
Manila Women's Forum

A Network of Women Professionals

January 2004

Blessed by An Angel

By Lisa Lumbao and Pamela Arychuk

The Manila Women's Forum was blessed on December 8th by the presence of an angel! The Christmas spirit of love and giving to children came through strongly and sweetly as Annette Helbig, President of the Springboard Foundation, gifted speaker, and mother of four, honored us with her heart.

It has been Annette's dream since she was a little girl to help poor children. An early trip to Mexico, where she saw desperate poverty for the first time, increased her resolve. She moved to the Philippines 18 years ago as a young wife and mother and found a haven in the New Apostolic Church near her home in Parañaque. She started teaching the children Sunday school and how to play various musical instruments. Annette noticed how quickly the Filipino children learned to play the recorder, violin and cello, playing simple songs in a matter of weeks. Their desire to learn has led to the formation of an orchestral group that performs for churchgoers and philanthropists alike.

We were treated to a performance by the group, which included about 18 children of various ages and one of

their fathers, who is also a minister at the church. They played violins, guitar, organ and xylophone and sang English and Tagalog Christmas carols. To the delight of the women present, an adorable 3-year-old, wearing a lovely barong, directed the group, starting them off by saying, "One, two, three, go!"

Annette explained that this orchestra is made up of people very close to her...she told us the touching story about the man playing the guitar...when she first met him his wife died of TB, leaving him with five children. Their home was a small hovel that they had to crawl inside of. Now he is remarried and all of his children play in the orchestra. Annette feels it is a privilege to teach the children in the orchestra because she learns so much from them. She holds their values in high esteem, and applauds their ability to smile and be happy in spite of difficult circumstances.

Regular MWF attendees over the past three years have witnessed Annette's incredible accomplishments and cheered her on along the way. We saw the first mock-ups of photographs and poems that would become the beautiful, poignant *Dignity and Courage* book, which started the ball rolling. She originally planned to sell the book at about \$100 and use the funds to support one children's foundation. But instead, that ball has gotten bigger and bigger as Annette has attracted large numbers of generous donors and organizations who hold fundraising events, which she channels along with the money raised from the book to more than eight worthy beneficiaries. She created the Springboard Foundation to formalize

her efforts and now has many volunteers to help her.

Her goal is to promoting healthy, nurturing environments for children. She selected the beneficiaries based on sustainability, years of experience in the field and area, accountability, having a vision that coincides with Springboard's, transparency, and the desire to create a dignified environment for children. Annette maintains that children need to feel dignity to grow and mature. The aim is to help people who are already helping themselves. By identifying well-run, effective organizations, Annette provides a service for other donors and proceeds from fundraising events organized by the National Honor Society of Brent School International, United Nations

(Continued on page 4)

Next MWF Meeting

When: Monday, January 19, 2004, 6:30 p.m.

What: Cynthia Tomacruz will lead a yoga demonstration and discussion of fitness and nutrition issues to start us off right in the New Year. Wear comfortable clothes.

Where: Carolyn Gibson's home, 117 Molave St., Ayala Alabang (yes, Alabang! Those dedicated Alabang women deserve a break so we will go to them. Carpools will be arranged through e-mail)

Bring: A contribution to the potluck dinner.

February meeting: Monday February 16, 2004.

"If you haven't any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble."
—Bob Hope

"Charity never humiliated him who profited from it, nor ever bound him by the chains of gratitude, since it was not to him but to God that the gift was made."
—Antoine de Saint-Exupery



Voice of the Chair

By Lisa
Kircher
Lumbao

Canine Search and Rescue Gets Press Coverage

Congratulations to Renee Speltz, MWF speaker last September, whose efforts have been published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer and What's On Expat. The Inquirer article is reprinted below. Renee's work is an inspiration to many of what a "trailing spouse" can accomplish if she puts her mind to it!

Inspired by the role played by dogs in arduous search and rescue operations during the September 2001 US terror attacks, an American woman is laying the groundwork for an Asia-Pacific canine network that can swing into action during disasters.

Volunteer Renee Speltz, wife of a Manila-based banker from Texas, is leading efforts to set up 30 dog rescue units for immediate deployment in the Philippines and then expand them to cover the disaster-prone region.

