

CU



Cares



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Capitol University

Core Values



COMMITMENT

Capitol University strives to develop the “Total Person,” one who has a strong foundation of integrity, courage, and moral virtue. CU prepares her students to be engaged catalysts of hope and change in challenging times by developing their social consciousness and ethical leadership skills.

COMPETENCE

CU seeks to transform students into professionals who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to enable them to respond to challenges and excel in the modern global arena.

CHARACTER

CU’s Total Person is dedicated to excellence in all endeavors. CU ingrains among her students the value of hard work and a sense of responsibility, not only for their personal duties but also their role in the greater community. They know that the future of the country and the world rests in the work of their hands.

CULTURE

CU cultivates excellence in the arts, letters and scholarly pursuits for the enrichment of the Filipino nation. CU also fosters progressive and tolerant individuals who appreciate and respect diverse histories, beliefs, and identities.

CARE

CU engenders a culture of care characterized by showing concern, kindness, affection, and respect for other people. This begins by molding compassionate individuals with a sincere appreciation of the value of each person. Total Person development entails a balance between academic excellence and emotional intelligence, thus CU nurtures the capacities for high performance and high care.

Introduction to CU Cares

By Ana Maria Juarez Macatangay

It is by design that Capitol University (CU) celebrates its founding anniversary every year on February 14, or heart's day. The founders, Engr. Sesenio and Mme. Laureana Rosales, deliberately chose that day because, as they always said, CU was a labor of love. CU was born from hard work fueled by the founders' passion to help the country and its people, and faith in education as the great equalizer. These sentiments live on among the members of the CU community today.

In CU, love is exhibited in each person's dedication to their work and the people they serve. This love in action is also encapsulated in the CU Core Value of Care, which may be a recent addition to the Core Values but it has always been fundamental to CU's vision, mission, and operations. What sets CU administrators, faculty, staff, and students apart is the heart they generously give in all their dealings. To articulate, preserve, and document even just a fragment of the CU beating heart is the rationale for this CU Cares book project.

Envisioned by CU's VPAA, Dr. Amor Q. de Torres, the CU Cares book was compiled at the height of the COVID-19 global pandemic. This book hopes to show how light can be sustained through love and care even in the midst of darkness and despair. It aptly begins with the Dr. de Torres' account of how the CU founder, Madame Rosales, exemplified the CU brand of care. Dr. Ryan Narvasa, the CUDDLE Executive Director, shares a glimpse of CU's transition to distance learning in order to continue its mission in the midst of the pandemic. Mr. Leo Pangan relates the preparations that were required to ensure that the campus was safe and that health protocols were followed



to secure everyone's safety. These are followed by the entries from faculty, staff, and students from the CU Colleges and the Senior High School. They share personal stories of how they have been recipients of kindness and care, how they were inspired to care for others, and how these encounters have changed them along the way.

This book is a first attempt at illustrating what the core value of Care means in Capitol University, by presenting a spectrum of how care is felt and demonstrated by the members of the community. We hope for future installments for we are certain that there are more inspiring stories to be shared.

The Foundation of Care at CU

By: Dr. Amor Q. de Torres

Allow me to honor first our founder, Madame Gloria Laureana San Pedro Rosales. Madame, as she is fondly called, laid a very solid foundation for CU. No, it does not consist of bricks or steel only—more than that, she laid the foundation of values in the hearts of the employees. Being a mother and an educator, she knows how to teach, how to instill values, and how to do it lovingly.

Have you heard about how she dealt with some problematic staff? She would call the erring person to her house and while they talked, she prepared food and then they would eat together. Where else can you find a boss cooking for her employee in order to put across her sentiments and to correct an error? This was a very personal approach; this was Madame's approach, her teaching method, her pedagogy!

Another way of showing her care: when teachers attended conferences in Manila, they would stay in Madame's house and enjoy her warm hospitality and delicious cooking. In the morning, after an early breakfast prepared by Madame, she would insist that the teachers each bring sandwiches she made and wrapped herself. She would tell them, "Mahirap magutom, mahal bumili." Where can you find a boss and owner of the school like that?

What were the implications of her actions? She loved her employees and treated them like her own children. In fact, she called each one, "Anak." She dealt with them in a special manner so they learned better. She did not

berate them in public—she did it in such a creative way that the offender did not feel embarrassed. That, to me, is a very good pedagogy. I believe she was leading by example, hoping that her faculty and staff would show the same care for the students.

Her heart was really close to those who needed help. She believed education opened up doors of opportunity and uplifted the lives of those who were less fortunate. She established Working Scholarship in CU, for she was a working student herself. The scholarship is granted to poor but deserving students who serve in various capacities in the school. Before the pandemic, CU employed upwards of 300 working scholars a year.

You might ask, how about now that Madame is gone? Her legacy of love and kindness lives on in CU. Here in CU, no teacher or staff celebrates his/her birthday without a gift personally picked and wrapped by Madame's daughter, the CU EVP, Dr Fe R Juarez. Let me give you another example. Have you witnessed the Pagpasidungog, the CU Service Awards? Please watch and you will see how grand it is! The ladies are in beautiful Filipiniana gowns and the gentlemen in their kagalang-galang na Barong. The beautiful costumes are just one of the gifts from the CU Administration to the service awardees. These moments are truly priceless. Having been an awardee myself, I can say firsthand how honored I felt!

This is the kind of atmosphere Madame wanted to create in the university—one of deep appreciation and love for others. In 2018, we dubbed this as the Culture of Care and it was formally added to CU's 4 core values. This was also CU's response to the rising rates of depression, hopelessness, and suicidal tendencies among the youth. We had a workshop on how to show care and concern, not only with the students but even among the employees. Of course, we have as living models Atty. and Dr. Juarez, and their children.

CU's Culture of Care is characterized by showing concern, kindness, affection, and respect for other people. It begins by developing compassionate individuals who are able to appreciate the value of each person. This was started by Madame but it lives on and continues to be perpetuated by her children and all of us in the CU community.

How did CU achieve feats such as being granted Autonomous Status, hailed as Centers of Excellence/Development, and being able to establish international linkages? "To God be the glory," would be the response of the CU President, Atty. Casimiro B. Juarez, Jr., a man of deep faith in God. In CU, we all worked hard and we dedicated our time and energy to improve in all the functions of a university: teaching-learning, research, and community engagement. The product of research is incorporated in teaching-learning, which is then brought to the community for application. With God's help, we serve to provide the best for our students that they may climb the ladder of success.

"We may cross the oceans and the hills while we travel," but we would always go back to our solid foundation—the Core Values inculcated here at Capitol University. For according to C.S.Lewis, *"Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man more a clever devil."*

Our CUDDLE Story

By: Dr. Ryan Glenn Narvasa

All sectors were astonished with the rapid adjustments to be made due to the advent of COVID-19. As an educational institution which prioritizes the welfare of students as well as the faculty and staff, CU started planning for a transition as early as mid-February 2020.

The first step was to safely finish the current semester (the 2nd semester of SY 2019-2020) by cancelling Face-to-Face meetings. With the guidance of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), all instructors were directed to convert their classes to distance education. The instructors were advised to exhaust all platforms in conducting classes and communicating with the students in order to finish the semester and achieve the outlined competencies. We called this mode Emergency Remote Teaching. The final term of the 2nd Semester and the summer classes served as a good avenue for everyone to be acquainted with the new set up.

By April 2020, while waiting for the final directives from CHED, the office of the VPAA released guidelines to the faculty through the Deans for the making of modules in preparation for the first semester. At the same time, the University President summoned the IT and EdTech practitioners in the university to finalize the plan for transition hence, the Capitol University Dedicated Distance Learning Environment was created. The Committee was chaired by the VPAA, Dr. Amor de Torres. Dr. Ryan Glenn C. Narvasa was officially named the CUDDLE Executive Director to ensure that CUDDLE objectives are carried out including designing development, implementation,

monitoring and evaluation of the CUDDLE activities. The name CUDDLE was originally coined by Prof. Michelle Ogatis. The CUDDLE framework was officially approved by the University President. The CUDDLE Committee is headed by the chairperson, Dr. Amor de Torres, who is ably assisted by Mr. Paul Clarence Juarez as the Vice-chair. Sub-committees were also formed, namely: (1) Online Pedagogy committee with Dr. Noreen Pontillas and the CED Faculty; (2) IT Support Committee with Prof. Cyril Ranido, Mr. Sterling Ong, and Engr. Macneil Pol, and the CS Faculty; (3) Intellectual Property Rights and Legal Affairs Committee with Dr. Jason Montecañás, Mr. Francis Juarez, and Ms. Lilian dela Peña; (4) Monitoring and Evaluation Committee – CUREXO and the Council of Deans. The program was approved and supported by the CU Administration.

As part of the preparations, a training plan was created and implemented. All CU faculty underwent two types of training: the CUDDLE Onboarding that started in mid-June until the end of July of 2020, and the CUDDLE Talks which was held within the semester. The CUDDLE On-Boarding Training was a month-long intensive, hands-on and output-based training for the Deans and Heads, faculty and staff which included topics on Productivity tools, Creation and Management Online Platform (Google Classroom), Cybersecurity, Plagiarism and Intellectual Property Rights, Online Materials Curation and Development, and more. To address problems within the implementation, the CUDDLE talks which include regular short enhancement webinars for the faculty were conducted. On top of all these training activities, faculty also attended webinars by the different discipline-based organizations, the CHED, and other agencies. Of course, there was a guide prepared for the faculty. While we made sure that competencies were covered, academic policies were also adjusted. The faculty were given instructions on these adjustments in detail through the CUDDLE Faculty Guide.

When we started in the first semester, everyone was required to follow a

30-minute synchronous lecture only, and the synchronous sessions should only be conducted every other week. This was to address the necessary adjustments expected from both faculty and students. By the 2nd semester, the VPAA, with the recommendation of the Deans, decided to adjust this policy based on the needs of the Colleges. Hence, the Deans could decide what was appropriate for their specific Colleges.

In addition to the CUDDLE preparations, CU ensures safety of the students both in the Physical and Virtual environment. There were several measures made by the university to ensure online safety of the students, including:

- (1) Using an official platform under the university domain. To ensure that access to student's information and the classroom materials are exclusive and secure, CU made use of Google and provided accounts to students under the CU domain.
- (2) Establishing the Data Privacy Office. Before the pandemic, CU already established the Data Privacy Office to safeguard the security and privacy of information in the university. Data Privacy guidelines were created, and faculty orientations were conducted for both pre-pandemic and during the pandemic classroom set up.
- (3) Creating Policies on Netiquette. Faculty and students were oriented on netiquette, or proper online behavior, as well as safety measures for cyber security. These guidelines are presented in the CUDDLE Primer for Students and Parents.

Indeed, the challenges of the new normal in education has been tough for the entire CU community. The first year of the transition from traditional teaching to a Flexible Distance Education required commitment, creativity, and diligence among the faculty and staff. There were many concerns and challenges especially the students, but with CU's Culture of Care, the faculty extended patience and guidance to all the students.

Now that the university is on her second year of implementing CUDDLE, several improvements were made not only on the infrastructure but also on the mindset and skills of the faculty and students. The university invested on a more advanced and premium Learning Management System, Student Information System and Enrollment, Internet Capability, and many more. In addition, the faculty, staff, and students have significantly adapted to the ways in the new normal. Most, if not all, of CU's activities were successfully done virtually with positive feedback among the stakeholders. Despite the challenges and risks brought by the pandemic, CU continues to provide quality, excellent and caring service to her students through the Dedicated Distance Learning Environment.

COVID-19 Campus Disinfection Program

By: Mr. Leo Pangan

When the COVID-19 pandemic reached the Philippines, everything drastically changed including the operations and the delivery of instruction at Capitol University. To ensure the safety of the community, CU shifted to distance learning, where students and faculty could conduct classes from their own homes. School offices also shifted first to skeletal mode and then eventually to work-from-home mode.

In addition to these efforts, the PPFMO launched a Preventive Disinfection Maintenance Program to inhibit the spread of the Coronavirus inside the CU campus. Thorough and regular disinfection activities were conducted in areas that were often visited such as the Registrar's Office, Assessment's Office, Cashier's Office, the Library, and the Dean's Offices.

Preventive Disinfection Program includes the following:

1. Provision of foot mats with disinfectant at main and rear gates;
2. Provision of triage to monitor the entry and origin of visitors;
3. Provision of thermal scanners to monitor the body temperature of visitors;
4. Provision of directional signages in walkways and building hallways;
5. Provision of washing areas with proper hand-washing guides;
6. Provision of campus isolation rooms;
7. Regular disinfection activities in building hallways and other populated areas.

ENTRY 1:

Care in a Shuttle

By Ethel Jane Balansag,
Student, College of Business and Accountancy

It was 2020 when this incident happened. I was with my boyfriend, who is also a student at Capitol University, and we were riding a shuttle heading home. The shuttle was full of passengers; many were ladies and there were only three men: my boyfriend, an old man, and a drunk man. Minutes after boarding the shuttle, I noticed that the passenger sitting in front of me, a female senior high school student was silently crying and she was noticeably uncomfortable. Beside her was the drunk man. She kept pushing the paper bag she was carrying towards her side.

I could not help but observe her and I felt bothered, which was why I asked her if she was okay. She answered, "no," and she looked at the man next to her like she was telling us that the man was doing something wrong towards her. I discreetly told my boyfriend about the situation and he signaled that he also noticed the girl and the drunk man. My boyfriend told me to keep quiet and act like nothing was wrong. I listened and followed what he said because I knew he had a plan; He would not let that man continue what he was doing to the girl. Some moments later, the girl was struggling to move away because the man was making overt moves to touch the girl inappropriately. My boyfriend became really angry seeing the girl crying but he could not confront the drunk man then and there because he was worried for everyone's safety—the drunk man might have a weapon with him. We did not know if the other passengers noticed because most of them were asleep at that time. I felt so worried for the girl and I was trying to make her calm at that moment.



When we reached the checkpoint at Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City, my boyfriend told the driver to stop under the pretext that he needed to pick something up very quickly. When the driver stopped, my boyfriend went out and talked to him. Little did the drunk man know, my boyfriend approached the police on duty and reported him. The police took the drunk man under their custody and they called the girl to confirm the incident. They talked outside the car but we could see that the man was denying the accusations against him, while the girl was crying. After that, the police temporarily detained the man and instructed the driver to go.

The girl started feeling calm now that the drunk man was nowhere near. She kept on thanking us for saving her. My boyfriend and I felt so relieved. Until now, I could not get over this incident. What could have happened if we were not there? Even if the situation was scary, we did not turn a blind eye towards someone in distress. I feel happy with the knowledge that we were able to help someone.

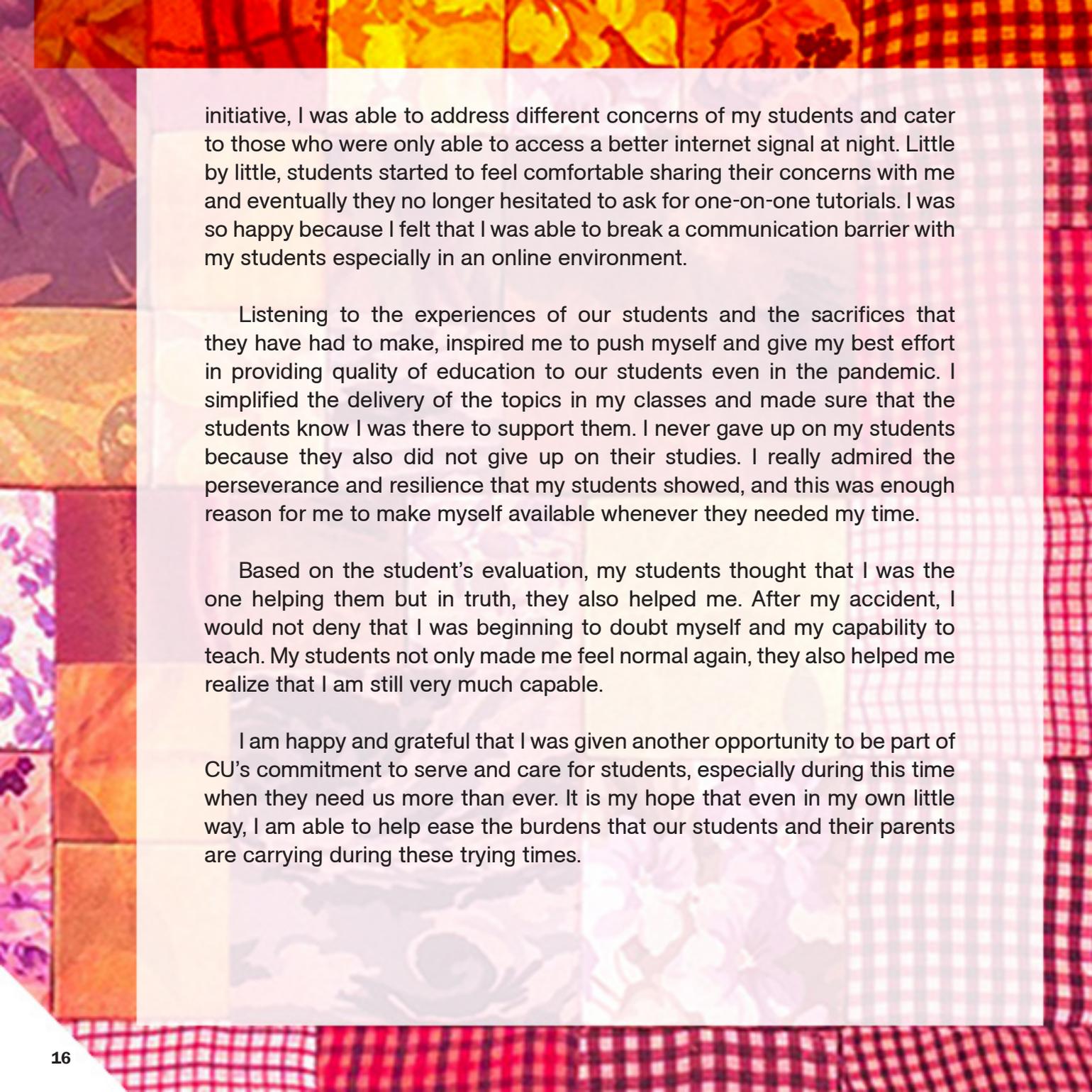
Sharing and Caring in My Own Little Way

By Glenn A. Baldelovar
Faculty, College of Computer Studies

It was in the middle of January 2019, a few months before the start of the pandemic, when suddenly my life changed. I got injured and I had to stay at home for several months. I was not able to work for more than 6 months and I believed that I would not be able to teach again. To cut the long story short, I could not express how happy I was when I was given the opportunity to teach in CU again. I was given another chance to impart my knowledge and skills to our students and since then, I resolved to give my best to my students and enjoy my teaching career while I still can.

