

BAGS OF HOPE: A TRIUMPH OF COLLABORATION AND COMPASSION IN CEBU

NAFFAA NEVADA NEWSLETTER – SPECIAL REPORT BY: GLORIA T. CAOILE – ON SITE AT THESE IMPLEMENTATIONS!

The spirit of bayanihan was alive and unmistakable in Cebu on January 19 and 20, 2026, as the Bags of Hope humanitarian mission—powered by the PHILIPPINE AMERICAN CHARITY FOUNDATION NEVADA (PACF NV) in partnership with the PHILIPPINE HONORARY CONSULATE LAS VEGAS; PHILIPPINE BISAYAN SOCIETY NEVADA (PBSN), and strongly supported by the NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FILIPINO AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS NEVADA (NaFFAA NV)—successfully reached more than 1,000 families affected by recent earthquakes and typhoons.

"Months of planning, coordinating, and fundraising culminated in a deeply moving two-day implementation across multiple communities in Cebu – Daan Bantayan; San Remigio, Talisay and Talamban – these locations welcomed the delegation with warmth and gratitude, and each distribution reflected the shared commitment to uplift families still recovering from devastation," exclaimed Art DeJoya, Nevada Community Leader and Business Entrepreneur.

A Partnership That Delivered Hope

The Bags of Hope initiative demonstrated what becomes possible when Filipino American organizations unite with purpose. Volunteers from PACF; PHILIPPINE HONORARY CONSULATE LAS VEGAS; PBSN worked side by side with (NaFFAA NV) leaders to ensure that every family received essential goods—food staples, hygiene items, and comfort supplies—carefully assembled through the generosity of donors across Nevada, as PBSN; Sid & Evelyn Dela Cruz Foundation; Philippine American Association of Nevada; University of the Philippines Alumni Association Nevada; Filipina Enough Nevada; Art & Jacque de Joya; Rich & Ruby Scaglione; Philippine Honorary Consulate LV; Nadia & Romy Jurani; Melanie Caoile and Mia Casino.

Local partners in Cebu played a crucial role led by RAMA LIMCHU FOUNDATION, INC., providing all the critical parts of implementation – purchasing; printing of bags and banners; transportation, logistical support, and on-the-ground coordination. Their dedication ensured that the delegation could move efficiently from site to site and that recipients were organized with dignity and care.

Voices From the Leaders

"Seeing our community come together for families in crisis reminds us of the power of unity. Bags of Hope is more than a project—it is a promise that we will always show up for our kababayans when they need us most," exclaimed Marian Pearson President. "The amazing show of force of our community made this implementation meaningful and successful," shared Jean Celemin, PBSN Founding Member and long-time community leader.

"The smiles, the tears, the gratitude—we felt it all. This effort proves that compassion travels across oceans. We are honored to stand with our partners in bringing relief and hope to Cebu," stressed Luz Sapin Micabalo, Founder and President of PACF.

"This mission succeeded because every organization, volunteer, and donor believed in the same vision: to uplift Filipino families recovering from disaster. We are grateful for the trust placed in us and proud of what we achieved together," echoed Philippine Honorary Consul Amie Belmonte

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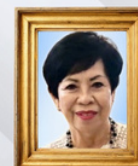
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NAFFAA NEVADA MEETS NAFFAA NATIONAL LEADERS AT THE RAIDERS AT M HOTEL

NaFFAA Nevada Meets NaFFAA National at the Raiders at M Resort on January 7. The meeting's objective was to reconnect NaFFAA Desert Mountain Region and Nevada State.



The organization's inaugural general membership meeting of 2026 took place on January 17, 2026, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the Transpacific Office, where Island Pacific Supermarket provided refreshments. Key agenda items included a comprehensive review and revision of the Constitution and By-Laws, as well as strategic plan presentations by Committee Chairs. Notably, the meeting highlighted the launch of digital membership and the introduction of plastic DI cards, which offer discounts at NaFFAA-Nevada's business partners. Following the formal proceedings, members with January birthdays were celebrated with cake, courtesy of Vice President Anna Ladao.



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Got Voice?

Be a pioneer member
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THE NaFFAA CHORALE

Contact:

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President, NaFFAA-NV
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ABOUT THE CHOIR DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CRUZ



Joseph Cruz is the Chairman of the Arts and Culture Committee of NaFFAA- NV and Choir Director of NaFFAA-NV Chorale. He graduated from UST Conservatory of Music and has taught classroom music since 1991.

His teaching experience encompasses Southridge School for Boys and Assumption San Lorenzo. Notably, he was a pioneer member San Miguel Master Chorale with National Artist for Music, Maestro Ryan Cayabyab, before moving to the US in 2002.

