



The awardees: (seated, from left to right) Sheryl Parangit; Bro. Crispin Botia; Marivic Boholts; Gerry dela Zerna (Guided and Unified Interaction for Development of Children Inc.); Fr. James Reuter; Conrado Navarro (Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement); Janet Colobong (Student Volunteer Association of the University of La Sallette); Myrna Yao; Juvelyn Gumal-in; and Edwin Ferrer. Standing are members of the NVM-SC, PNVSCA Director Jesselito de Vera (5th from right) and NVM Honorary Chair Antonio Mebita (3rd from right).

## PNVSCA Awards Top Volunteers of 2007

The top volunteers of 2007 were honored at a recent ceremony by the National Volunteer Month Steering Committee (NVM-SC) and the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA). The Search for Outstanding Volunteers (SOV) named seven individuals and three organizations to cap the year's National Volunteer Month (NVM).

Here are the people, institutions and their respective efforts that contributed to the improvement of the lives of others:

- The **Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)** was founded in 1952 committed to the cause of the Filipino peasants. PRRM pools support and services of professionals, community members and business and local organizations to push for rural development and local democracy. It was the first nongovernment organization (NGO) to send workers to the villages to implement its integrated, four-fold program of education, livelihood, health and self-governance.

At present, PRRM has enabled more than 600 village organizations with membership of about 30,000 poor farmers, fishermen, indigenous people and youth. By convening themselves into a federation, these organizations achieved a level of capacity for self-governance in addressing poverty and asserting their right in shaping policies that affect their own communities and the larger society.

- **Fr. James Bertram Reuter, SJ** led the establishment of the Philippine Federation of Broadcasters now known as the Catholic Media Network (CMN) and helped start Radio Veritas. His introduction of Catholic

programming to Philippine television has significantly extended the reach of Catholic mass media to preach and educate people on clean entertainment, values formation, morals and faith. Fr. Reuter is also noted for his staunch support for press freedom, human rights and democracy.

Already spending 63 years of his life with Ateneo de Manila and St. Paul's College as a teacher, Fr. Reuter also serves as confessor-adviser to many.

- A family man and a Doctor of Education, **Mr. Edwin R. Ferrer** spends his free time educating people coming from different sectors of the society through Alternative Learning Systems (ALSs).

One of Dr. Ferrer's ALSs is the Probationer, Parolees and Pardonees Reformation and Improvements through Developmental Education (PRIDE) Program. It has aided more than 300 inmates in San Carlos City, Pangasinan with social, economic and agricultural services. By applying what they learned in their livelihood classes, some probationers, parolees and pardonees have now turned entrepreneurs.

His other ALSs currently mentor students, and so far had helped 200 vendors and 150 to 200 senior citizens. While doing so, he has encouraged many to become volunteers as well.

- **Juvelyn Gumal-in** is a registered nurse and was certified by the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS). She could have gone for better monetary compensation as a nurse abroad, but decided to serve the marginalized and deprived Mangyans of Mindoro.

As a volunteer health worker, educator and trainer, Ms. Gumal-in and her organization, the Team Mission Philippines, coordinates with the local government, government agencies, and various NGOs to help uplift Mangyans from their daily plight. Some of their notable achievements include the registration of Mangyans in the government database for census and other legal purposes; implementation of healthcare programs; reading and numeracy literacy programs; and livelihood programs on livestock raising and handicrafts. She also trains Mangyan educators who then teach in their own communities.

Through their efforts, Ms. Gumal-in and her organization helped decrease the mortality and morbidity rates, improved literacy level, and increased the confidence and self-esteem of the Mangyans, specifically the Hanunuo, Tambuwid, Buhid, Alangan, and Iraya tribes.

- For 23 years, **Ms. Marivic G. Boholts** was a Barangay Nutrition Scholar (BNS) and Barangay Health Worker (BHW) whose services covered 19 island barangays in Surigao City.

As a BNS/BHW, she spearheaded the establishment of 43 Botika ng Barangays to aid around 4,000 people with affordable medicine. She also organizes and coordinates BHWs in crafting policies and facilitating trainings. Her efforts led to the establishment of a BHW federation, the implementation of policies on hospitalization and burial benefits of concerned federation members, and the training of around 200 BHWs and BNS.

- **Bro. Crispin P. Betita, FMS** is a member of the religious congregation of the Marist Brothers.

On January 25, 1991, Bro. Crispin established the Marcellin House of Street Children. The Marcellin Foundation, Inc. works with various government agencies and private institutions in initiating children's welfare and protection programs. With these projects, the Foundation has armed a large number of children with formal education, as well as, technical and livelihood skills; provided health tips and counseling; and allowed some 170 street children to be employed or manage their own businesses.

In addition, the foundation also organized the Court Appointed Special Advocates/Guardian Ad Litem (CASA/GAL) who work for the welfare of children undergoing court proceedings.

- **Ms. Sheryl V. Paringit** is a pharmacy student and member of the **University of La Sallette Pananagutan Center and Student Volunteer Association (SVA)**. She was also elected SVA president for 2005-2007.

Under her leadership, she strengthened SVA's programs on education, health, environment, livelihood, and family life enrichment and values formation which serve the people of Isabela. She introduced innovative fund raisers for SVA's flagship *Balik-Paaralan* program, as well as, new entrepreneurial projects to aid indigent families. During her term, SVA membership increased from 1,500 to 2000, further mobilizing students towards volunteerism.

Through its 33 years of existence, SVA has sent back to school more than 13,000 children. The organization supports them with financial assistance, tutorials, and home monitoring to ensure continuity and sustainability.

- After liberating herself from poverty, **Myrna T. Yao** now works hard to help the less-privileged. She is a businesswoman from Bicol who became actively involved in different development undertakings of the government and NGOs. She is presently Commissioner of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women and former President of the National Council of Women of the Philippines.

Through her civil activities and efforts to empower women, she has provided livelihood skills, microfinance and marketing support and allowed for the recognition of women's vital roles in local governance. She also spearheaded the creation of the Voters Education Guide for Women.

- The **Guided and Unified Interaction for the Development of Children, Inc. (GUIDE)** aims to give special children a better chance in life by opening up their worlds.

Since 1997, GUIDE's centerpiece program, Gabayan, has benefited 1,430 children and youth with special needs. Gabayan allows special children to (a) travel and learn things; (b) enjoy the company of other children; (c) develop faith in their capacities and use their creative skills to hone their potentials; (d) enhance their self-esteem thru association with other people; and (e) understand that the world is a good place to live in.

On the other hand, GUIDE's Institutional Socialization Program (ISP) gathers special children in a common activity to share their time and experiences with other children who have no disabilities. It intends to let special children feel being part of the normal stream of society and regain their self esteem. ISP benefited around 20,000 special children.

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Sources: Handouts provided by the PNVSCA.