During the first semester of SY 2020-2021 when CU transitioned to online classes because of the pandemic, it was apparent to me that most of the students needed to learn, adjust, and make sacrifices. In order to help ease the students' burdens, I decided to share all the time I possibly could to make myself available and assist students with their concerns related to our subject or anything about online classes. It came to the point that the students would open up to me about their experiences during this time of pandemic.

Since I was just at home most of the time because of my injury and because I also had difficulty sleeping because of my condition, I made the initiative to open avenues of communication using different platforms so that students may contact me when they needed my help. Through this



initiative, I was able to address different concerns of my students and cater to those who were only able to access a better internet signal at night. Little by little, students started to feel comfortable sharing their concerns with me and eventually they no longer hesitated to ask for one-on-one tutorials. I was so happy because I felt that I was able to break a communication barrier with my students especially in an online environment.

Listening to the experiences of our students and the sacrifices that they have had to make, inspired me to push myself and give my best effort in providing quality of education to our students even in the pandemic. I simplified the delivery of the topics in my classes and made sure that the students know I was there to support them. I never gave up on my students because they also did not give up on their studies. I really admired the perseverance and resilience that my students showed, and this was enough reason for me to make myself available whenever they needed my time.

Based on the student's evaluation, my students thought that I was the one helping them but in truth, they also helped me. After my accident, I would not deny that I was beginning to doubt myself and my capability to teach. My students not only made me feel normal again, they also helped me realize that I am still very much capable.

I am happy and grateful that I was given another opportunity to be part of CU's commitment to serve and care for students, especially during this time when they need us more than ever. It is my hope that even in my own little way, I am able to help ease the burdens that our students and their parents are carrying during these trying times.

The Care Cycle

By JMM (Jessa Mores)
Faculty, College of Education

This story is the experience of the writer, who has encountered so many challenges and hardships in her life that even until today she could not believe she made it through.

She was known for her passion for and determination towards education.

She believes that education is a powerful weapon in reducing poverty and she believes that poverty is not a hindrance to success.

She knows how to have nothing. She comes from the mountains and her parents are farmers. For her, it was painful to dream and make plans for her future because her family could hardly provide for her studies. But because of her determination, she applied for scholarships and eventually became an LGU scholar for her undergraduate studies. She did her best to pursue her studies despite the limited support. Along the way, she was lucky to receive aid from caring and generous people belonging to different sectors—from the army, the church, and even from her former neighborhood.

Today, she is a successful person who remains committed to her passion for education. She is a University Professor in Capitol University, College of Education, and she also extends volunteer work in the Alternative Learning System or ALS. She continues to serve the Lord by being a Youth adviser in the Parish Youth Ministry, and gives her tithes directly to the Out-of-School-Youth or the ALS learners, be it school supplies or through dedicating her



time in teaching.

It is easy to show our care and sympathy especially during this pandemic. We just have to share what we have, even starting with our own family, and when we have more, we can share to others. No matter how small the group is, as long as we start to plant the seeds of care, sympathy, and generosity, we are already empowering others. This small group will grow and eventually they can continue show acts of kindness to others, creating a cycle of kindness.

It is no longer about paying back those we are indebted to. Instead, it is about paying it forward that matters. When we treasure in our hearts the gratitude for all the people who have shown us care, it transforms into a force that propels us to show our care for others. Thus, the care cycle continues.

ENTRY 4:

SHS Valedictory Speech

By Heather Grace Donguines
Student, SHS

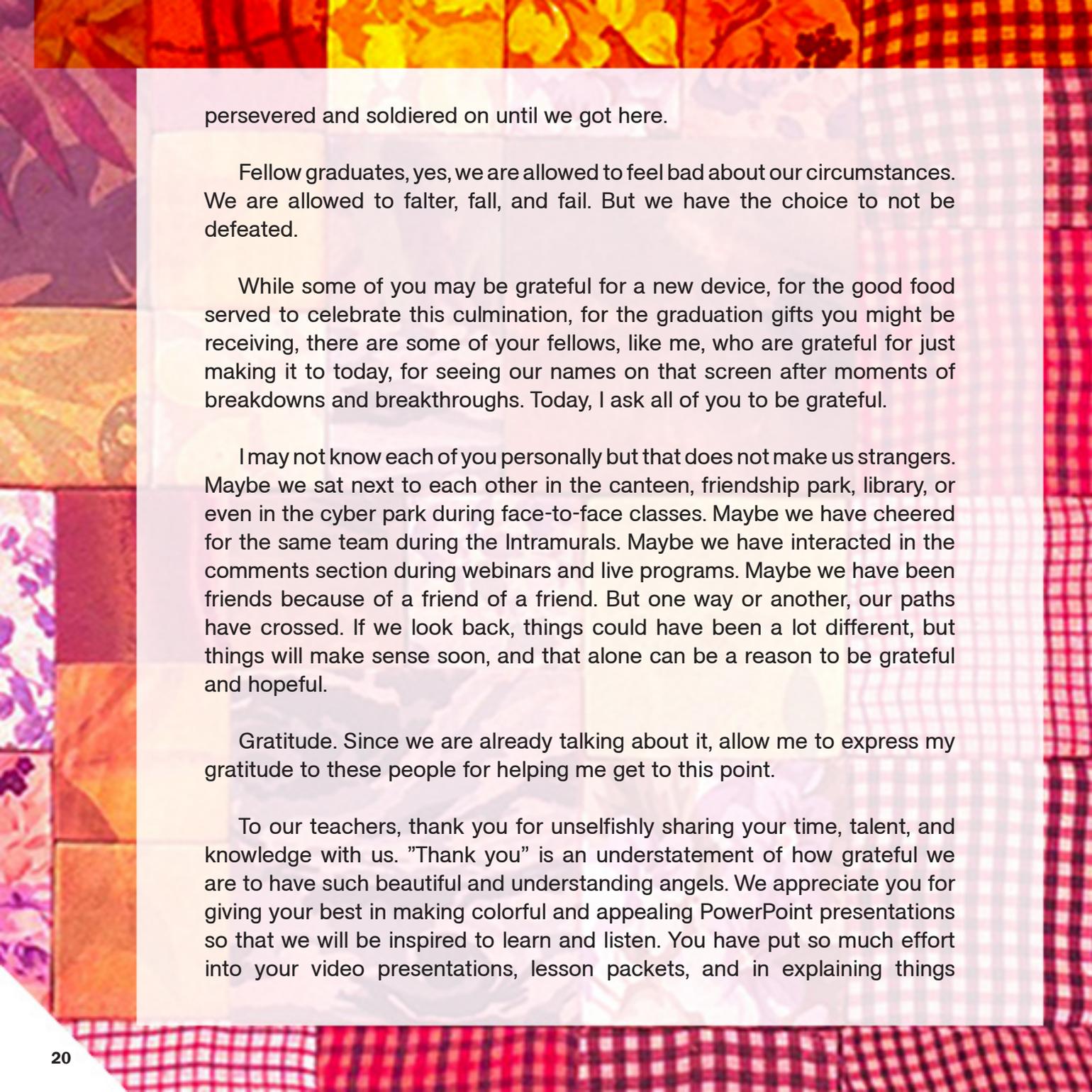
Let me start by sharing these words of encouragement by Roger Crawford, *“Being challenged in life is inevitable; being defeated is optional.”*

I speak before you not because I am the smartest and that I have never struggled. I stand and speak before you because I chose not to be defeated by the challenges thrown at me, like all of you, my fellow graduates.

If I could sum up in one word what I have gone through to get here, I would say the best word would be gratitude. By now, you might have heard that I have a twin sister with whom I share this success today. We grew up without our parents by our side. The lack of parental support could have defeated us, but we continue to feel grateful. We had many valid reasons to feel defeated but it was our choice to stand up and move beyond our circumstances.

Our story of gratitude stems from the efforts of our sister, our relatives, and our neighbors to give us a better life. Through the people around us, God provided us with what we needed. Our education, for example, was made possible through the university scholarships my twin sister and I received in High School.

But then the pandemic happened and we were all not prepared, including my sister and I. We attended our online classes while sharing only one device and we had to agree who got to use it first. But, like many of you, we



persevered and soldiered on until we got here.

Fellow graduates, yes, we are allowed to feel bad about our circumstances. We are allowed to falter, fall, and fail. But we have the choice to not be defeated.

While some of you may be grateful for a new device, for the good food served to celebrate this culmination, for the graduation gifts you might be receiving, there are some of your fellows, like me, who are grateful for just making it to today, for seeing our names on that screen after moments of breakdowns and breakthroughs. Today, I ask all of you to be grateful.

I may not know each of you personally but that does not make us strangers. Maybe we sat next to each other in the canteen, friendship park, library, or even in the cyber park during face-to-face classes. Maybe we have cheered for the same team during the Intramurals. Maybe we have interacted in the comments section during webinars and live programs. Maybe we have been friends because of a friend of a friend. But one way or another, our paths have crossed. If we look back, things could have been a lot different, but things will make sense soon, and that alone can be a reason to be grateful and hopeful.

Gratitude. Since we are already talking about it, allow me to express my gratitude to these people for helping me get to this point.

To our teachers, thank you for unselfishly sharing your time, talent, and knowledge with us. "Thank you" is an understatement of how grateful we are to have such beautiful and understanding angels. We appreciate you for giving your best in making colorful and appealing PowerPoint presentations so that we will be inspired to learn and listen. You have put so much effort into your video presentations, lesson packets, and in explaining things

we hardly understood because of connectivity issues. Thank you for your patience in between lectures, even if most of the time you are the only one talking. You never gave up. You set the bar high and challenged us to learn independently without leaving us behind.

To my advisers from my first year at Capitol University up to this moment, thank you for always believing in my capabilities. Sir Glenn, my first adviser, always reminded us not to settle for less. Sir, you are one of the people who helped me gain confidence. Ma'am Clau, our forever mother, neither words nor sighs will describe how thankful I am for your existence. You have indeed been a mother as well as a sister to us even until now. Ma'am Ren, my first online adviser, you are one of the few persons I can count on. We may not have had more time to bond and know each other more deeply, but I can feel that you care for us even through online means and gave us time to adjust. Ma'am Aly, the prettiest person alive, I could not express how grateful I am to have you as our Calculus teacher last year and being our adviser now. You have supported us in every way and never failed to cheer us up every day. Sir Bird, our SSG adviser, we may have met just a couple of times this year, but I can say that you are one of the few people who believed in my capabilities and pushed me to my limits. Finally, to Ma'am Bel and Sir Kent, my Math Club Advisers and teachers in Grade 11, thank you for believing that I could do it and for giving me opportunities I never thought I could get.

To my sister and all our relatives who stood as our parents, thank you for your unending support, especially in our studies. To all the parents, thank you for supporting your children in more ways impossible to count. You dragged us from bed every morning so that we are full and prepared for our online classes. You have given us enough space to learn how to work things for ourselves. These are just a few of thousands of ways you have supported us in our journey.

To my classmates from Hilbert and Bernoulli, thank you for being part of this challenging yet meaningful journey. Continue to soar high and be the best version of yourself. To my Ilongga and Ilonggo friends in school, damo gid nga salamat sa pagupod-upod natun mapa online man o face-to-face maskin lain-lain ta ninyo strands. To all the friends I have made this year, from the Council of Presidents to my SSG family, you have played a significant part in helping me overcome my fears and boost my confidence.

To our school principal, Dr. Amor Q, de Torres, and to our vice-principal, Ma'am Conchita Bas, to all the faculty and staff, thank you for doing your best in making sure that the students are learning. This school year would not be successful without all your efforts. To our guidance counselor, thank you for listening and trying to keep us on track for graduation. Without your help, some of us may not be graduating today.

To Capitol University, thank you for this beautiful and unforgettable experience.

Most importantly to our Almighty God, thank you for keeping us away from all harms and dangers. Thank you for your abundant love and mercy. To my fellow graduates, always remember you are loved, you are beautiful, and you are remarkable for surviving up to this day. May we all live our dreams and never fear the future. This pandemic should never stop us from achieving the success we've promised to our future selves. Never choose to get defeated.

Again, I am Heather Grace Donguines, STEM-Engineering, your Class Valedictorian. Challenged but never defeated. Felicitades y adios Class of 2021.

ENTRY 5:

A Tree to Life

By Pink Jakody

Better a tree who gives us life
than a man who works and strives,
for your purpose of life gives us time
from bits of past to stories of life

You are first in life, yet we end that line
you live in peace, still we end that time,
we know not of who you are
nor what your past has to hold,
but we know you are our futures' Gold,
As living we walk to tell the untold
you live to strive for a double life
to give us time to tell our own

As selfless as you are and
As selfish as I may be,
As much as deafening your sorrows are for me
May my hands be a call out of light for ease
For a tree to life is the life for me.

ENTRY 6:

An Order of Kindness

By Cristine Milar Tamayo
Faculty, CUBED

"Kindness begins with understanding that we all struggle."
- Charles Glassman

I would like to share this simple act of kindness I experienced and encountered with a Food Panda delivery rider.

It happened on June 6, 2021, a Sunday afternoon. It was a tiring and bustling day since the week ahead was for passing of grades and requirements for our clearance. My co-worker and I decided to order from Food Panda for our late lunch. We placed our order around 3:25 PM and expected to receive it around 3:45 PM, as was indicated in the processing time of delivery. While waiting for our food to be delivered, we rested and had a mindful conversation. We got carried away while talking until our stomachs started protesting, which was when we noticed it was already 4:00 PM. There was no update yet about the food we ordered. I checked the app again and confirmed that I had placed the order, but there was no call nor text from the delivery man. We didn't mind it and tried to understand that we're not the only customer. We also figured that the driver might not be familiar with the location of our street, which happens often. Around 4:14 PM, I received this text message from Food Panda:

Your order is delayed. We're sorry to keep you waiting. The rider is on the

way, and the latest arrival time is now 16:39 PM. -Food Panda

At least we got an update from food panda. At around 4:30 PM, I was getting excited and I waited for a call from the delivery man. Again, there was no update from him. My friend and I began to wonder about why it was taking our driver so long to deliver the food. At 4:46 PM we received another text, not from the delivery man, but from food panda which said:

Your order is delayed. We're sorry to keep you waiting. The rider is on the way, and the latest arrival time is now 16:56 PM. - Food Panda

When I received this message, I was about to burst and explode why it was taking our driver so long to deliver our food, though we ordered from the nearest fast-food chain and the app set a 20-minute delivery time. At around 5:00 PM, I received a call from the delivery man. When I received the call, I planned to tell him how upset I was with his service, but then I heard his voice.

"Good afternoon, Ma'am, on the way nako Ma'am, aha gani ni dapit inyo Ma'am?" he said with a determined voice that was slightly cracking. I forgot everything—my anger, my stomach, the almost two hours of waiting—and answered him as politely as I could. From his voice, I heard and felt an old family man who is striving hard for his family, a family man who is happy to have work in this time of pandemic, and a man of strength, still showing a positive attitude even though he's struggling.

When the driver arrived, he had a positive disposition as if nothing had happened and he apologized for the delay of our food. I asked him politely about what happened and he told us that he had a lot of customers and he had a hard time delivering the food and finding the address location, especially with the bad weather.