"I was surprised when I first heard that there is no fully trained canine search and rescue squads in this region although it's ravaged by deadly typhoons, floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters every year," Speltz told AFP.

The nurse and counselor recalled how valuable the 260-odd dog teams were in search operations after hijacked passenger jets were used by terrorists to crash into the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center, the Pentagon in Washington, and a field in Pennsylvania, killing more than 3,000 people on Sept. 11, 2001.

The dogs had worked round the clock in 12-hour shifts and, aside from tracking down survivors, recovered thousands of body parts which were used in DNA identification.

The United States receives many requests from Asian countries for canine squads to help in relief work

during earthquakes, floods, landslides, terrorist bombings or in other such disasters but it takes a long time to ferry them to the region.

"You only have a 100-hour window to find a victim in a rubble and it takes between 48 and 72 hours for a canine squad to be planed into the region from the United States.

"If you do the math, you'll find it's just unacceptable. So I pursued my little dream to have these canine squads right here so more lives can be saved," said the 50-year-old wife of Paul Speltz, the US executive director of the Asian Development Bank.

She helped set up the Philippine Canine Search and Rescue Association, Inc. (PhK9SAR), a nonprofit vehicle that will train and form the 30 dog units largely for disaster relief operations on a free-of-charge basis.

"If there is an earthquake, for example, and people are trapped, we will offer our services. What we need is the logistics to get to the spot, which can be provided by the authorities or the private sector," Speltz said.

The first batch of 10 units, expected to complete training in September next year, would be certified by the US-based National Association for Search and Rescue, which has experts to conduct courses and conferences and for standards and certifications. ■

—AFP Reprinted from the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, December 16, 2003

My goal in life is to be as good a person my dog already thinks I am. —Unknown

Heaven goes by favour. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in. —Mark Twain

Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole. —Roger Caras

Why we love dogs: Dogs don't cry. Dogs love it when your friends come over. Dogs don't care if you use their shampoo. A dog's parents never visit. Dogs aren't catty.

Check out this book

A Girl's Best Friend
The Meaning of Dogs in Women's Lives
Jan Fook and Renate Klein (Eds)
Published by Spinifex Press

Ojai* search dogs called into action on slides, quakes

By Jesse Phelps

Ojai Valley News, CA - 2004 Jan 3

Ojai's National Disaster Search Dog Foundation found its canine search teams called into action again last week to search for victims of mudslides and earthquakes. The slides occurred in the area of the San Bernardino wilderness called Waterman Canyon when heavy rains came less than a month after fires ravaged surrounding mountainsides. On the scene for many hours after the slides, assisting the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the San Bernardino County Fire Department, were several NDSDF canine search teams. * * * These teams are called into action by emergency services to find live victims in any natural or man-made disaster, from earthquakes to building collapses to train wrecks. Many of these dogs, once abandoned in shelters and now helping to save lives, have gone from rescued to rescuer.

—Read the whole article at <http://www.ojaivalleynews.com/issues2003/01-January2004/01-02-04/01-02-04news1.html>

*Ojai is 80 miles northwest of Los Angeles in Ventura County.

New! Visit a work in progress at www.geocities.com/manilawomensforum

The Manila Women's Forum

The Manila Women's Forum (MWF) is a cross-cultural network for women. It provides opportunities to build friendships, to talk to women of various cultures, and to share information about resources. Our meetings are intended to provide intellectual stimulation and lead to personal and professional development. All women are welcome to join. The current officers are **Lisa Lumbao**, Chair, Programs, Treasurer, and Newsletter. **Penny Poole**, Programs, Newsletter. **Susan Nishihira**, Programs. **Heather Davenport**, Database. **Beaulah P. Taguiwalo**, Newsletter, Website.

Cost of membership is P300 per year. Members receive a copy of the current mailing list in addition to the newsletter, which is also sent to non-members. A contribution is collected at each monthly meeting: P20 for members, and P40 for non-members. Please contact Lisa Lumbao at Tel. 818-2887 or 813-0168, or at lumbao@mozcom.com for more information about MWF.