He was a professional tenor of Pacific Chorale in Orange County California. He was also a Conductor of Philippine Chamber Singers-LA.

He also plays clarinet, piano, organ, aside from composing and arranging music. Joseph Cruz currently serves as music director at St. Francis De Sales Church.

CHORALE MEMBERS

PRELIMINARY LIST

Leoh Aguilar
Christine Buenavista
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Elaine Valdez
Salvie Celeste
Van Dyck
Ledda Vinzons
Marie Jane Cutshall



Introducing **Patrick Nadal**, the newest member of our team as Director of Membership for NaFFAA - Nevada. Patrick holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Information Technology, specializing in Advanced Networking, Information Assurance, and Security, from the University of Phoenix. In his professional capacity, Patrick is associated with a credit union based in Yakima, Washington, where he works remotely. He also contributes to his community through his involvement in the St. Francis de Sales choir, NaFFAA - NV Chorale, and serving on his homeowners' association board.

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Gratitude to Our Donors and Local Partners

With deep gratitude, Jacque de Joya, Immediate Past President of NaFFAA NV declared "None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary generosity of donors who fully funded the Bags of Hope packages. Their contributions transformed concern into action and action into tangible relief for over a thousand families,"

"Equally invaluable were the local partners in Cebu—community leaders, transport coordinators, barangay officials, and volunteers—who ensured smooth movement, safety, and organization at every site. Their hospitality and efficiency made the mission not only successful but deeply meaningful," jointly stated by Cynthia Deriquito and Resty Lopez, who themselves had implementations in their own towns – San Pablo, Laguna and Balayan, Batangas, respectively.

A Resounding Success—and a Continuing Commitment

The 2026 Bags of Hope implementation stands as a testament to what the Filipino American community can accomplish when united by compassion. As the delegation returned home, they carried with them not only memories of gratitude but a renewed commitment to continue serving communities in need.

"PACF, NV; PHILIPPINE HONORARY CONSULATE LV; PBSN; NaFFAA NV, extend their heartfelt thanks to everyone who made this mission possible. Together, we proved once again that hope is strongest when shared," passionately declared by Community Leader Leo Belmonte who chronicled these implementations through the lenses of his camera.

TIPS FOR THE SENIORS

Aging gracefully is about combining safety, health, and social fulfillment. Here are essential tips categorized to help you or a loved one thrive:

Prioritize Home Safety

- **Fall-Proof Your Living Space:** Remove throw rugs and clutter from walkways. Install grab bars in the bathroom and ensure all stairs have sturdy handrails and proper lighting as recommended by Health in Aging.
- **Improve Lighting:** As eyes age, they require more light. Use frosted bulbs to reduce glare and install sensor lights or night lights in hallways and bathrooms Parentgiving.
- **Fire Safety:** Set water heaters to no higher than 120° F to prevent scalding. Avoid wearing loose clothing while cooking and keep a fire extinguisher easily accessible Parentgiving.

Stay Physically & Mentally Active

- **Incorporate "Multicomponent" Exercise:** Aim for a mix of aerobic, strength, balance, and flexibility training. Yoga and Tai Chi are excellent for combining these elements according to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK).
- **Exercise Daily:** Even simple movements like walking or chair yoga can boost heart health and mood Vitality Living.
- **Challenge Your Brain:** Learn a new language, play strategy games, or pick up a new instrument to slow cognitive decline Tufts Health Plan Medicare Preferred.



Optimize Nutrition & Health

- **Focus on Nutrients, Not Just Calories:** As metabolism slows, prioritize nutrient-dense foods like leafy greens, whole grains, and lean proteins NIDDK.
- **Manage Medications:** Use a labeled pill organizer and keep an updated list of all prescriptions to review with your doctor regularly Westmont Living.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Thirst cues weaken with age. Build a habit of drinking water when you wake up and after every meal Coterie Luxury Senior Living.

Foster Social & Emotional Well-being

- **Combat Isolation:** Regularly connect with friends via video calls or join local clubs. Meaningful interactions are more important than just being around people Vitality Living.
- **Find a New Purpose:** Pursue passion projects like mentoring, volunteering, or writing your life story to maintain a sense of fulfillment Coterie Luxury Senior Living.

Practice Self-Compassion: Challenge negative self-talk about aging and keep a gratitude journal to boost self-esteem CBT Psychology.