While he was talking about what happened, I paid him 290 pesos for our bill that was 286 pesos. I didn't have 1 peso, so I added a 5-peso coin and told him to keep the change of 4 pesos. His next act surprised me and melted my heart: He returned my five pesos and said:

It's okay Ma'am, I'm happy to serve you. Okay ra Ma'am, kuhaa nalang na five. Piso ra bitaw kulang, okay ra Ma'am. Salamat sa pagsabot Ma'am, daghan gyud kaayo ko customer Karun Ma'am.

I tried not to accept it and returned the five pesos to him, but he quickly went back to his motorcycle and said thank you.

For some, this may not have been a big deal but for me, it is a simple act of kindness. I appreciate how grateful the rider was. He needed that five-peso coin as much as I did. He works hard for it but chose to give it back because he's grateful for what he accomplished that day. I'll never forget this encounter because I learned so much from this simple event.

We don't know what a person is going through. We all have our own dilemmas and challenges. We can't compare our problems to others, and the only thing we can do is to be kind to each other and to try to understand each other's situation.

Yes, I could have gotten mad at the delivery man for the super delayed delivery, but I could not blame him for having a lot of customers or for the bad weather conditions. If I had been rude to the delivery man, would his actions and disposition that day have been the same? I don't think so.

To Manong rider, thank you for your service. You did not just deliver our food that, you also brought something special, which is your kindness. You inspire me to be grateful for little things.



To all my fellow food delivery customers, I shared this experience for you to do the same. Let us strive to be considerate and no matter what happens, we should choose to be kind. There is no such thing as a small act of kindness. Whether big or small, any act of kindness matters. Kindness is what we need the most in this time of the pandemic.

Pagtatanto ng Isang Maraingin

Ni James L. Pabayo
Student, College of Education

Ako ay maraingin; panay ako daing tungkol sa iba't ibang mga bagay—iritable sa mga bagay-bagay sa paligid. “Apaka init naman!,” madalas kong sabihin pagka mainit; “Ano ba ‘yan?! Basa na naman ang daan, madudumihan na naman ang sapatos ko,” ang sinasabi ko naman pagka naulan; “Kakapagod naman ‘tong pinagagawa ni Sir/Ma’am [pangalan ng guro],” ang sinasabi ko naman pagka tinatamad sa gawain sa paaralan, pero ako naman ‘tong madaling maburyo pagka walang ginagawa na pampaaralan.

Sa tahimik kong ‘to, marahil hindi maipagkakamali na ako ay punong-puno ng mga daing sa buhay (na minsan pakiramdam ko ay wala namang makatuwirang saligan), subalit sabi nga nila: “Ang karanasan ay subhetibo” (*isinalin mula sa Ingles), ibig sabihin: ang bigat ng bawat bagabag o ‘di naman kaya’y gaang dulot ng bawat kagalakan sa buhay ng bawat isa sa mga samu’t saring mga bagay—kung positibo ba o negatibo—ay dedepende sa kung papaano ito tatanggapin ng bawat isa; mayroong mga tao, halimbawa, na pagka hinahagupit ng problema ay nakakayanan pa ding makangiti, at sa kabilang ibayo, mayroong mga biniyayaan ng karangyaan subalit tila naliligaw ang ulirat at labis na nalulungkot at balisa sa maraming bagay—waring mayroong kulang.

Ako, sa isang banda, ay isang anomalya; wala ako sa isang sambahayang marangya at sumasapat lamang ang kinikita ng ama ko sa mga

pangangailangan namin, subalit bagaman ganoon, ako pa itong malakas dumaing nang pabulong. Nang magsimulang maghigpit bunga ng pandemya, umigting lalo ang pagdadaing ko; naiinis ako sa kasusuot ng face mask at tila nababaliw sapagkat nababagot. Ang madalas ko na lamang ginagawa ay ang magbababasa ng kung ano-ano at suyurin ang bawat news channel at mga channel ng mga paborito kong mga sa Youtuber: Al Jazeera, CNA, CNN, NHK, Cong TV, Johnny Harris Geography Now! at iba pa. Sa mga panahong iyon (sa kakapanood ko ng balita), unti-unti akong namulat; napagtanto kong kay palad ko pa pala at ang mga daing ko ay pawang kababawan lamang (aking pagdiriin). Kung dumadaing man ako tungkol sa labis na init o 'di naman kaya ay sa labis na ulan, paano pa kaya ang mga manggagawang sasadyaang ibilad ang sarili sa katirikan ng araw o halos lunurin ang sarili sa gitna ng bayo ng ulan para lamang makapaghanapbuhay at may maiuwi sa mga pamilya? Kung dumadaing man ako dahil sa mga maladaluhong na mga gawaing pampaaralan, paano naman ang mga nangagsisikap at nagtitiyaga para lang makatuntong ng paaralan at makapag-aral? Kung dumadaing man ako dahil sa nahihirapan akong huminga dahil sa face mask, paano naman ang mga hindi na halos makahinga dahil tinamaan na ng COVID-19? Oo, siya ngang ang karasanan ay subhetibo subalit masamang itanggi ang katotohanang mayroong nahihirapan at handang mahirapan alang-alang sa ikabubuti at ikagiginhawa ng mas nakararami; may mga deliveryman na handang suyurin ang bawat dako ng lungsod malasap mo lang ang BTS Meal mo; may mga courier na handang hanapin ka saang lupalop ka man naroroon, maihatid lang ang damit na in-order mo mula sa app na katunog ng "Lasagna;" may mga pulisya at tanod na handang magpakapuyat para lang matiyak ang kaayusan sa paligid; may mga nurse at mga doktor na handang isabak ang sarili sa panganib ng pagkakasakit, malunasan lamang ang mga iginugupo ng COVID-19; may mga gurong tinitis ang mababang pagtingin ng lipunan at pang-aaglahi ng marami para lang matuto ang mga mag-aaral na minsan ay mga magulang lamang naman ang sumasagot sa module; may mga tsuper ng jeep na handang tiisin ang maliit na kita sa maghaponing pasada para

lang maihatid ka saan mo man gusto; may mga magsasakang nagtitiis ng kakarampot na kita at dukhang pamumuhay para lang makalamon ka.

Kung diwa ng pagmamalasakit lamang naman ang pag-uusapan, kampeon diyan ang bawat manggagawa, sapagkat sila ang hiyas ng ating lipunan—ang tunay na yaman ng bayan. Sila ang patunay na ang malasakit ay nasa paligid lamang. Ang pinakamalapit na salin ng salitang Ingles na “care” sa Filipino ay “malasakit,” at kung sasangguniin ang “dakilang kapangyarihan” ng internet, ang “care” ay nangangahulugang “ang proseso ng pagsasanggalang sa kaninu- o kahit anuman at pagbibigay ng kung anong kailangan ng tao o ng bagay na yaon” (Dictionary.cambridge.org, aking pagdiriin *isinalin mula sa Ingles). Ang salitang “daing” naman, sa kabilang ibayo, ay nangangahulugang “pagpapahayag ng hindi kasiyahan o sama ng loob” (Diksiyonaryo.ph, aking pagdiriin). Samakatuwid, ang pagod ng bawat deliveryman, courier, pulisya, tanod, nurse, doktor, guro, tsuper, magsasaka at ng iba pang mga manggagawa—lalo na ngayon sa panahaon ng pandemya—ay hindi maipagkakailang “pagbibigay [nila] ng kung anong kailangan [natin]” (malasakit) kahit na sila man mismo ay may mga daing o mga “pagpapahayag ng hindi kasiyahan.” Ang daing per se ay hindi naman masama kung mayroon namang malinaw na pinagsaligan at pinagbatayan (konstruktibo) at kung ito ay sa ikabubuti, subalit kung ang daing ay patlang at ang layunin lamang ay upang takasan ang pananagutan, komporme sa katamaran, iyan ang uri ng daing na hindi marapat tularan. Ang bawat tagaktak ng pawis ng bawat manggagawa ay bakas ng pagmamalasakit nila sa lipunan; ang bawat patlang na daing ng bawat tamad na maraingin ay dagdag na pasanin sa bayan. Ang kabaligtaran ng maraingin, kung gayon, ay ang mga may tunay na malasakit (hindi pulitiko)—ang mga manggagawa. Madalas nating ipagsawalang-kibo ang kanilang pagal, madalas nating punahin ang kanilang mga pagkukulang, at hindi man lamang minsan naisasagi sa isip natin kung sila ba ay nangangailangan din kaya ng malasakit mula sa atin. Kaya ang pamanhik lamang ng inyong lingkod: bago dumaing at kumuda, liban sa payak

na “salamat po,” ay mahayag din sana natin ang ating malasakit sa kanila sa paraang alalahanin din nating ang tungkulin natin sa lipunan ay hindi ang pawang maging tagatanggap lamang ng malasakit, kundi bilang maging mga tagapagbigay din. Akong maraingin, na kabahagi rin sa ginahawang bunga ng pagsasakit ng marami, ay ‘di dapat tularan; ako ay walang maidadaing, manapa, marapat pa ngang mamutawi sa akin ang lubos na pagpapasalamat. Ako ay mumunti—marami ang sinasabi subalit wala pang mapatutunayan at wala kailanmang mapatutunayan—ako ay maingay na alabok lamang sa gitna ng sansinukob.

Sanggunian

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Altruism in Action

By Jelvett Mynne F. Pagatpatan

In a short period of time, the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world. People have experienced fear and anxiety over the uncontrollable spread of the virus. Many of us have lost jobs and, more heartbreaking, family members.

And I for one was not exempt from facing a crisis. Last March 2020, I could recall that we were very happy until an outbreak of COVID cases led to a community quarantine. No one was allowed to go out, not even to go to work. My heart was totally broken in sympathy over my friends and family, many of whom struggled to put food on their tables. Many fought over the ayuda from our barangay officials. I really wanted to help but I have been the breadwinner in my family since my father retired in 2019, and I needed to budget the little money that I had. However, I believe in prayers and that God will provide so last March 28, 2020, I took the initiative to pack 5 kilos of rice for each family in our neighborhood. I bought 2 sacks of rice but when I started to prepare it for them, I felt that it was not enough. I cried and prayed to God to help me find a solution. Then the idea came to partner with my cousins who may have savings, so I tried talking to them. I don't know how I convinced them but I believe that it was the work of the Holy Spirit that was able to touch their hearts. In the morning, a box of canned goods with noodles arrived in our house. It was God's miracle for me.

It was funny at first because our relatives thought that they received ayuda from the barangay or from the church. So after packing the goods,

we included the note, “Dili gikan sa Pulitiko, dili gikan sa simbahan kundili, voluntaryo lamang.” We did not include our names because I wanted to show that you can give without expecting to be thanked or expecting to be voted for in elections. Our intentions were pure.

On April 2020, the Women’s Ministry, which is an organization in my church that helps the victims of VAWC as well as Prostituted women, asked for financial assistance to share to the women victims of the pandemic crisis. We hurried to Gaisano Bulua and bought a sack of rice for the women, and we delivered our goods to a house run by the Good Shepherd sisters. For me, solidarity in this time of pandemic is what we all need the most. We felt genuinely happy because we were given another opportunity to help.

Another opportunity to help arose during the school year of 2020-2021, when schools shifted to online distance learning. Many students could not acquire their own laptops or smart phones to use for their studies, and the youth in the parish were greatly affected. As the former youth coordinator, my heart was hurt too, so I decided to share our pisonet business to these students. For students who were enrolled online, they were free to use our computer as long as it was properly used for education purposes. At the terrace in our house where I had my class every day, beside and in front of me were students who were attending their classes too. It was a fulfilling moment for me because as an advocate of education, I believe that children are our future so we have to support their studies in any way we can. I told the students who used our computers that they should not feel they owe me or my family anything—all I asked from them is to do well in their studies because I will be very happy to see them succeed in their lives.

November 2020 was my birthday month so I kept an amount to celebrate my birthday with friends and family. However, I could not enjoy while many were hungry and suffering. I saw then a picture of Mother Teresa on Facebook,



with the quote, “give and give until it hurts.” It moved me because, as much as I want to celebrate my birthday for the first time using my salary, I could not do it because it did not feel right for me. My heart was telling me to donate it instead. There was a tragedy in Cagayan Valley then and the church was asking for donations, so I split my birthday savings into two, for the victims of the storm and for a remote area in our place where I gave a sack of rice. In January 2021, a close friend celebrated her birthday with the missionary society of St. Columban and friends through giving goods to the people to show solidarity with them during these hard times.

I remember now one of my role models, our Madame Gloria Laureana Rosales, whose legacy of generosity and compassion inspired me to follow in her footsteps in my own way. I share these simple acts of kindness because I believe that the help we give during this pandemic should not be limited to money, we can also offer our time and our resources. Any small act of kindness is our contribution for the greater good and our service to God, who is always watching us.

Pagkakaisa is the Greatest Ayuda

By Erica Pabillore Morala
Student, College of Nursing

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health crisis due to the outbreak of COVID-19. A year has already passed and until now, we are still battling a dreadful pandemic. COVID continues to affect all aspects of our lives. Anxiety, hunger, and grief has enveloped the world yet we are called to rise and to unite against an invisible enemy.

When the pandemic started, the government and certain organizations made an initiative to distribute ayudas to communities. Seeing the great need in our community, my family and I took part in this undertaking in our own little way. We listed families in need and we shared a portion of our savings to buy goods for the families. There were three phases in this process and all my family members extended a helping hand in each phase. First, we purchased goods from the market. We divided and packed these goods and ensured that each bag had 3 kilograms of rice, cans of meatloaf and sardines, packs of noodles, and toiletries. We had to accomplish this within two days. Each good was a necessity for the families and so we had to be careful that nothing was wasted. We realized then that we should not take anything for granted.

Second, we had to distribute the goods around our neighborhood. It was both tiring and fun. We had to visit one house after another and gave out the ayuda, but we still made sure that we followed the health protocols of wearing face masks, face shields, and observing social distancing. We



were able to explore our neighborhood and we were able to listen to our neighbors' stories during the pandemic. We did not have any idea how much suffering this pandemic has brought until we heard their stories. It was a heart-opening experience.

Finally, we had to return home in the late afternoon. We were all exhausted yet satisfied because of the smiles reflected in the eyes of each family we visited. My mom even shared that our neighbors' "Thank you!" were filled with sincerity. We may only have a little but whenever a crisis arises, we share what we can. I am glad that this culture of generosity in our family has been instilled in me at an early age.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have changed our lives but not our willingness to live and to help one another. Yes, many bad things have happened but these circumstances do not stop us from being there for each other. We still have a long way to go in our fight against this virus, but the path is never hopeless with our sense of togetherness. This is the greatest ayuda that we can offer—pagkakaisa.

Halo-Halo

By Adenisa G. Andig
Student, College of Computer Studies

We always hear the saying, “It’s better to give than to receive,” but we do not realize the truth of this until it really happens that we are given the opportunity to share our blessings.

On December 10, 2019 I was a freshman student and we had classes until 3:30 in the afternoon. When it was time to go home, my best friend, Cha-cha, and I went to city hall because it was allowance day. After we collected our allowance, we rode on a tricycle until we got caught in traffic outside Ayala mall. It was very humid that day because it was going to rain. I couldn’t stand the heat anymore so my friend and I got off the tricycle and went inside the mall. It was already 4:50 pm but it was still raining and we were far away from home, so Cha-cha and I decided to have our early dinner.

We went to Mang Inasal and thought of inviting our friend, Kring-kring. Cha-cha was giving our orders to the waiter while I communicated with Kring-kring, who unfortunately could not join us because she was helping her mother with groceries. We decided to change our order since we had not paid yet and we ordered a set menu that was good for two. We ate to our heart’s content and we were already so full, yet we had not had a bite of our Halo-halo order.

I looked outside and the rain was still on pouring, so we agreed to take out the remaining Halo-halo and give it to the two people who we always see whenever we walk in the overpass. One of them is blind and he’s always



playing the drums. Before leaving the store, we first cleaned our mess after eating. After that, we went outside and gave the Halo-halo. The two of them were very happy and thankful, they thanked us over and over with smiles that made us smile, too.

I feel blessed to have been given the opportunity to share this story to everybody. I hope that this will serve as an inspiration to others that helping people does not need to be captured by a camera nor be posted on social media to be considered as generous. Even simple ways of giving matters, because one cannot measure sincerity when it comes to helping other people. Whether the gestures are big or small, the good thought and intentions matter most to the people you are able to help especially in this time of pandemic.