KaWoMeNaN

Selected and Edited
by Beulah P. Taguiwalo

New Year's resolutions that will make a difference

Does the phrase New Year's Resolutions make you cringe? If you've resolved—unsuccessfully—to start exercising before, you may be a victim of New Year's Resolution-itis.

But you can achieve success if you realize what the expert decision-makers know—that the road to health is marked by slipping and sliding. I'm proof. I had to change my couch-potato ways and I did, losing 30 pounds in the process—and keeping them off. Here are my New Year's Resolutions with a Difference. What's the difference? These resolutions can lead to success!

- Make an appointment with yourself to exercise. Don't "squeeze in" exercise; you'll never do it.
- Don't compare yourself to the slimmest lovely at your health club. View yourself, and others, realistically.
- Experiment to determine the optimum exercise time for you. Some people prefer mornings, others late afternoon.
- Treat yourself occasionally to low-cost exercise "goodies" such as exercise videos, pretty water bottles, jazzy T-shirts or neon-colored weights. They'll lift your spirits while you work out.

- If you must, take an occasional "vacation" from exercise. It takes time to transform an exercise program into a habit. Persevere and you'll get there.

A final word: Remember to check with your doctor before getting started, especially if you haven't been exercising lately or have health problems. But if you follow these resolutions, come next year, when the topic of New Year's Resolutions comes up, you'll feel only pride.

—From the email circuit

Yoga as a New Year resolution

The early days of January is that period of time when many of us will be drawing up our list of new year resolutions. Lose 10kg, give up smoking, eat more broccoli. For better overall health in body and spirit, Manoj Kaimal recommends practising

yoga. * * * Yoga is a systematic science that entails step-by-step methods categorised under eight aspects. Out of these eight, only one is devoted to the body. The rest involve proper codes of living, breathing, concentration and meditation practices.

Sadly, people tend to think yoga is synonymous with poses.... This trend of excessive body focus only makes us infatuated with looks. [A famous movie actress is believed to have] once said, "I don't want yoga to change my life, just my butt".

—From "Yoga as a new year resolution" by Manoj Kaimal

A New Year's resolution leads to a lofty goal

Brady O'Mara's New Year's resolution is to make good on the one he made last year—to climb the 19,340-foot peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa, and to raise \$19,340 for Save the Children's HIV/AIDS program.

The Save the Children HIV/AIDS program approach focuses on community mobilization through activities such as identification and registration of orphans and other vulnerable children, community-based child-care centers for children, support to meet basic nutritional needs of affected children, and support for income-generating efforts... It concentrates on supporting the affected people and their social structures—renovating village schools or granting micro-finance loans to women who wish to start small businesses.

—From "A New Year's resolution leads to a lofty goal" by Alan Thomas

New Year's levee at London's oldest home

London's oldest home opened its doors to guests [on January 1], ushering in the new year in the same tradition its original owners would have in 1834. Eldon House hosted its annual New Year's Day levee, welcoming visitors with cider, cookies and a big serving of the city's history.

A levee is a British tradition that saw the women of the home prepare food and drinks for visitors who were encouraged to drop in throughout the day as a way to celebrate the arrival of the new year and bring luck to the home.

—From "New Year's levee at Eldon House an old tradition" by Shawn Jeffords

New Year, city girls, country boys

Ange Newton always thought the blokes of Harrow were beaut; what she didn't predict was that so many other women from around Australia would agree with her.

When Ms Newton, the local publican, started "Beaut Blokes", a fun-filled weekend for city girls to meet country boys, she never imagined that the town of just 90 people would become the breeding ground for so many romances. * * * Last week the girls were back in town to see in the new year with their rural mates, joining in the town's festivities and camping out with locals.

—From "City girls break the drought" by Liz Gooch

A New Year poetry-reading party

The Reizei family traces itself back to a master Japanese classical poet and courtier in the 12th century, and its residence just north of the Kyoto Imperial Palace is often the scene of cultural events that evoke the atmosphere of the ancient court.

At the Reizei residence in Kyoto, a man and women in Heian Period ceremonial costumes take part in the family's annual new-year waka composition party.