HEALTH IS WEALTH

BY: NAFFAA HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE

INTRODUCING HFAN – MINDING OUR FIL-AM HEALTH

By: Doris Lacson Bauer

The organization HFAN – Healthy Fil-Am Nayon just turned 1 year old, and they have officially joined NaFFAA. The initial collaboration between NaFFAA and HFAN started on October 26, 2024 with the NaFFAA activity – Piknik Sa Park. There have been quite a few activity collaborations between the 2 organizations and now, it is with much pride that I introduce HFAN to the NaFFAA family.

The mission of HFAN is to promote the health and well-being of the Filipino Americans in Nevada. Through a Holistic Wellness Program, which is the goal of the organization, the individual's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health will be achieved with community and family involvement.



HFAN is the result of the involvement of Nurses and other community stakeholders with FAPCOR – Filipino-American Patient Centered Outcomes Research which was initiated in the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio. Elizabeth de Leon Gamboa, the Founding President of HFAN, was a member of the community stakeholders for FAPCOR – Nevada. The stakeholders, which also included some members of NaFFAA, realized that Filipino Americans had the highest risk for Cardiometabolic disorders among Asian populations and that Filipino-Americans have a higher prevalence or Coronary Artery Disease, Diabetes, End Stage Renal Disease, Hyperlipidemia and Hypotension. With these statistics in mind, it was imperative that dissemination of information about these health issues needed to be continued. Hence, the birth of HFAN.

The HFAN Board is comprised of healthcare professionals and community leaders. Since its inception, a website has been created – www.healthyfil-amnayon.org which became the hub of Information resource especially for videos promoting healthy lifestyles, nutrition and overall well-being for Filipino Americans in Nevada.

HFAN PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- Healthy Filipino Kitchen: A Nutritional Program for Filipino-Americans
- Mindful Living: A Holistic Approach to Mental Health Wellness
- Fit-Fil Wellness: Empowering Filipino Americans for Optimal Physical Health and;
- Media Involvement: HealthHub Filipino – Your Gateway to a Healthier Lifestyle.



Healthy Filipino Kitchen: A Nutritional Program for Filipino Americans

Healthy Filipino Kitchen is a nutritional program designed to promote healthier cooking habits among Filipino Americans. This program is dedicated to helping you discover and enjoy healthier versions of beloved Filipino dishes, as well as a fusion of other popular cuisines done the healthier way. Our goal is to celebrate the rich flavors and cultural heritage of Filipino cuisine while making thoughtful adjustments to improve overall health and well-being.



Mindful Living: A Holistic Approach to Mental Health Wellness

Mindful Living is a program committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle with a strong focus on mental health wellness. Our mission is to empower individuals to achieve balance and harmony in their lives through comprehensive and supportive mental health practices. We believe that mental well-being is the cornerstone of overall health and strive to create a nurturing environment where everyone can flourish.



FitFil Wellness: Empowering Filipino Americans for Optimal Physical Health

FitFil Wellness is a program dedicated to promoting a healthier lifestyle among Filipino Americans through a strong focus on physical wellness. Our mission is to empower individuals to achieve their best physical health by providing comprehensive programs that cater to the unique needs of the community. We believe that physical wellness is a cornerstone of overall well-being and strive to create an environment that encourages active and healthy living.



ON MEDIA: HealthHub Filipino - Your Gateway to a Healthier Lifestyle

HealthHub Filipino is a program composed of podcasts, social media and other media-based activities dedicated to empowering Filipino Americans on their journey toward optimal health and wellness. We offer a diverse range of media content that is both educational and entertaining, designed to support and inspire healthy living from food choices to physical activities and community events.

Here are some HFAN activities worth noting, which follow through with the organization's goals: On March 15, 2025, a "SustanSarap" Recipe Contest was held which energized the Fil-Am community around the joy of healthy, affordable cooking. On May 31, 2025, HFAN hosted a Mental Health Workshop – "Mag Kape Muna Tayo". In June 21, 2025, HFAN invited Fil-Ams to embrace a healthier lifestyle through the art of dance with "Sayawan Sa Nayon". And for their 1 year anniversary on November 8, 2025, HFAN held a "Food Art Challenge". The activity involved inviting various Filipino-American organizations to send contestants to showcase non-professional food artists as they demonstrate their culinary creativity in a live contest centered on fruits and vegetables. Many more Activities are planned for this year.



HFAN Media involvement includes guesting on various podcasts on the PHLV Radio Platforms. The Philippine Times of Southern Nevada is featuring a column from HFAN called "The Nayon Whisperer". The articles feature suggestions on the importance of a Holistic approach for Fil-Ams when dealing with health and wellness. HFAN has also participated in conferences and community education programs to promote Holistic Health.

FAN hopes to promote Mental Health Awareness to the Fil-Am organizations with carefully planned activities and education. This will be one of the main goals for NaFFAA through the Health and Wellness Committee.