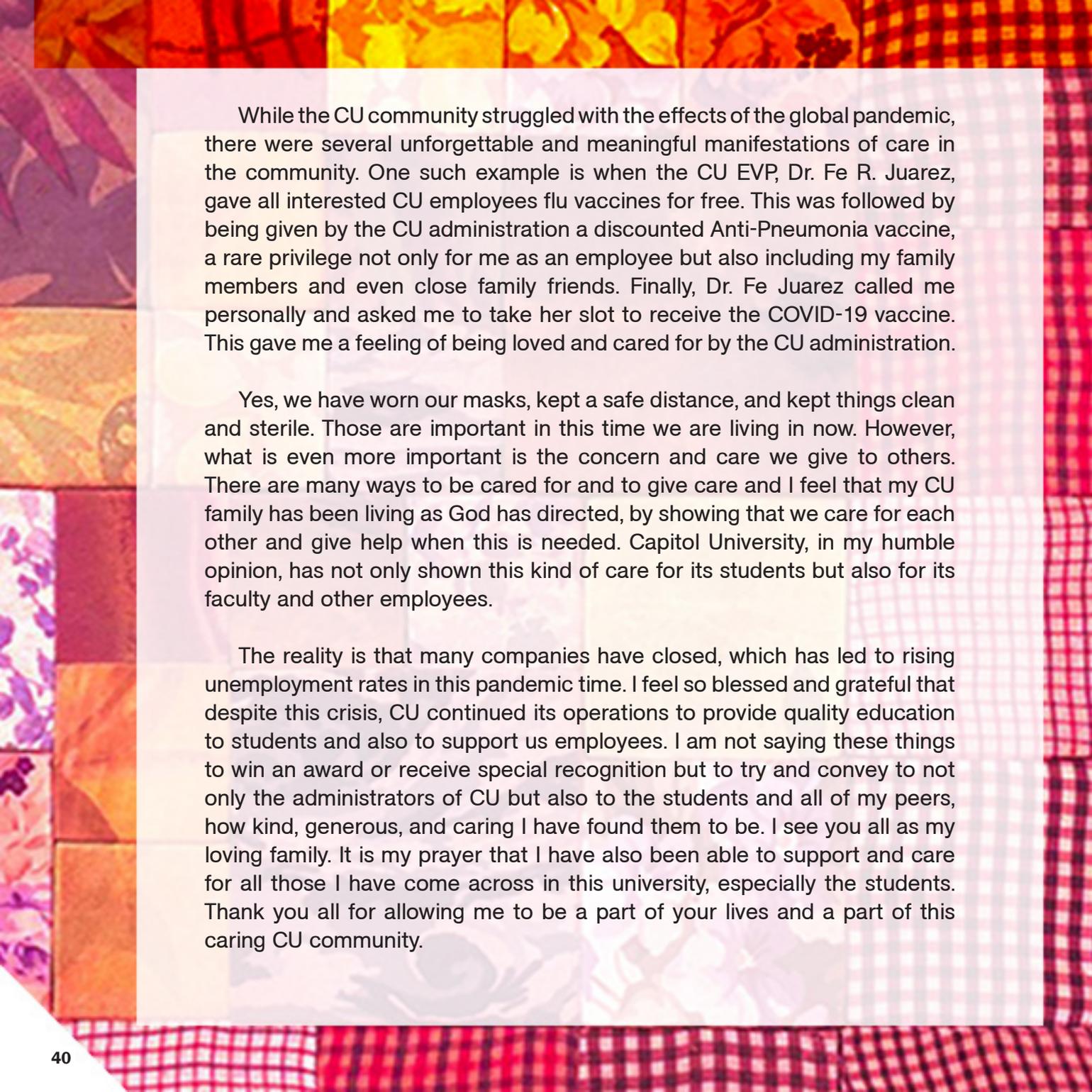
CU Cares in the Time of COVID

By Chorieta L. Valerio
Director for Libraries

An act of care can be measured in many ways. I can attest to this, for I can honestly say that I have been both a receiver and a giver of care in these nerve-racking times. My professional journey has taken me to four different colleges, which allowed me to lend a hand to many struggling students and also to interact with many faculty members in a positive way.

My voyage, which began in Cagayan de Oro College some 26 years ago, has been filled with the pleasure of training students in library services but also giving to them ways to conduct their lives and jobs in a positive and compassionate manner. In this profession of Librarianship, I have also been the receiver of many pleasures by watching my “kids” grow in their lives and enter into the working world with more tools for success.

Throughout my tenure in Cagayan de Oro College, Lourdes College, Lyceum of Iligan Foundation, and then currently, in Capitol University, I have had warm and memorable associations with my administrators, co-employees, and students. My years with Capitol University especially are marked with a feeling of belonging with fellow educators who honestly care for their “family” of students, faculty, and other employees. I share with the staff and the students the positive practices that I have experienced with my CU colleagues, such as sharing greetings among heads and colleagues during holidays and birthdays or showing gratitude for deeds and tasks that were fulfilled.



While the CU community struggled with the effects of the global pandemic, there were several unforgettable and meaningful manifestations of care in the community. One such example is when the CU EVP, Dr. Fe R. Juarez, gave all interested CU employees flu vaccines for free. This was followed by being given by the CU administration a discounted Anti-Pneumonia vaccine, a rare privilege not only for me as an employee but also including my family members and even close family friends. Finally, Dr. Fe Juarez called me personally and asked me to take her slot to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This gave me a feeling of being loved and cared for by the CU administration.

Yes, we have worn our masks, kept a safe distance, and kept things clean and sterile. Those are important in this time we are living in now. However, what is even more important is the concern and care we give to others. There are many ways to be cared for and to give care and I feel that my CU family has been living as God has directed, by showing that we care for each other and give help when this is needed. Capitol University, in my humble opinion, has not only shown this kind of care for its students but also for its faculty and other employees.

The reality is that many companies have closed, which has led to rising unemployment rates in this pandemic time. I feel so blessed and grateful that despite this crisis, CU continued its operations to provide quality education to students and also to support us employees. I am not saying these things to win an award or receive special recognition but to try and convey to not only the administrators of CU but also to the students and all of my peers, how kind, generous, and caring I have found them to be. I see you all as my loving family. It is my prayer that I have also been able to support and care for all those I have come across in this university, especially the students. Thank you all for allowing me to be a part of your lives and a part of this caring CU community.

A Tale of Gratitude

By Ian Dominique L. Taping
Student, MPSM

A canopy of dark clouds blanketed the infinite skies which foreboded the omen that will change the world as we know it. True enough, this test of faith threw solid jabs on the usual dispositions of society. Personally, it caught me in a maelstrom which made me re-evaluate how removed I was in life based on the normative standards of people my age because, before, I sincerely felt like every single day was just like any other day—unexceptional and simply uninteresting.

In the fourth quarter of 2019, a new virus caught the attention of China which manifested itself with flu-like symptoms. Unfortunately, the impact of this seemingly weak outbreak was recklessly underestimated which gave the virus an opportunity to mutate and work its way across the globe. As its tentacles reached even the farthest of countries, COVID-19 brought the world to its knees with its cunning method of infecting its hosts. People affected by the virus became mere figures on the news which sowed panic, stress, and fear as the numbers continued to soar. It was at that moment when the unimaginable happened—the world was caught in a stalemate. Helplessly waging a war against the invisible foe, the busy streets were silenced and the crowded places were closed in hopes to re-establish control while the erudite scientists and leaders were grasping at any possible solution against the unprecedented crisis. In spite of the lack of preparation, everyone donned their face masks and face shields as they struggled to accept the advent of the new normal. Despite the differences among nations that threatened



the expedient resolution of this dilemma, they raced to combat the plague while calling a truce in consideration of the new Goliath that they swore to conquer.

Beyond the gray shades that paint the canvas of the pandemic era, I am still grateful because the experience helped me appreciate life from a new angle and, at the same time, understand and redefine what it truly means to care. In my perspective, caring is something that we can better comprehend when it is felt first-hand. As an expression of love, it may manifest in a form of sacrifice that gives a warm feeling of reassurance—a promise that whatever happens there will be someone who has your back. Unlike the diluted and overused words of passion, this kind of love speaks volumes in a language that both the giver and the receiver recognize for its sincerity and pureness. It is a kind of love that touches the soul.

This depth of gratitude blossomed in the deepest corners of my heart which I never thought existed. The ineffable feeling of warmth that managed to penetrate beyond my sun-kissed skin was too beautiful for words to describe but I knew that it was love.

In late July of 2021, I was feeling a bit off and under the weather. Initially, I inferred that maybe it was the continued exposure to erratic temperatures and humidity that weakened my immune system. Moreover, as someone with sensitive allergies, I have a myriad of triggers that may induce flu-like symptoms. Also, with my asthma, I carelessly dismissed my condition as something mundane since I have been battling these recurring symptoms for years. Enduring the mild manifestations of the early onset of a disease that never crossed my mind, I persevered to work overtime to beat my work plan for the quarter which exacerbated my exhaustion. However, on the 30th day of July 2021, my bout against a sharp, stabbing headache began which kick-started my fever and body pains. That was when I supposed that my



condition could be something else entirely. With this, I opted to sleep in a different room thinking that I may have caught some sort of flu since I was drenched in the rain the day before. The next day I started to feel some discomfort in my throat which was something that I usually experienced since I am quite prone to having lesions in that area due to my severe nutrient deficiency which I was also diagnosed with in the past. But weird enough, it felt different. It was actually worse. My sore throat hurt me when I ate, drank, or talked. Somehow, it seemed like it impeded my breathing in a manner that I never experienced before. The day after, when I ate my breakfast, I failed to appreciate my viand because it tasted too bland even when my sister claimed that it was properly seasoned. I tried to reason that it was probably my fever and colds that kept me from appreciating the taste. Waking up early on the 2nd day of August, I was totally out of the zone. I was dizzy, exhausted, and sick, and because of that, I decided that it would be better if I take my leave and recuperate as much strength as I can to get back to work as soon as possible. At noon that same day, I received a call from my workmate who informed me that she had experienced the same symptoms which began on the 30th day of July 2021, and that she had already tested positive for the COVID-19 virus.

Speechless and completely stupefied, I slowly surmised that, probably, I was no different but I still think that it was quite unlikely since I still felt relatively fine and so I continued to work as usual in spite of having filed a leave of absence. By five in the afternoon, my toes and fingertips had that tingling sensation. By seven in the evening, the numbness and the cold sensation snaked around my upper and lower appendages. My breathing grew more forced and I observed that my veins became more pronounced. Slowly, my muscles were becoming more rigid and stiff. I was losing control of my body and at that moment I knew that I needed immediate medical attention. And just before my jaws locked, I managed to scream for help for the last time before my legs gave out and lost their strength. My parents and



my brother scampered at the call and saw my horrendous condition. I was on the ground gasping for air to no avail and all my arms and fingers were stiffened and contorted in an odd manner. My pallid visage accentuated my suffering and I was groaning while trying to tell them about it. Without dillydallying, both my brother and father hoisted me to our truck. Zooming past checkpoints and traffic lights with my mother on the driver's seat, I was rushed to the city center. Catching my breath, I saw bright lights dancing through the windows cheering me up with the notion that I was almost at the hospital.

“Just a few more minutes.” I tried to comfort myself over and over because I knew that I was not alone. I had my family and, as cliché as it may sound, I knew in my heart that God was there with me in the backseat. The nearest hospital from my residence was Maria Reyna but we were not even entertained because there were already a number of patients lining up in the parking lot. Moving to CUMC, we were greeted by the same post-apocalyptic scenario but a nurse told us that I needed oxygen to improve my condition but, unluckily, all the other hospitals in the city were at full capacity and no oxygen tanks were available. It was a hopeless case. From there, I had already assumed that I was infected.

As I was trying to control my breathing, my concern about the possibility of infecting my parents surfaced. In a hoarse voice, I tried to warn them of the matter but they simply shrugged it off and told me not to worry about it. They continued to massage my muscles while trying to monitor the oxygen level of my body. At this point, I was barely breathing and my entire body was shackled by the virus—motionless. My mother was asking for help from all her contacts but none of them gave a favorable response. Exhausted, I told them about my life insurance policy documents and who to contact just in case I lucked out. At the exact moment that I was about to give up, my aunt called and told my mother that she managed to buy an oxygen tank in Iponan.

Miraculously, it was the last oxygen tank available. Then and there, I felt that it was God's comforting embrace that made this miracle happen. With a renewed hope, I persisted as I waited for God's grace. When I was stable, I had myself swabbed and, as expected, I was positive with the virus. Luckily, I was the only one who tested positive in our family. As the days in quarantine and isolation flew by, I managed to regain my motor skills. A few special friends showed their concern for me and kept tabs on my improvement. Sadly, when I was essentially back to normal, the news broke that my aunt who gave me my lifeline when I was almost over the edge is sick with stage II breast cancer. The realization that in spite of her vulnerable state she still went out of her way to help me tugged a chord on my heartstrings.

"How do I thank my friends? How do I repay the level of care from my family that invalidated logic and reason? How do I express my gratitude to my aunt who risked her weakened self to save the ordinary and unremarkable me?"

Through my days in isolation, these questions echoed in my hollowed mind and I recognized that I can never repay the kindness and the love that I was showered with because, how does anyone calculate the cost of something priceless? Nonetheless, I knew that my second chance to life should justify the sacrifices of the people around me. I should make it a challenge to myself to be better at living the life that I was given and the chance that I was gifted with. I should learn to live in the moment and to choose myself because, for the longest time, I was a flightless bird with no direction. I missed so much in life that I should be ashamed to those people who made the irrational choices for me.

For a person like me who doesn't win much in life, the smallest of victories does yield tears. I know that I don't deserve the people around me but I will try. And although my battle in life is far from over, I had already claimed my victory in front of God because I know that I am blessed. His plans may be



difficult to comprehend but that is what faith is for.

Indeed, the image of the pandemic may have been peppered with gray tones on its façade but it can never hide the fine shades of hope in between its strokes. Looking back, I acknowledge my myopic view in life but at least now I know better. Beyond the struggle and at my lowest point, God made sure that there were people who I could count on. If only the world would nurture a culture of care, then no adversity would be too impossible to handle.

To all the people who helped me, *“I love you.”* To the world, let us be the miracle that we are waiting for. Abante!

Kalinga

Ni Angelica A. Oberes
Student, BSED Filipino

Bawat isa sa atin ay nakakaranas ng problema. Mapa-pamilya, kaibigan o maging sa personal man. Ngunit, ang pandemyang ito ang nagsilbing patunay na kahit sa kabila ng hirap na ating mapagdadaanan, ay naroon pa rin ang pagkakaisa, pagdamay at pagmamahal natin sa bawat isa. Kahit na hindi man natin ito naipapaabot ng personal sa mga taong lubos na nangangailangan ng pagkalinga, ngunit ang presensya na ating ibinibigay sa kanila ang siyang nagsisilbi nilang lakas para magpatuloy sa buhay.

Ako ay isang simpleng mag-aaral ngunit may matayog na pangarap sa buhay. Mula nang ako ay mag kolehiyo, hindi ko lubos akalain na sa ganitong kalagayan ako hahantong. Madalas akong mahirapan sa pagbagay sa mga pangyayari dahil hindi ko ito nakasanayan. Minsan, napapaluha na lamang ako at ang tanging naimumutawi ko sa aking mga labi ay ang pahayag na, “pagod na ako.” Hindi ko maintindihan, siguro nga ay lubos akong naninibago dahil walang ni sinuman ang nag-akala na ganito ang sasapitin ng buong mundo. Kahit minsan ay nahihirapan akong mag-isip ng mga ideya na aking ilalagay sa aking mga takdang aralin, ay ginagampanan ko pa rin ang aking responsibilidad bilang estudyante na ang tanging hinahangad ay makapagtapos para sa pamilya at sa kinabukasan. Hindi ko masukat sa mga salita ang hirap na aking nararanasan sa ngayon ngunit wala akong magawa kundi magpatuloy.

Gayon pa man, may mga tao pa ring lubos kong ikinagagalak na

mapabilang sa aking buhay. Natutuwa ako na kahit hindi ko na sila nakikita at nakakasama ay naroon pa rin ang kanilang pagsuporta at pagmamahal sa akin. Ramdam ko ang kanilang suporta at paggabay. Minsan nga ay napapaisip ako na napakaswerte ko kasi kahit hindi ako perpekto, madalas man akong madapa at minsan man ay nagkakamali, nariyan pa rin ang mga mahahalagang tao sa aking buhay upang tulungan akong bumangon at patuloy akong gabayan upang magpatuloy sa aking pangarap.

Lubos akong nagpapasalamat sa aking pamilya, dahil kahit hindi man kami lumaki na may gintong kutsara sa labi, ngunit ang kanilang pagbibigay ng suporta sa akin ay walang katulad. Hindi ko man sinabi sa kanila na gusto kong magpabili ng kagamitan para sa aking pag-aaral, pero dahil sa online class —na ito, ibinigay nila iyon sa akin.

Sa katunayan, hindi ko masukat ang aking kagalakan sa panahong ito. Ibinigay sa akin ang pagkalinga, pagmamahal at pagsuporta na lubos kong kinakailangan mula sa aking pamilya, kaibigan, sa aking mga guro mula pa noon, sa espesyal na tao sa aking buhay at lalong-lalo na mula sa ating Panginoon.

Isang bagay lamang ang aking ikikintal sa mga mambabasa. Minsan man ay nahihirapan tayo at minsan man ay naiisipan na nating sumuko, subalit huwag nating kakalimutan na may mga taong handing mag-alay ng kanilang suporta at pagmamahal sa atin. Lagi nating tatandaan na ang pagtulong sa kapwa ay hindi kawalan sa ating pagkatao, bagkus ito ay nagbibigay sa atin dahilan upang mas lalong yumabong ang ating pagmamahal sa kapwa.