Particularly gorgeous is a gathering it hosts for the annual new year poetry-reading party, in which participants attired in court costumes recite 31-syllable waka poems, also known as *tanka*.

—From "Time travel the Reizei way" by Jun Kamiya

A lovely New Year painting

"Palace Women and Children Celebrating the New Year" is the title of a 16th century painting from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). It is in the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, a gift of Charles Lang Freer.

— At <http://web4.si.edu/collections/zoomObject.cfm?ObjectId=8214>

Women and their own place, 2003

"After breaking up with the guy I had been living with, I'd had enough. I decided I'd buy my own place and live by myself for the rest of my days."

— Fumiko Tanaka, 30, one of a growing number of Japanese women shunning marriage and opting for their own place. December 11, 2003 at <http://www.japantoday.com>

That's all folks, Happy New Year,
Maligayang Bagong Taon.

Blessed... (From page 1)

Women's Group, Financial Times, the German and Canadian Clubs, and the Nomad Rugby Team. Many companies such as Leighton Contractors, CalEnergy, Anchor, the Shangri-La, FESTO, Coca Cola, Shell Exploration, Roche Vitamins, Robert Bosch and many more chose to use the Springboard Foundation as a way to make a difference in the lives of so many less fortunate than we are.

The Springboard Foundation has supported the Haduan Primary healthcare center, which serves a large community of Aetas near Clark in Pampanga through Entrepreneur Volunteer Assistance (EVA). They also support homes for abandoned children and street children, renovate and provide supplies to hospitals, and provide funds to those who provide prenatal care and training.

"Nine requisites for contented living:

Health enough to make work a pleasure. Wealth enough to support your needs. Strength to battle with difficulties and overcome them.

Grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them. Patience enough to toil until some good is accomplished. Charity enough to see some good in your neighbor. Love

enough to move you to be useful and helpful to others. Faith enough to make real the things of God. Hope enough to remove all anxious fears concerning the future."

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
(1749-1832)

Funds were given to the Sun and Moon Home for Children for the renovation of their bathroom facilities. The website (www.springboard-foundation.org) shows wonderful before and after pictures of the bathroom. The home has up to 12 children, often in a state of malnourishment when they first arrive. It provides the children with a high quality diet of vegetables and whole grains, a well kept spacious living area, and large swimming pool and yard—it is the accountable type of institution that Springboard prefers to support.

She has now raised an astounding P2 million and built up a reputation as a trustworthy conduit for donors' funds who can rest assured that she will use the money for good projects. She and the children she has helped were featured on Nickelodeon TV, and she has new fundraising initiatives with Visa and Ralph Lauren.

Some people ask her why she bothers when the problem is so huge—there are so many children in need and you can only help a few—and what can she really accomplish given the difficult political structure and government mismanagement here? Her reply is that even if she helps only one child or family, to that family the impact is enormous. Therefore it is worth all the time, effort, and frustration. Others ask how she finds the strength and energy to do so much. She said when she gets discouraged, she looks at the photos and poems in her book and is inspired by the courage of the children who

deal with grinding poverty and seemingly hopeless situations and still smile, enjoy life, and dream of a better tomorrow.

The message for all of us was clear: we can each make a difference... helping even one child is a big accomplishment and give us so much joy to know that we have positively affected the lives of those in need. ■

The biggest fundraising event of the Springboard Foundation for the year 2004 will be a "Black Suit and Tie Dinner" with boxing, an auction, and sport legends as guest speakers (Jonah Lomu, a Rugby legend from New Zealand, has confirmed his attendance). It will take place on May 21st in the NBC tent and tickets for the tables are selling fast. More information can be found on the Springboard website. <http://www.springboard-foundation.org/>

"A little more patience, a little more charity for all, a little more devotion, a little more love; with less bowing down to the past, and a silent ignoring of pretended authority; brave looking forward to the future with more faith in our fellows, and the race will be ripe for a great burst of light and life."

—Elbert Hubbard

"Make your thinking orderly and free from emotional overtones, and you will see people and things as they are, with clarity and charity."

—Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

MWF Newsletter
c/o Lisa Kircher Lumbao
3B Cordova Condominium
138 Valero Street, Salcedo Village
Makati City, Metro Manila