HFAN's greatest challenge is a wider participation and engagement from various Fil-Am organizations. But HFAN and its enthusiastic Board of Directors and its volunteers will continue its work to achieve its mission. The hope is to spread the word so other Fil-Am communities outside of Nevada will follow suit. For more information, please go to their website www.healthyfilamnayon.org.



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A LOT TO LOVE ABOUT ANNA LADAO

By: Marylaine Viernes

I recall the very first time I had met the Ms Anna Okol Ladao. It was at a Filipino festival many years back, where she wore a fashionable outfit topped with a large straw hat and huge dark shades, waiting in front of her iconic green Humana truck.

I have heard about her prior to that summer; almost every Filipino American involved in community activities in Nevada spoke highly of her and recall in one group chat that she was giving away Humana loot bags with essentials from hand sanitizers to slippers and I recall thinking how thoughtful and generous she was.

And yet none of it was at par when I finally met her face-to-face. A no-nonsense businesswoman who has since embraced her monicker, "Anna from Humana," she is a breath of fresh air with her sincerity and kindness.

One can easily tell if someone is merely doing a sales pitches or lip service but Anna, she spoke kind and empowering words to me, commenting me about the service I had rendered for the festival with care and attention and from then on, I considered her as a friend. I always love seeing her even when she'd momentarily make me feel guilty for not doing more as she reminds me, "hey you need to be more active in the community and attend the meetings more!"

In fact, while she is both a noted community leader and servant on top of being a successful entrepreneur, she is one of the genuinely approachable and dependable forerunners that many in our community truly honor and trust.



That is why she won the recent NaFFAA Nevada Vice Presidential elections by a landslide for she embodies the virtues and traits that the largest non-partisan, non-profit organization, and national affiliation of Filipino American institution and its local chapter demands. She is very excited to work with the leadership of President Doc Michael Sta Juana. And having both our beloved Doc Mike and Anna means we can expect brilliant, purposeful and impactful activities in the months to come!

Anna Ladao is always generous and sincere in encouraging others and giving praise where it is due, but I believe she is the one truly worthy of admiration and appreciation for all the ways she pulls through for every single Fil-Am community organization, constituent and beyond.

Showing our love for Anna who embodies what her name, **L.A.D.A.O.** stands for...

Leadership – She may be young, vibrant, cheerful and kind yet no one can mess with her when she has her leader cap on. Anna is present in virtually every worthwhile endeavor where her various expertise and abilities are required, but the best part is she is always serving others, exhibiting the mark of a true leader.

Accomplishment – one of the reasons that many listen to her is because we all look up to her. Able to balance an enviable personal and family life as a devoted wife to Peque and loving mom to her two handsome sons with a praiseworthy professional career, Anna's got it all figured out. It only makes sense to follow someone who's got her work and family life together, and we are grateful that she shares the joy from her various accomplishments with the communities and lives she touches.

Determination – it is not easy to balance a happy home with a successful career in a tough space such as Healthcare (as a highly-awarded Licensed Medicare Insurance Agent), co leader of Humana's HAPI NRG Connect as well as mentor of the Pacific Southwest Intermountain Team at Work and still do everything that she does for the community, but Anna does it, and this speaks to the drive and the determination she has to get things done, and right. I would even go as far (and I am pretty sure the entire community will agree with me) as crown Anna as the undisputed proponent of Filipino American culture; a banner she carries so gracefully. Apart from serving as Vice President of NAFFAA, she is also a member of the board of Directors for the Filipino American Charity Foundation, the Filipino American Heritage Foundation, FilAm Civic Action International and Healthy FilAm Nasyon. She is on her second term as an appointed member on the Commissioner on Aging for the State of Nevada and also serves as an Ambassador for the Las Vegas Asian Chamber of Commerce. Now if that is not determination, I don't know what is.

Amicable – Anna is well-known for her spirit of friendliness that makes her very effective as she serves in various capacities for different organizations. An advocate of women's empowerment, everyone in Nevada who knows her would not only ascertain this but would surely be able to share a beautiful moment working with Anna who credits her grandmother, Heidi Faraon and her mother, Leslie Faraon Rabat, both successful women who raised her to become the well-rounded and truly admirable woman she is today.

Outstanding – Be it her beautiful smile, her standout fashion on all the way to the things that matter such as family, career and community service, Anna is truly amazing and exceptional! If there is one Filipino expression that applies to her, it would certainly be, "How to be you po?"

Indeed, in today's chaotic, entitled and often unkind environment, choose to be outstanding yet kind. Choose to be a leader who serves! Choose to be Anna.

Thank you for all you do; take a bow, Ms. Anna Ladao!