Magpatuloy lamang tayo at tiyak akong ang pandemyang ito ay ating malalagpasan at ang mga pangarap na ating inaasam ay ating mapagtatagumpayan

ENTRY 14:

Through Sharing We are United

By Kent Gerald M. Apdian
Student, BSMT-1

Despite the devastating effects that the global pandemic has had on everyone including the lives of Filipinos, hope and courage continue to grow as we work to overcome our current circumstances. Knowing that each of us is suffering and is in need of financial assistance, it is imperative that we demonstrate acts of kindness, care, and love.

Last year, my family and I decided to share our blessings with those in the frontlines in our barangay, especially to the tanods and health workers fighting against COVID-19. My family also requires financial assistance but we felt that it was important to show a spirit of camaraderie by assisting and supporting those who were more in need. Even if we simply shared a small box of goods, it is the thought that counts the most. It was indeed gratifying to see the smiles on the faces of those we gave assistance to. Our hearts were filled with joy and love when we shared gifts with others because we knew that we were able to help someone in our own little way. We were very happy to be able to provide food to our frontliners because we have seen how they have risked their lives for the sake of everyone's safety. Truly, giving from the heart brings joy to your life and feeds your soul. Giving gives you an internal reward that is far more valuable than the present itself. I remember now the words of Mahatma Gandhi when he said, "To find yourself, lose yourself in the service of others."

Our lives have all been disrupted by this pandemic situation, but working hand in hand matters especially when you are able to share your blessings



to those who are in need. We can always earn money but the good deed you performed will live on in the hearts of those who witnessed it. As long as you have the power and ability to give and contribute, please do so. You may believe it to be a simple gesture, but you will have no idea about the difference you will make in someone's life.

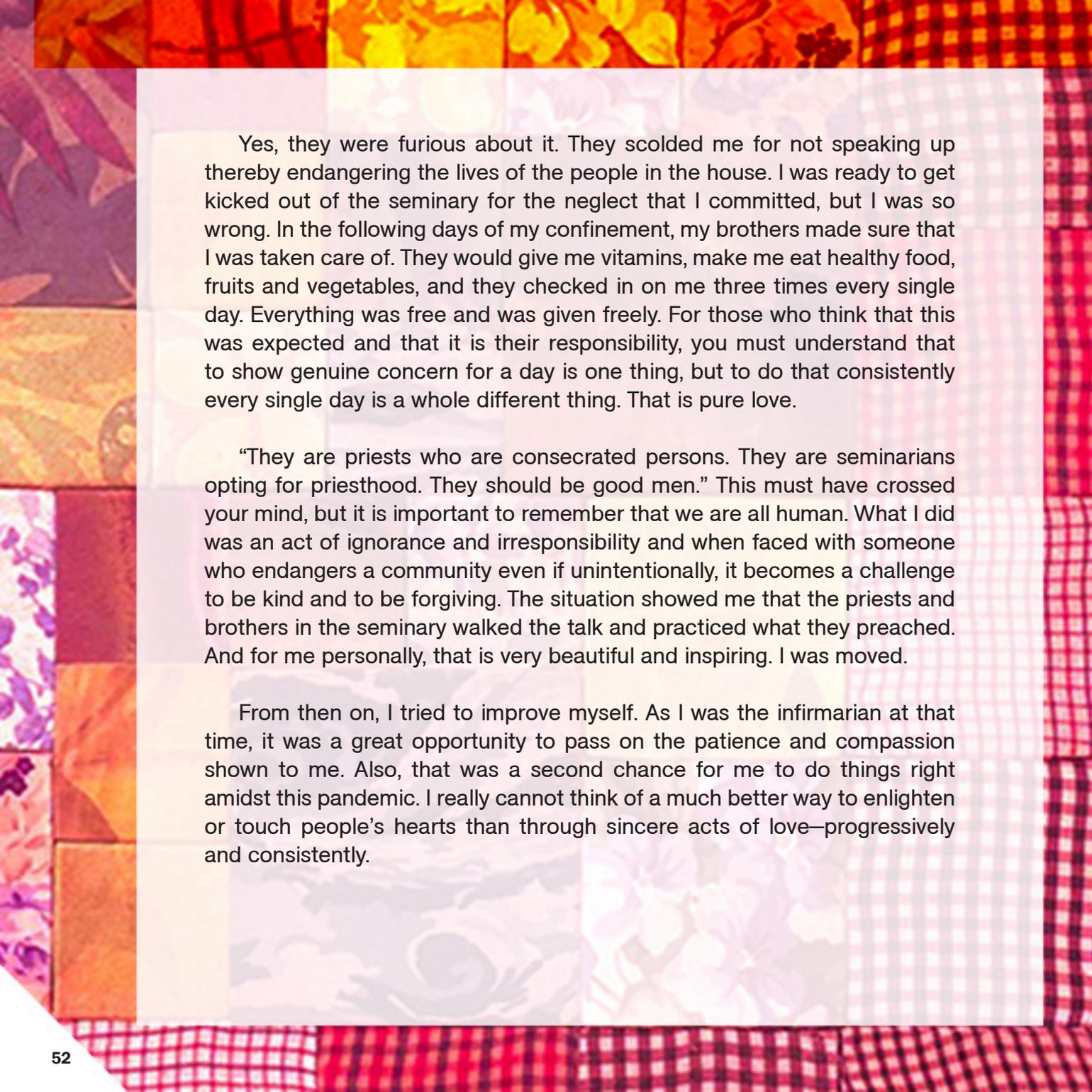
Patience for the Patient: A Story of Loving the Ignorant

By Kyrb Del Darrel Veronilla
Student, BA English Language

You know, it's funny how it takes a global crisis for us to realize something about ourselves and make us commit to a radical change in our lives.

I was still in the seminary formation in Marikina when the government imposed the first lockdown in Luzon. It was an abrupt change in people's daily lives, but personally, I did not feel the severity of the situation yet. I mean, my life revolved around the seminary walls where I was provided with everything that I needed such as food and shelter. The walls shielded me from the grave realities of the pandemic. Yes, I knew what was happening around the world by reading newspapers and searching the internet but being safe and secure in the seminary made me feel somehow removed from what was going on outside.

I could never forget the first time I had the symptoms. It was already nearly the end of September 2020 when I had high temperature. I recovered on the same day but I noticed that I had lost my sense of smell and taste. I thought that this was just a normal aftereffect of someone who had just recovered from fever, which was why I did not take it seriously. I told my brother seminarians about what I was feeling but they also assumed the same. It was only after a week when I decided to research about the symptoms of having the COVID-19 and alas! It was a common symptom! So, I rushed to tell my superiors and I was led to isolation right away.



Yes, they were furious about it. They scolded me for not speaking up thereby endangering the lives of the people in the house. I was ready to get kicked out of the seminary for the neglect that I committed, but I was so wrong. In the following days of my confinement, my brothers made sure that I was taken care of. They would give me vitamins, make me eat healthy food, fruits and vegetables, and they checked in on me three times every single day. Everything was free and was given freely. For those who think that this was expected and that it is their responsibility, you must understand that to show genuine concern for a day is one thing, but to do that consistently every single day is a whole different thing. That is pure love.

“They are priests who are consecrated persons. They are seminarians opting for priesthood. They should be good men.” This must have crossed your mind, but it is important to remember that we are all human. What I did was an act of ignorance and irresponsibility and when faced with someone who endangers a community even if unintentionally, it becomes a challenge to be kind and to be forgiving. The situation showed me that the priests and brothers in the seminary walked the talk and practiced what they preached. And for me personally, that is very beautiful and inspiring. I was moved.

From then on, I tried to improve myself. As I was the infirmarian at that time, it was a great opportunity to pass on the patience and compassion shown to me. Also, that was a second chance for me to do things right amidst this pandemic. I really cannot think of a much better way to enlighten or touch people’s hearts than through sincere acts of love—progressively and consistently.

How COVID-19 Affected my Adolescent and my Family

By Joan F. Akut, RN
Faculty, College of Nursing

Exposure

It started last July 17, 2021, when my father-in-law called us at 3:30 AM. He was in a state of fear and was almost in a panic; he said that my 90-year-old mother-in-law had been having low grade fever for 5 days already. But that day was the worst because her temperature hit more than 39°C that night, she was not eating nor drinking, and she slept crouched in bed the whole afternoon. We picked them up and brought them to Capitol University Medical Center (CUMC). It was hospital protocol to swab all patients for admission and their Rapid Test came out positive. Our exposure struck us like lightning. While my husband and his sister were thinking of the possibilities and concerns about their parents getting admitted such as having to look for a private duty nurse (PDN), the only thing I could think about were my children.

A Call for Quarantine

The first thing I did was call my eldest sister-in-law and arranged for the transfer of my children to their care for the next 2-3 weeks. I then called my children to explain the situation: their father and I had possible exposure to COVID-19 and we needed to quarantine at home for the next 2 weeks. I instructed them to pack their things and bring clothes and other necessities for 2 weeks since they will be living with their aunt for a while. My adolescent was quite compliant at first but later showed some resistance and had a lot

of questions and concerns.

My Adolescent

According to Piaget's Cognitive Development, the adolescent develops abstract reasoning from the ages of 11 to 15 years. With abstract thinking/reasoning, one embraces the capability to understand and think thoughts that, while real, are not tied to actual and tangible experiences, objects, people, or situations. This type of reasoning entails thinking about ideas and principles that are often symbolic or hypothetical and speculative. The adolescent thinks beyond the present and forms theories about everything, delighting especially in considerations of "that which is not." However, adolescents in this age group do not have futuristic thoughts. They do not connect real events "here and now" to long-term results (2 years from now) such as pregnancy, parenthood, or COVID-19. One of the fear factors in adolescents is death, which could be a death of a loved one or death itself. I believe my adolescent was experiencing this fear during our COVID crisis, and to overcome this, she must have adapted a defense or coping mechanisms to help her. According to Freud and Psychoanalytic theory, some of these mechanisms include: problem-solving, asserting control, acting out, denial, projection, rationalization, and intellectualization.

In the use of problem-solving mechanism, my adolescent must have used her ego defense mechanisms trying to exhibit a mature and adaptive behavior by following instructions and being compliant. But ego defense does not stop there; Freud believed that such method is an attempt to protect the self and cope with emotionally painful thoughts or events, such as the COVID-19 contamination in our home. In an effort to understand the situation and in consideration of the instability of her emotions and feelings, she implored acting-out by showing impulsive and unthinking behavior with no regard for rules or social conventions in the form of resistance to doing her requirements in school, not finishing her online exam midway, and failing

a long test in her favorite Math subject. This was a clear manifestation of her denial or refusal to accept the reality of the situation. Her defense mechanism is a reaction to protect her emotions that operates at the unconscious level and denies that she needs help to see the reality.

Having to experience COVID-19 in the family and all the other troubles and concerns that go along with it is a traumatic experience. According to Freud's theories, a person suppresses into the unconscious the memory of traumatic events such as this. As most defense mechanisms operate at the unconscious level of awareness, people are not aware of what they are doing and so it continues to manifest. My adolescent continues to project, rationalize, and intellectualize. She unconsciously blames an external object such as slow internet connection as a way of projecting. She then employs rationalization, which means to excuse her own behavior to avoid guilt, responsibility, conflict, anxiety, or loss of self-respect by blaming others such as her teacher for changing the schedule of exam earlier than expected. Moreover, she is trying to intellectualize everything using separation of emotions; she acknowledges the facts but she does not show any emotional expressions while discussing the situation.

Conclusion

Psychoanalysis focuses on determining and exposing the causes of one's unconscious and repressed thoughts, emotions, and battles believed to cause anxiety and on assessing and assisting the client to gain discernment and wisdom into and thereby resolve these conflicts and anxieties. In consonance to Kohlberg's Moral development, postconventional level of morality occurs at about age 13, marked by the development of one's individual conscience and her defined set of moral values. At this time, my 13-year-old adolescent had acknowledged a conflict between two socially accepted standards (right and wrong) and has tried to decide between them. Control of her conduct is now internal, both in standards observed, in reasoning about right or wrong

and learning to choose wisely in what works best in her situation rather than just trying to justify her action.

In affirmation of the Psychosocial Crisis faced by adolescents according to Erickson, which is identity vs. role diffusion. To my adolescent, development of who she is and where she is going becomes a central focus. She will continue to redefine her self-concept and her roles that she can play with certainty having a goal. As rapid physical changes occur, she must reintegrate previous trust in her body itself, and how she appears to others. Lastly, on the aspect of self-concept development, my adolescent's self-concept crystallizes in her later adolescence when she focuses on physical and emotional changes and peer acceptance.

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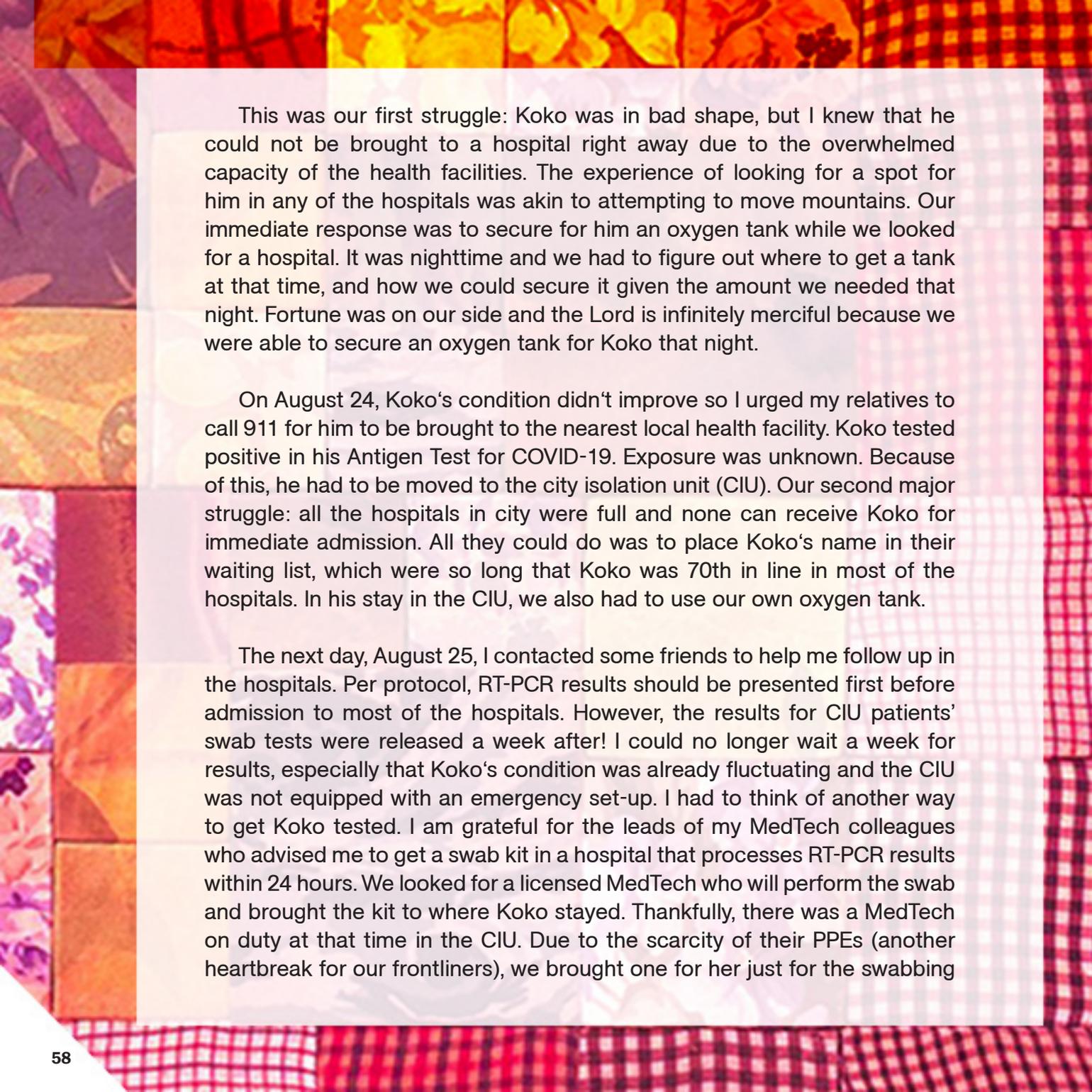
Caring for our Koko

By Xerczhiel Faye C. Rio, RN
Faculty, College of Nursing

CCOVID-19 is an infectious disease that has crippling effects on a global scale; for the majority, the hustle and bustle of daily life was put on hold. The collective negative impact of the pandemic has affected each one, even implicitly, by creating emotions of fear and uncertainty of what's yet to come.

I am a healthcare professional who has embraced the nature of my job since I entered the nursing program in my undergraduate years. We are to take care of patients from womb to tomb. We have witnessed individuals grieving their hearts out, bargaining all they could to save their ailing family members. Losing a loved one in this time of pandemic is a double misery. The surging COVID-19 cases and the overwhelmed health facilities have made the situation worse. Just recently, I experienced firsthand how helpless one can feel in the midst of this crisis.

