group

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Gawad Kalinga to sponsor youth immersion in Davao

GAWAD KALINGA AUSTRALIA (GKA) is holding the annual Youth Great Adventure Tour (YGAT), an immersion program for GK volunteers in communities served by the organisation. This year's YGAT will be held on 18-29 May in Davao in southern Philippines. In 2012, typhoon Bopha left the southern part

of the country with \$900M in damages and 1,000 casualties, and thousands homeless.

The two-week immersion will give volunteers an opportunity to experience the unique culture of a local village as they share a home with their host, do household chores and community responsibilities, at the same time share each other's life experiences. During their stint, they will dig and establish the foundation of

community centre, house, school, or septic tank. They will also farm and till the land or plant fruits and vegetables.

Volunteers will attend The Brother's Keeper workshop sessions to orient them with the tools they need for the immersion. Two sessions will be held prior the trip, and another two in the community. The workshops will be venues for threshing out issues and concerns, and sharing of experiences

among experienced GKA volunteers.

The approximate cost for the program is \$2,000-\$2,500. It is inclusive of airfare and travel, accommodation, and meals for the duration of the trip.

Contact Jessper Perez 0422 216 130, Ed Davila 0410 644 456, or Pia Salenga 0402 785 840 for further enquiries. Interested parties can also send an email to gkaygat2013@gmail.com.



Bayanihan Australia conducts mission for deaf children

PETER Cichello and Peter Harrison, both Australian audiologists, left for the annual Medical Mission for Deaf Children in Cebu last 22 February 2013. The children come from poor families, and many were affected by Typhoon Pablo and struggling to keep the kids at school.

"In 1993, an Italian Catholic priest knocked on our door (literally) looking for 'the Italian audiologist married to a Filipina' seeking help to set up a school for deaf children who couldn't go to local primary schools because of hearing disability. This is how the mission school and Bayanihan Australian Community Network Inc's (BACNI) love affair with deaf children grew, from the bayanihan dream of an Italian priest," relates BACNI Chairperson Mila Cichello.

The Mission School is now run by The Little Sisters of the Deaf in Gualandi, Cebu and BACNI slowly managed to "mainstream" the mission with PGH ENT doctors, local teachers, and overseas clinicians so the school can be self sufficient on donated equipment, hear-



ing aids and batteries. Peter donates equipment, teaching time, professional training with teachers, repairworks, among other things. He receives adobo, lechon and fresh fruits in return. This

time, because the families really struggle to buy food and with no money left to buy batteries, the audiologists took supply boxes of batteries with them for the school to distribute to families.

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