My Lolo, whom we fondly call Koko, had progressing difficulty of breathing on the night of August 23. Since I was in Cagayan de Oro and my Lolo was residing at a nearby city in Misamis Oriental, I instructed my Tita to check his oxygen saturation through the pulse oximeter. It fell to around 75-80% only, which is already low. Being the only health professional in the family, I had to rush there to confirm the situation. Seeing Koko was tearing my heart but I had to make sure that I was following the basic health protocols.



This was our first struggle: Koko was in bad shape, but I knew that he could not be brought to a hospital right away due to the overwhelmed capacity of the health facilities. The experience of looking for a spot for him in any of the hospitals was akin to attempting to move mountains. Our immediate response was to secure for him an oxygen tank while we looked for a hospital. It was nighttime and we had to figure out where to get a tank at that time, and how we could secure it given the amount we needed that night. Fortune was on our side and the Lord is infinitely merciful because we were able to secure an oxygen tank for Koko that night.

On August 24, Koko's condition didn't improve so I urged my relatives to call 911 for him to be brought to the nearest local health facility. Koko tested positive in his Antigen Test for COVID-19. Exposure was unknown. Because of this, he had to be moved to the city isolation unit (CIU). Our second major struggle: all the hospitals in city were full and none can receive Koko for immediate admission. All they could do was to place Koko's name in their waiting list, which were so long that Koko was 70th in line in most of the hospitals. In his stay in the CIU, we also had to use our own oxygen tank.

The next day, August 25, I contacted some friends to help me follow up in the hospitals. Per protocol, RT-PCR results should be presented first before admission to most of the hospitals. However, the results for CIU patients' swab tests were released a week after! I could no longer wait a week for results, especially that Koko's condition was already fluctuating and the CIU was not equipped with an emergency set-up. I had to think of another way to get Koko tested. I am grateful for the leads of my MedTech colleagues who advised me to get a swab kit in a hospital that processes RT-PCR results within 24 hours. We looked for a licensed MedTech who will perform the swab and brought the kit to where Koko stayed. Thankfully, there was a MedTech on duty at that time in the CIU. Due to the scarcity of their PPEs (another heartbreak for our frontliners), we brought one for her just for the swabbing

of Koko. Then, we sent out the specimen back to the hospital molecular lab. While we were waiting for the results, we followed up the priority list again and to no avail; Koko was still far from being admitted. The next day, the results came in. I emailed the result to the CIU so that when Koko will be referred to the hospitals, his RT-PCR result will be acknowledged.

On August 28, our prayers were answered because I was contacted by one hospital—it was finally Koko's turn to be admitted. We had to wait for what felt like forever before receiving comprehensive medical care. Due to the unstable condition of Koko, he had to be placed in a high flow oxygen machine. This was another struggle the family had to face because the equipment's availability depended on the waiting list again and it has a very costly rental fee per day. My family could not find such amount in a short span of time but we continued to look at the bright side. The next day, we were blessed with another miracle: it was my Lolo's turn for high flow oxygen delivery.

As an experienced health care professional, I could tell that there were signs of impending doom but as a granddaughter, I remained hopeful all throughout. The entire family had a video call with Koko, which was all we could do in that moment. He became calm only then. The call ended at around 12AM.

On August 30, at around 5 AM, my uncle—who was with my Lolo the entire time and gave him so much effort, love, and care—called us because Koko was not responding anymore. We didn't know that the video call the previous night was the last time we would see Koko. The nurses tried to revive him but our Koko did not make it.

It was sorrow for the entire family. If Koko got the appropriate care immediately, maybe he would have been given another shot in life. It was



painful enough to have lost Koko, but because a pandemic was raging, we were not given the chance to see the body anymore. The only options given when someone dies are immediate burial or cremation. We opted for the latter so that our family will be given the time to grieve.

“All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return” (Ecclesiastes 3:20). Koko died that morning and was returned to us in an urn in the afternoon.

There is a clear message to this: we are fighting a battle against an unseen enemy. My family lost one of our pillars. This reminds us that anyone can be hit. Others may only get mild symptoms, but extra protective measures must be imposed for the vulnerable groups in our population. Mutual respect must be shown by following the basic health protocols. My family even had vaccine hesitancy before the incident, but now they have all admitted themselves to getting their doses.

A comforting prospect amidst the unfortunate circumstance is that we were able to strengthen our ties. In between the moments we struggled, we placed a premium on caring among family members. We worked as a team in an effort to save our Koko. If only heaven had visiting hours, we would surely take the time to be with our departed loved ones. The experience is a reminder that life is fleeting and it should be lived to the fullest around the people you love.

Teamwork is Care-work

By Alexa Mae Angel Garces
Dawrin, CU SHS

Care is quite rare nowadays especially in this world we live in right now. With just a blink of an eye, everything was turned upside down because of COVID-19. Everyone was busy saving themselves that we forgot about caring for others. I am not mad nor am I pointing a finger. That's how we usually are as people, we choose who we want to help and save. We choose what path we want to walk upon.

When helping someone, you must not expect to be given anything in return. We must help with all our hearts and let our intentions be pure. I chose to help not because of the recognition but because I wanted to help others succeed and get through their struggles.

I remember in 2020-2021, everyone was having a hard time surviving the school year. Not all of us had a stable internet connection, gadgets to use for online class, and money to continue studying because some of my classmates' parents had lost their jobs. Several of my classmates dropped out because they thought of resuming when the pandemic would end, believing that it would end soon.

This is why I chose to help my classmates, because I know I was capable and I had something to share. We had this subject that required us to use a computer or a laptop because it was a graphic design project. Not all of my classmates have laptops and they cannot go to computer shops because



of COVID-19. I decided to help by letting my classmates come into our home one by one. I created a schedule for them so I can help them all. My classmates and I wore facemasks and face shields while we did the tasks.

Another instance was when we were given a video project to portray one character from the book *El Filibusterismo* by our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. Several of my classmates did not know what to do so we teamed up and helped each other by taking turns filming here in our subdivision. I divided them in very small teams which could not be considered a gathering, to ensure that we were safe and that we followed the guidelines.

This is my story of care during this pandemic. I hope that we would all help each other especially in times like this, because it is very hard to be alone and helpless. Help people when you know you can.

Care Begins with the Self

By Gwyneth D. Hojilla
Aristotle, CU SHS

Familia. Foundation of love and care. Home. These are words I think of when I hear the word “family.” Family is a source of deep affection. It is one of the most important fundamentals in shaping our roles and beliefs.

Allow me to share my story on how I extended my care and love to my family and to other people, and how we were able to overcome the problems that we faced during the pandemic.

When the pandemic brought about by COVID-19 started, I really thought that it was only going to last for a few months. But on March 13, 2020, there was a lockdown in our country and the schools and establishments were all closed down. I was so shocked and devastated that I would not be able to see my classmates and friends for a month. But this month turned into a year, and then 2 years.

I feel I have grown mentally during this pandemic, even if it ruined my sleeping schedule and mental health. When the lockdown started, I was losing myself—I was unproductive because there was no school for 6 months and I was in a mental slump. I am beyond thankful to everyone who tried to talk to me during that time because they helped me feel better. I started taking care of my body and my sleeping schedule and I generally felt better. I do think that I changed in that period. I went from being the funny girl to being more introverted.

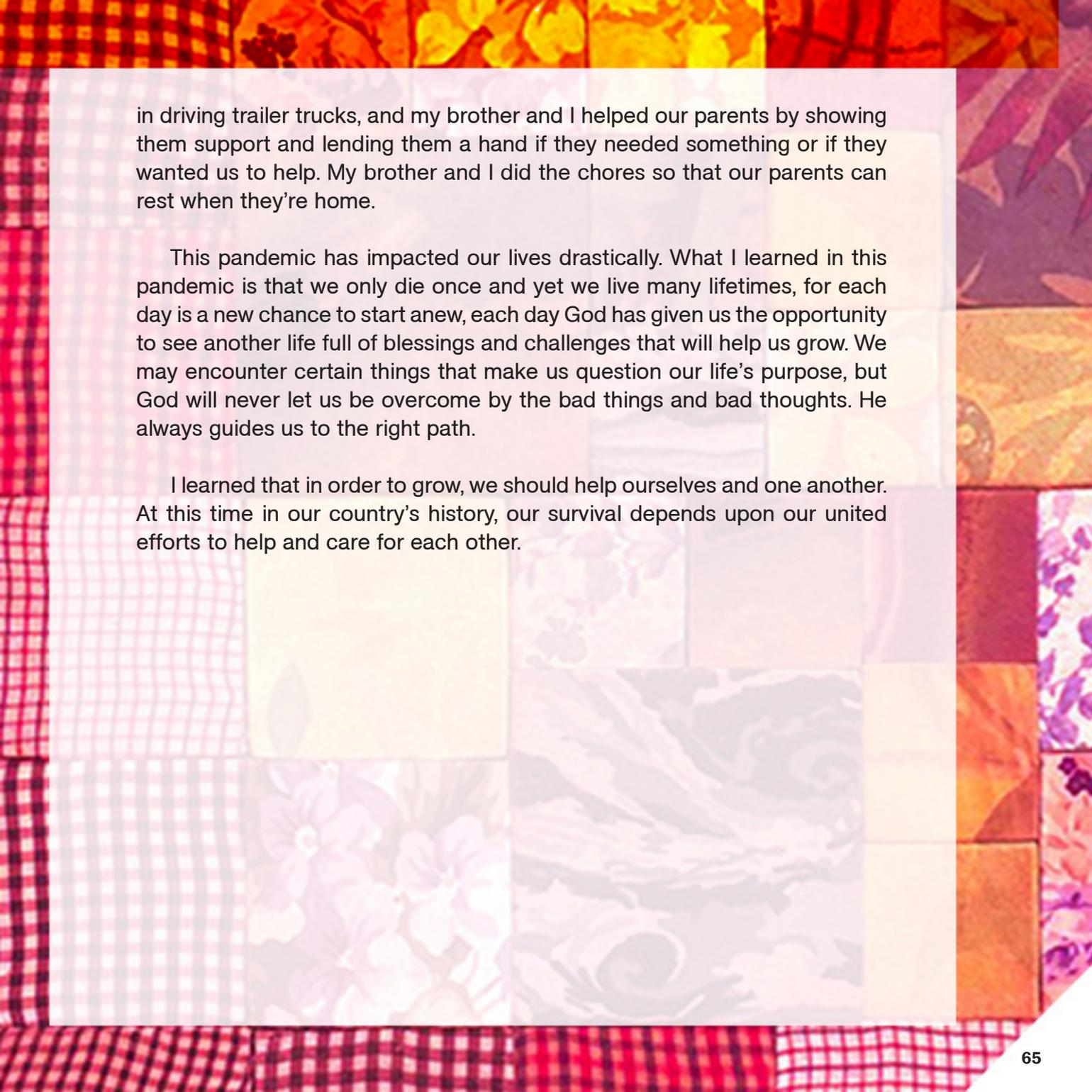


My family never left me even during the hardest times. They're always there for me, and I give my best to be there for them too. I believe that I could not give love and care to my family if I did not give these to myself so it requires a balance.

I extend my love and care to my family in many ways, such as taking the time to bond with them. I can be talkative especially with my family and I always tell them what's going on in my mind, what my plans are, and what makes me happy. I love expressing myself to my family because they reciprocate and share advice on what path I should take. I make my family feel loved and appreciated by doing chores around the house and by being respectful and obedient to my parents.

I show my love and care to my friends by checking on them if they are alright or if they need someone to talk to. I'll always be there for them because I know how it feels to be left alone. I also share to my friends some funny tiktok videos to make them laugh because it also makes me happy. I even made my best friend a playlist, just for her, so that when she's sad she can always listen to that playlist.

I do believe that we can't gain happiness without sadness that is why when something bad happens, I know that it is just an obstacle to make us stronger and to prepare us for the better things to come. My family experienced financial instability during the pandemic and I think it is one of the most difficult problems that we have had to face. But with the grace and goodness of the Lord, our faith and perseverance, we have overcome that obstacle. My mother is madiskarte or resourceful, and I saw firsthand how hard she worked to keep us afloat. To make ends meet, she did sewing projects, manicure and pedicure, baking cakes and cupcakes, cooking empanadas, puto, and other Filipino dishes. My father also doubled his time



in driving trailer trucks, and my brother and I helped our parents by showing them support and lending them a hand if they needed something or if they wanted us to help. My brother and I did the chores so that our parents can rest when they're home.

This pandemic has impacted our lives drastically. What I learned in this pandemic is that we only die once and yet we live many lifetimes, for each day is a new chance to start anew, each day God has given us the opportunity to see another life full of blessings and challenges that will help us grow. We may encounter certain things that make us question our life's purpose, but God will never let us be overcome by the bad things and bad thoughts. He always guides us to the right path.

I learned that in order to grow, we should help ourselves and one another. At this time in our country's history, our survival depends upon our united efforts to help and care for each other.

Lessons in the Pandemic

By Amber Ninna S. Caburatan
Dalton, SHS

Before anything else, I would like to say that I am very proud of everyone who has survived and are still fighting through this pandemic we are facing.

Along with the pain and hardships of the pandemic came some personal realizations.

First, at the end of the day, all we have to do is pray. When the pandemic started, my dad went off to work somewhere far away from us because he is a seaman. I could not have foreseen how chaotic and difficult that time was for our family. Separated by hundreds of miles, my father worried about us and we were worried for his health and safety. I experienced sleepless nights thinking about life questions that I did not have the answers to: Would I still be able to be a registered nurse? Is this the end of the world? Why is this happening now?

I started reading the Bible, which taught me to have faith and surrender my worries to God. It made a big difference on how I viewed the world. I find it ironic how I used to get irritated whenever I heard the quote, "It's never too late," because frankly, sometimes it is too late for some things. But this does not hold true with faith because it is never too late to seek God. Whatever one is facing now, it is just a test or a challenge of your faith. Never give up because the harder life is, the closer you are to the future you deserve that God has planned for you.



My second realization is how much I love my family. When it comes to my family, I feel so vulnerable and sensitive mainly because my dad has been going away for work ever since I was very little. So little that I could barely remember how old I was. I am ashamed to share that I once felt ungrateful, but that experience taught me how to love my family deeply.

My mom truly is the strongest woman I know. She served as a father-figure and a mother at the same time, to me and my brother. She guided us to be the individuals that we are now. Raising a child alone is a great challenge so imagining the problems she faced when dad was away and the struggles she hid from us made me realize how strong she is and how lucky I am to call her my mother. I saw this more clearly during this pandemic because I saw firsthand how she dealt with things. I applaud all the mothers out there for giving their best as a parent especially during these difficult times.

My final realization is that it is important that we show our love and care to people around us because you do not know who is struggling in secret. I struggled emotionally in this pandemic to the point that I felt as though I was nothing but a selfish daughter that no parent would ever want. The pandemic showed a side of me that I never knew existed, but I believe that God gave Skai, my dog, to me as my anchor. The story of how Skai came into my life is another story for another time, but it was unexpected. It was my definition of “perfect timing.” Dealing with emotional pain is harder than dealing with physical pain especially when you are too lonely to share it with someone, or maybe too proud, or too scared. Physical pain is more bearable compared to emotional pain that seems to endure much longer. I can’t explain how it started but there was a moment when everything in my life felt as dark as you can imagine, as though a Dementor from Harry Potter ate the life out of me.



I learned how hard it is when you think that you are alone, and to believe that you are not. Do not forget that with hard work and prayers, nothing is impossible. Another quote I used to despise, “Nothing is impossible.” But again, I have found that with God anything is possible. I dealt with failure and darkness and yet now I thank God for it because without those experiences, I wouldn’t look at life the way I do now. To anyone who is dealing with emotional pain or any kind of pain, remember to go back to God.

I learned how to be thankful to the people who gave and showed me love, respect, protection, and care. They made me realize that it’s okay to receive love because you deserve it, it’s okay to receive respect because you earned it, it’s okay to receive protection because you need it, and it’s okay to receive care because you gave it first. I lost myself in 2020, and now I feel new and better than ever. I might have little scars from the past but those are reminders that I am a survivor and that makes me beautiful—all of us are.

The Old Woman

By Dale Christian Catipay
Ellison, CU SHS

There was an old woman who was waiting for her ride, when suddenly it started to rain. The old woman struggled to move towards the shade because of she was carrying many things. At first, I thought to leave her be but my conscience told me to help the old woman because no one else was coming to her aid. I decided to approach the old woman and help her, because I care about other people other than myself. The old woman thanked me for my simple effort. I felt so happy with her kind words for me; it was overwhelming to hear such things.

I want to share with all of you some details about myself. I am caring towards other people, more than I care about myself sometimes. This is because helping others makes me happy. I care about nature, the environment, and the cleanliness of our surroundings. An important project that I was able to accomplish was in Grade 6 and I helped plant trees. The experience was memorable and fun, and we were able to plant a variety of trees. I did not realize at that time that I was helping Mother Earth grow and recover.

By showing even a little more care for other people and for nature, you can really make a big difference in the world. There is no such thing as too small an effort when given by a big and open heart.

Care in the Family

By Cyla Marie Gabe
CU SHS

On May 2020, the global crisis caused by COVID-19 affected millions of people. Everyone lived in uncertainty and fear, not knowing what to do nor what will happen next. Even amidst all the hardships this pandemic has brought, I can say that I gave my best to remain strong, brave and optimistic.

The first week of July 2020 was a devastating and difficult week for my family. We did not expect that the virus would spread to our Municipality and the entire community was shocked and scared. Through contact tracing, my father was identified as a Patient Under Investigation (PUI) since he attended the meeting where the person who tested for COVID-19 was present. When the Rural health Unit (RHU) of our municipality called to tell my family that we should all be in quarantine for 14 days, my sister had an emotional breakdown. My father went to the center to have a rapid test, which came out positive so he was isolated with 14 other people. In the meantime, my mother, my sister, and I were just at home praying for good health and a negative RT-PCR result for my father. My sister had been diagnosed with general anxiety disorder (GAD) and my mother was emotionally struggling at that time because of the unexpected circumstances. I needed to be strong physically, emotionally and mentally for my family. Even if it was difficult, I needed to remain optimistic for my mother and my sister. As the youngest member of the family, I had to be brave and stand up for my family. I did not want to see them drown in their sadness or be overwhelmed with anxiety, so I gave my best effort to make my sister and mother laugh and keep their



spirits up. I kept them hopeful and grateful by reminding them of the good things that God has given us. I also sent inspirational and motivational verses and messages.

The RT-PCR or swab test result of my father came out negative. I was so grateful to God because He used me to strengthen my family, especially my mom and my sister, in a time of crisis. I was also grateful because my sister did not get an anxiety attack.

Being strong, being the counselor, and being a clown for my family was my effort to show my care and love for them. We all can be givers of care in this time of pandemic in our own small ways. These small things that we do can make a huge difference in the life of the person we care for.

Finding Answers

By Maxinne Claire Ipan
Dalton

When the pandemic started, I was so lost that I did things I know I shouldn't have. I lost self-control and I let myself wallow in my sadness. Going through this experience damaged me and yet it has also changed me for the better.

In the height of the pandemic, I had a fight with my Mom for reasons that I shall keep to myself. The fight between my Mom and I led me to stay in my room for at least three months. You must be wondering what I was doing in my room in those three months. Did I eat or take baths? Well, I spent those three months attempting to end my life. I made plenty of attempts, but each of those attempts did not work. I could not figure out what was stopping me when I felt so empty during that time; I felt like no one cared for me. I barely ate and only took baths when I felt like it.

On one of those days when I was planning another attempt, I was crying so much hoping that someone might save me from the black hole of darkness. This darkness was so overwhelming that it made me feel like I belonged inside of it, that I should end my life then and there. At the back of my mind, I was hoping that someone out there would save me. Maybe in every attempt that I had made, I was hoping for someone who could keep me.

What was shocking to me was that a "friend" I found annoying kept messaging me at that time. She was ranting about everything that she was going through, and she said she felt empty, just like me. What I did was comfort her. I called her and made her realize her worth. I told her things that



I wish someone would say that to me. I needed her to stay alive because I sincerely know that she has dreams and goals for her future life. That day, I saved her life even though I also needed to be saved. She cried her heart out and thanked me for always being there for her.

I felt relieved that my friend was now slowly healing. However, I wondered how I could make someone feel okay but I couldn't do that for myself. I should apply everything I told her to myself and start improving. I began to think: Do I really need someone to save me? Is it possible that I could save myself? Am I worth saving? I started to reflect on these questions. While reflecting, I was also distracting myself by looking for a hobby. Since then, I started reading books that my sisters owned from their younger years. The books made me realize a lot of things and also made me reflect even more.

Finally, the time came when I could answer the questions with conviction. Do I need someone to save me? The answer, I realized, is no. No one else is responsible for me being stuck in the dark and feeling depressed. No one is responsible for saving me, so I should save myself. I am the only one who could save me. Am I worth saving? Yes, I am worth saving. I still have goals in life and I still want to see this world's beauty.

We have all been through difficult times. Although we might have escaped that storm, there is a big chance that a storm would chase us again. When it does, I always remind myself that running away from such a storm will not help. We must face it and find the spark that will put you back on track.

Family Matters

By Chrysler John P. Utlang
Aristotle, CU SHS

December 2019 was filled with much hope: many in the world celebrated the birth of Jesus and prayed for a blissful new year ahead. Little did any of us know, an incident had already occurred in one part of the globe which would have catastrophic consequences that would change all of our lives.

In the first half of 2020, there were numerous reports about a disease that threatened a person's respiratory system. Since there were only speculations and claims at that time, people around the world did not give it much attention. However, the disease started spreading at an alarming rate and before long, everyone knew about the COVID-19 virus.

In March 2020, classes were suspended due to the rising cases of COVID-19 in the city. I woke up every day thinking about the possible negative effects that the global pandemic has brought. I was still somehow happy at that time because I got to spend more time with my family. As a student who is focused with his studies, there is not much time for anything else aside from academics. I realized then that I missed being able to act like a son and a family member. I knew this was an unexpected blessing, to be given a chance to bond with my family without having to worry about school. I resolved to remain positive despite the ordeals of COVID-19. I calmed myself by doing household chores and offered a helping hand to everyone in the house. Sometimes, I would be so preoccupied that I would forget about the raging pandemic outside our home.



One day, the company that my father worked for decided to halt the work schedule to ensure people's safety. This saddened my father because he knew that we needed the financial connections in order for us to survive this crisis. Luckily, we managed to get through with our sari-sari store business managed by my mother. My older sister who is a teacher was also stuck at home because the school where she was working suspended their classes. After so long, we were able to taste my sister's stunning and delicious dishes once more. My little brother busied himself while in lockdown by engaging in physical activities. He was also my father's assistant when there was something that needed to be done in the house. Because we were all at home without the usual distractions from our external lives, my family became closer. We chose to stay positive despite the challenges of the pandemic and our bond as a family grew when all of us hoped and wished for the best. We always prayed to God to look after us and help us overcome these trying times in our lives.

Our family is a circle of strength and love. With every union and every birth, the circle grows. Each crisis faced together makes the circle stronger. We must not forget that an individual's burdens become lighter when the load is shared. Your family can be a source of great support and motivation for your spirit to keep going and keep moving forward. May all of us continue to persevere and overcome this ordeal together.

Give and Receive

By Anikin Luke G. Abales
G11 Backus, CU SHS

Going through this pandemic has been a struggle for each one of us. Even in difficult times however, there are still kind and warm-hearted people who are willing to help so that others will have a fighting chance to survive. In this pandemic, one of the main problems we have had to go through is finding enough financial resource for our daily sustenance. In this regard, I was both a receiver and a giver. From my family, I received all the care and support so I could continue studying. I do not take this lightly because I saw how hard they worked and all their struggles in order to sustain our needs in school. My family found ways to earn more so they could provide for our needs.

I was also a giver because I found a way to earn extra income. My family did not expect it from me but on my own initiative, I was able to provide a bit of help. This small effort went a long way especially in times when we had almost nothing.

What this experience has taught me is that the root of generosity is love. My family worked so hard to provide for me because they love me. In turn, they inspired me to show my care in return even if they did not ask for it. There was no need to ask because love is freely given.

Remaining Time

By Shanerose E. Baguio
11 - Dalton

When this pandemic started, my Tita who is a nurse in the provincial hospital, was assigned to work in the COVID-19 ward. She had to work there for a whole week so she needed to be isolated after her duty. This meant that for the first time, my mother had to stay in my grandparents' house to take care of them without my Tita there.

My mother asked me to stay and assist her when my Tita left for her duty. My mother has been taking care of my grandparents ever since I was in 7th grade and honestly, taking care of my grandparents, especially my grandmother, is very difficult. My grandmother is not an easy patient to take care of because she would curse at us and say awful things, like wishing we would die. She would even attack us physically, throwing plates and her stools at us. Aside from fending for myself, I was worried for my mother because she just had an operation the year before for Myoma and was advised to avoid stressful situations. Every time my mom has to take care of my grandmother, she is always stressed out.

A few weeks after, my mom started complaining about aches in her feet, her legs, her back and other muscles. I thought that it was just because of an earlier incident when she slipped in Ororama, but the pain she felt did not subside even after several weeks. She started having fever, she started puking, and she was severely constipated. When my mother's symptoms started to show, my Tita was already there in the house and she was the one who took care of my mother. They didn't bring my mom to the hospital

because they wanted to avoid exposure to COVID-19. My Tita took care of my mother in the house, making sure she had her IV and medicine.

After a few weeks, my mother started feeling better but then relapsed after a week. We were worried but my mom insisted she did not want to go to the hospital so we had to take care of her again inside the house. My father wanted my mom to go to the hospital, but because she begged against it, my father respected her wishes. After a week, she was feeling okay again.

By the next month, the symptoms showed up again. We insisted that our mom go to the hospital already because we knew something was not right. My mom conceded, and she went to the hospital with my tita. They said they could not find anything wrong in mom's body or in any of mom's organs, but the doctors advised to have her admitted for more careful examination. They still did not find anything and my mom was feeling better, so we went home. By the next month, the symptoms were back and even worse than before.

We noticed something in my mom's stomach, which was starting to grow bigger. We were so worried, we didn't know what to do. We were having financial problems at the time yet we knew we had to bring our mother to the hospital for the third time. When my mom was admitted, it was then that we found out that she had Colon cancer. Before this, I remember someone saying that it was black magic that made my mom ill, but we didn't believe this because our mother is a lovely and nice person who would not harm anyone.

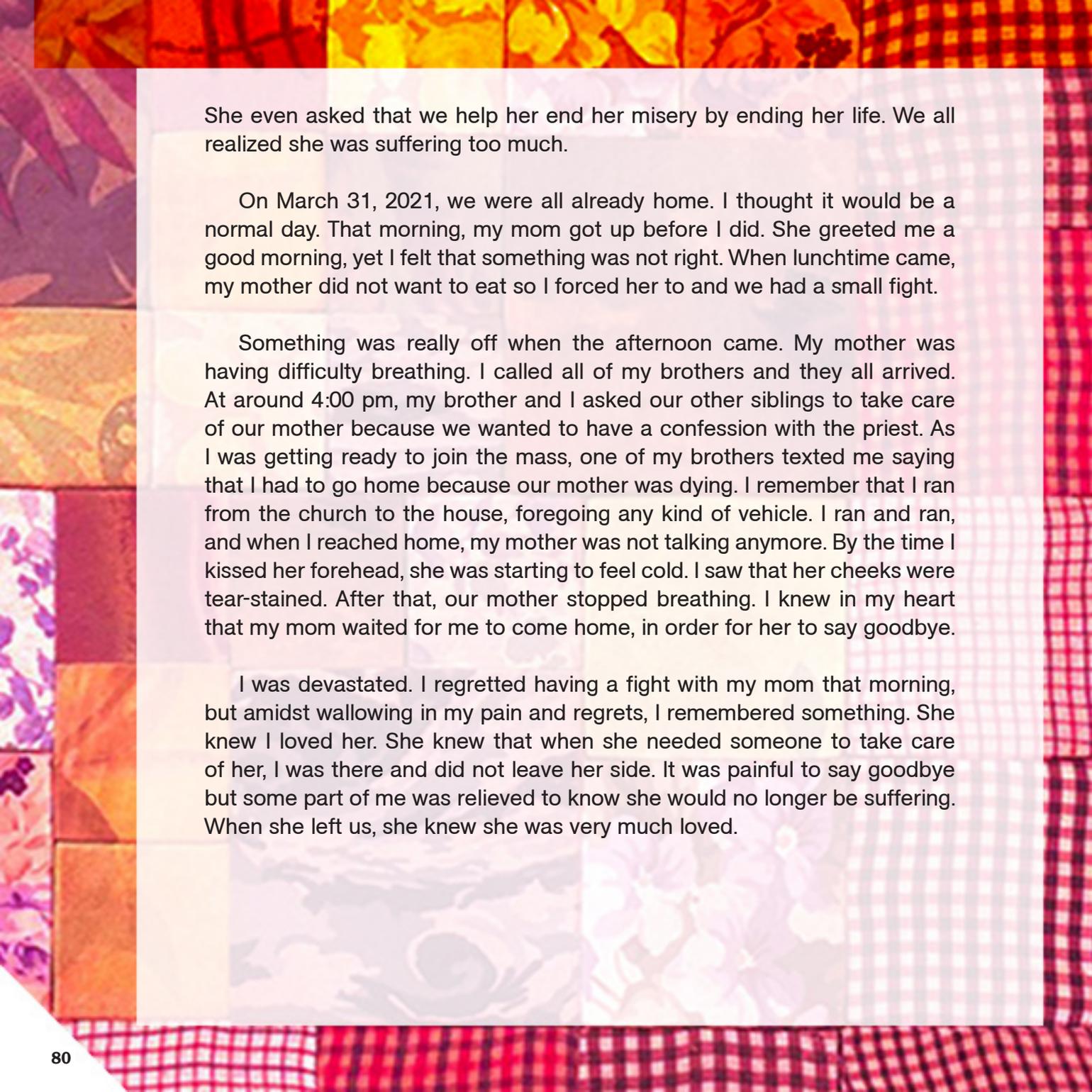
Each time my mom was admitted, I was the one taking care of her 24/7. I'm not complaining, in fact I was happy that I was able to take care of my mother. My mom often wished that she would not be sick, the kind of sickness that would lead to death. I used to overhear her prayers. She would say, "Lord, please don't take me yet because I still have children to take care

of. I don't want to leave my kids." I would be listening behind her, crying, feeling pain, having regrets of not taking care of her well.

On the day of my mother's operation, my tita and I were the only ones waiting outside the operating room. Since my tita was a nurse, the doctor called her to go inside and by the time she left the room, she was crying so loudly. It was as if she already knew, she knew it was impossible. Yet she insisted that we pray and we prayed endlessly at that time. My mother came out alive from the operating room even if she had to be admitted in the hospital for her recovery. We believed our problems were over.

After the operation, my mom had to use a colostomy bag, which needed to be cleaned every minute and every hour. However, one day, my mother's full colostomy bag spilled on her. Because stools are acidic, my mother's skin got irritated and started to burn. The burn would not heal, no matter what we did. We were all finding ways for the burnt skin to stop spreading. All the while, my mom was suffering and I realize now how selfish we were. She suffered for three months because of that burnt skin. During that time, she also lost a lot of weight, she couldn't walk anymore, she could no longer talk properly, and she couldn't remember any of us anymore. My mother kept pleading to us that she wanted to rest, a lifetime rest. Yet we insisted that she fight, we were so selfish. My mother knew that even if she was able to survive her illness, she would go back to her daily life where she could not take care of her kids.

When March came, my dad arrived home from abroad. He took care of my mother round the clock. For the whole month, my father took care of my mother. One time, when my tita could no longer find my mother's veins for IV insertion, we knew she had to go to the hospital for the fourth time. That's when the chaos started, when we were at the hospital. There was no second there that my mother was not begging for us to let her rest and let her go.



She even asked that we help her end her misery by ending her life. We all realized she was suffering too much.

On March 31, 2021, we were all already home. I thought it would be a normal day. That morning, my mom got up before I did. She greeted me a good morning, yet I felt that something was not right. When lunchtime came, my mother did not want to eat so I forced her to and we had a small fight.

Something was really off when the afternoon came. My mother was having difficulty breathing. I called all of my brothers and they all arrived. At around 4:00 pm, my brother and I asked our other siblings to take care of our mother because we wanted to have a confession with the priest. As I was getting ready to join the mass, one of my brothers texted me saying that I had to go home because our mother was dying. I remember that I ran from the church to the house, foregoing any kind of vehicle. I ran and ran, and when I reached home, my mother was not talking anymore. By the time I kissed her forehead, she was starting to feel cold. I saw that her cheeks were tear-stained. After that, our mother stopped breathing. I knew in my heart that my mom waited for me to come home, in order for her to say goodbye.

I was devastated. I regretted having a fight with my mom that morning, but amidst wallowing in my pain and regrets, I remembered something. She knew I loved her. She knew that when she needed someone to take care of her, I was there and did not leave her side. It was painful to say goodbye but some part of me was relieved to know she would no longer be suffering. When she left us, she knew she was very much loved.

In God's Time

By Lourhey Grace M. Banico
11 Bloomberg, CU SHS

This pandemic brought many of us lessons and realizations, even though some of these lessons were brought forth from hardships. Every day we get up and continue to strive for our loved ones, clinging to the hope that one day things will get better.

One of the important lessons I have learned during this pandemic is the value of family time. When this pandemic came, I felt bad for all the people who were infected and affected, but I was also happy because my family and I became quite close. Before the pandemic, the whole family would be too busy to spend time but now we had the time to bond with each other inside our small home. There were 12 of us in the house, which meant there was not much quiet time. My siblings and I were assigned to take care of our grandparents. By spending time with family, I realized that I must treasure my loved ones and give my best effort to take care of them for as long as I can.

During the quarantine, we couldn't go out easily to buy supplies and a lot of supermarkets were closed. It was a very hard time. After a month, community leaders organized to give a month's supply to all the home owners. We were very thankful that the government helped us to get through this hardship. Each week, the community leaders never let us down. They always showed their concern for our health and guided us to manage in this new normal. We really felt that they cared for us.

Even now, we continue to struggle each day to earn for our family's



needs. This pandemic is still not over but we are thankful we are able to survive. Looking around me now, the new normal is vastly different from what we grew up with. It takes a lot of adjustments—physically, mentally and emotionally. We shall continue to follow health protocols to successfully lessen the COVID cases. We shall keep on living with hope and faith. Maybe next year, we will no longer be wearing face masks. In God's time.

Pag-pangga

By Eugene Francis Baylin
Achilles, CU SHS

It was in May 2021 when my family got sick. My lola was first, she developed a hard cough and fever. After two days, mas naglala ang ubo ug hilanat sa akong lola and nagdecide ang akoang father na ipa-check up na niya si lola ug nag adto sila sa CUMC hospital. I felt very worried kay 61 years old na ang akong lola andang iyahang syptoms kay symptoms sa naay COVID-19. At the hospital, the doctor suggested to check lola's urine, sugar, and X-ray. Ang resultsa sa X-ray kay naay white spot sa iyahang lungs, so nagdecide ang doctor nga ipa-swab si lola. Tungod sa situation, nabalaka akong papa kay what if mag positive si lola? I-admit siya sa provincial hospital na grabe na ka-crowded sa COVID-positive patients? Unsaon na lang kung masagol akoa lola didto? Possible nga mag worsen pa iyahang sakit ug wala mi nga pwede mo alaga sa iyaha.

Papa decided na dili na niya ipa-swab si lola ug nanguli sila sa balay para sa balay nalang mag-paayo. Pero dili mao amoa gi-expect nga ma-OK pa ako lola, kay mas nag worsen iyahang gibati. Naglisod na siya ug ginhawa ug dili siya makatulog. We all worried about my lola everyday. Because of her condition, nag palit akong papa ug set of oxygen para lang maka-alalay sa pag ginhawa ni lola. While naa sa ingon-ana nga situation akoa lola, nag suggest akong papa na dili lang sa ko mo du-ol du-ol nila kay basin lage ug COVID, para pud sa akoang safety daw nga mo likay sa daw ko. Grabe akong na feel nga kaguol kay lage wala koy mahimo or matabang para lang man ma lessen ang gibati sa akong lola. Grabe nga tambal, tuob—halos tanan gibuhath ni papa para maulian lang gyud si lola.

Para sa akong safety ug safety sa akong mama, igo gyud mi taman atiman sa ila pagkaon. Ug wala namo na huna-hunaan, what if magsakit pud akong papa kay na expose siya sa pag-atiman kay lola? And yes, nagsakit gyod si papa. Grabe doble kaguol na amo nabati ni mama para kay papa ug lola. That day, nagdecide ko nga dili COVID ang ila sakit. Ug mao na akong gipa-internalize sa akong utok, nga normal nga fever ug ubo lang ila gibati. Sabay mi nag kaon, mo abay ko sa ako papa maski dili kaayo maayo iya paminaw, makig-movie marathon ko niya, tabang ko atiman sa iyaha pang-tuob, hatag sa tambal para monitor nya iyang pag inom ako mismo sige pa remind kay lage gusto ko nga maulian siya ug dali.

Mapa salamaton mi sa Ginoo kay sa hinay-hinay, na ok-ok akong lola ug ang akong papa. Medyo aktibo na pud sa adlaw-adlaw na lihokon. Didto nako na-realize kung unsa ka importante ang kinabuhi. Ug unsa ka importante sa akoa ang akong pamilya. Tungod aning pandemic mas doble, triple pa ang akong pag amping sa among panglawas. Kay dili sayon naay magsakit sa pamilya. Dapat mo sunod ta sa mando sa gobyerno kay para ra man pud na sa atong kaayuhan. Likay sa pag gawas-gawas kung dili importante ug dapat apply na gyud ang healthy lifestyle. Eat vegetables, fish and dili pawala sa vitamins. Ug tungod pud aning pandemic mas na appreciate nako ang sacrifices sa akong parents. Tanan badlong nila kay para ra gyud sa akong kaayuhan, even karon gusto ko mo adtog mall pero ginabawalan pa gyud ko nila kay lage aron malikay ko sa sakit. Mapasalamaton ko sa akong ginikanan kay always nila gipabati sa akoa ang ilang pag-pangga.

Kaayo sa Tao

By Nancy Rose B. Branzuela
Bloomberg, CU SHS

Adtong May 26, 2021, nagpa-vaccine akong lolo para sa COVID-19. After ana, nakabati siya ug mga side effects pero nawala-wala ra dayun pagkahuman niyag inom sa tambal. Pero mga duha ka adlaw gikan sa iyang pag-vaccine, gihilantan siya'g kalit, dili na sad siya kaginhawa ug kapanlasa. Abi namo'g normal ra so mao tong nagkuha mig dextrose sa health center pero ang una kailangan pa siya i-swab. Pagka gabii ana na adlaw, niggawas iyang result unya ang nakabutang kay positive. Naa na man diay virus nisulod saiya. Gitawagan namo ang emergency kay para ma-confine siya sa hospital unya ana ang doctor layo padaw siya kay gi pila sila by number. Ang other choice is mag isolate siya sa hotel.

Gikuha na akong lolo ug ambulance tapos didto siya nag isolate. Kami ra dayun sa akong tita ug igagaw nabilin sa balay tapos abi namo'g among silingan kay i-discriminate bitaw mi kay nagka covid lagi, pero diay gitabangan mi nila. Gitagaan mi nila'g pagkaon ug sudan, wala nasad nila gipabayran. Apil sad amoang igagaw ug niuli sad akong tito sa Cagayan na gikan sa Valencia para lang tagaan mi'g pagkaon, iya jud ming gi kumprahan. Thankful kayao mi ato nga time kay dako kaayo ilahang natabang sa amoa. Puhon kami nasad mu-return sa ilang ihatag sa amoa. Nalipay mi kay naa pajud diay ang mga inana klase nga tao kay ang uban selfish naman. Mga pila ka adlaw kay naulian nadayun akong lolo. Thankful pud mi sa Ginoo kay giayo niya ang sakit.

A Message with Care

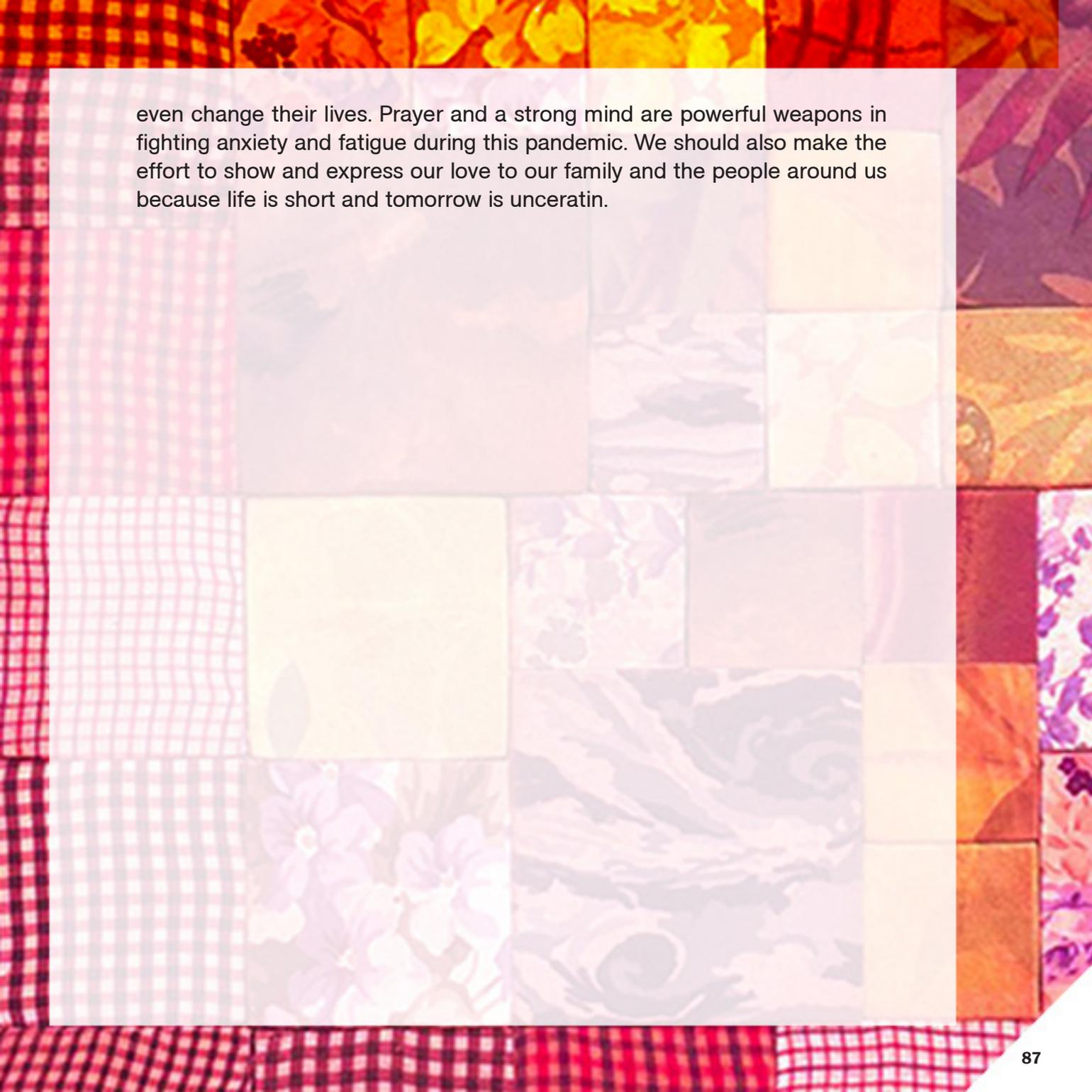
By Kiara Kym R. Caballes
Dalton, CU SHS

Last month, my uncle tested positive for COVID-19. He was admitted to the hospital alone because no watchers are allowed inside the COVID ward. My uncle, who has a heart problem and suffers from anxiety, has a tendency to overthink. He also has had a history of suicidal tendencies and being admitted in the hospital alone was difficult for him. He shared later on that he witnessed other patients beside him die so he had every reason to be afraid.

My mom called me and told me to send messages to my uncle to cheer him up and to remind him that we are waiting for him so he should not give up on his life. I messaged him and showed that I cared; I told him that we missed him and that he should stay strong. He should remember that God is always with him and watching over him; that God is stronger than any problem. My message was long and heartfelt, and I sent a prayer along with it.

My family and I were all praying for my uncle and rooting for him to recover. A few days after I sent him my message, he recovered. I believe my uncle was healed by God because he showed faith in himself, in God, and in the love of the people who were waiting for him.

I learned from this experience that even with a simple message, you can change a person's perspective and help them become more positive. You will not know how much one simple act can matter to someone; it can



even change their lives. Prayer and a strong mind are powerful weapons in fighting anxiety and fatigue during this pandemic. We should also make the effort to show and express our love to our family and the people around us because life is short and tomorrow is uncertain.

Sharing our Blessings

By Glory Faith Yap Bajao
Bernoulli, CU SHS

None of us imagined that a pandemic of this scale could really happen in our lifetime. Our normal lives were turned upside down in what seemed like a blink of an eye.

When COVID-19 hit our country and the situation gradually worsened, people became scared and many were losing hope. In this dark time however, there were a lot of people who stepped up and showed how much they cared for others. My family and I were fortunate to be givers of care during this time.

My family has a business of delivering water and though it is a small business, we have a lot of customers because my dad is a well-known and well-liked person here in our subdivision. When the pandemic started, we were worried that it would cause our business to close. Thank God, He didn't let it happen and we continued selling water.

Each day, the number of COVID-positive cases in our subdivision was rising. Many of the people who tested positive were our customers who were having a hard time. Because we understood their situation, we would always give them free water. We knew that they needed the money to help sustain their households until they got better. One of our neighbors tested positive, along with all of his family members. Half of the family had to go to the hospital and our neighbor was left at home with his 2 kids. We were witnesses to their suffering.



They could not go outside to buy food and medicine, so we were the ones who would buy these for them. We also gave them water to drink without letting them pay. We would always ask them if they were getting better, and if they needed anything else. Being able to show care and help people who are in need satisfied my heart so much. I realized that in helping others, I was helping myself become a better person.

The reason why I am inspired to help is because I feel blessed by God, and I know that should share my blessings to others. In this time of crisis, I learned that we should not be selfish and think only about ourselves. We should help try to help others because that is what God wants us to do. It really means a lot to the recipient and it also helps to spread hope and love. Let us find opportunities to show kindness, care, respect, and compassion to others. Let us all work together and to make our country free from COVID-19.

Manong Sikad

By Jerose Nulo
Bernoulli, CU SHS

I am Jerose Nulo, a grade 11 student, who has always dreamt of becoming a cadet in the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). I know that this dream is not easy to achieve and I am currently waiting for the result of the written examination, which is only the first phase in the admission process. For a time, I was preoccupied with this dream without really having a bigger purpose.

One day, I went to Palawan pawnshop to get Php550 that my Lola had sent to me for my 16th birthday. As soon as I got out of the shop, there was a trisikad driver who asked, “Saan sakay mo, ate?” I accepted his offer for a ride and instructed him that I wanted to go to the school. “Kuya, sa may main building,” I said. My mother was a teacher there and she was waiting for me so that we could go home together. As per usual, I took my phone out and tried to scroll through social media to pass the commute time.

“*Ang swerte mo, ate,*” Manong Sikad said. I did not expect that he wanted to start a conversation and his statement confused me so I answered, “Bakit po, kuya?” He replied, “Okay lang po ba makipag-usap sa iyo, ate?” I looked at him and saw that he had a warm smile on his face, despite the sweat and strain of his job. At that moment, I was overcome with compassion for him so I said, “*Sige lang kuya, madaldal naman ako.*” He laughed wholeheartedly, like he was not tired from working all day under the heat of the sun. He spoke to me like a grandfather would, admonishing me to focus on my studies and keep away from having relationships at my age. “Hay, kabataan nga naman,”

he sighed. I laughed while listening to Manong's story.

“Ako’y nakapag-asawa ng maaga dahil sa tukso. Alam kong nagugulat ka kung bakit tagalog ang aking salita, sapagkat galing pa akong Maynila at lumuwas dito dahil natanggal sa trabaho dahil sa pandemya.” He said he was hoping for an opportunity that would help him sustain his children, who were in Manila. He was separated from his wife who has custody of their children. *“Tukso nga naman, pag palarin,”* Manong continued. He met a girl on his way to the province and in 2 months, they bore a child. She is his third wife. I was shocked but I did not show it. Manong continued his story. He said that he lived in a common house with his third wife's parents, who were too old to work. His biggest earning in this pandemic was 200 pesos in a day, which was rare. To add to that, his wife was occupied with her cellphone the entire day. He cooks for everyone before he leaves to drive the trisikad, and he takes care of his children and does household chores when gets home even if he would be so tired. Yesterday, he only earned 30 pesos, not even enough to buy 1 kilo of rice for 9 people. *“Ate, ganyan ginagawa kapag walang pinag-aralan at maagang mag-asawa,”* he said.

I did not notice that we had arrived at the school building. I paid Manong Sikad 50 pesos, just a little more than the fare I owed and yet it brought tears of gratitude to his eyes. I told him in parting, *“Manong Kuya, pray for me to become a cadet. I can't promise anything but I'll do my best to help not just you but those who really need help po.”*

I could not forget about Manong Sikad. That day, it seemed to me he that he just needed someone to listen to him and it taught me that there are so many people carrying personal burdens. I also realized that I have a heart that is willing and wanting to serve. These realizations continue to motivate me as I pursue my dream. I am working hard not just for myself, but for the people I know I will be able to help in the future.

There Was an Old Woman

By Christina Allyza M. Agolito
Curie, CU SHS

Because my parents do not reside with me, I went to Capitol University on September 27th to submit missing requirements. When I got to our school, it was almost 11 AM and I went straight to the 7/11 across the street to get a drink because it was a hot day. I made my way to school as soon as I finished buying what I needed.

As I was walking, I noticed an elderly woman approaching people one by one, asking for spare change because she had not had her breakfast yet. I was listening to what she was saying to the people around her, and I was just watching them say they didn't have any spare change while eating at the stalls near the school. I was just standing there, thinking of a way to say no to the older woman despite the fact that I knew I had some cash and change on me. When I was the one she approached, a notion occurred to me. I began to wonder whether there was anything I had learnt from school and my family, because if there was, why would I even start thinking of a way to say no instead of giving a hand to help. When she inquired if I had any extra time, I instantly replied that I was just heading out for breakfast and offered for her to join me.

It was awkward at first, since others who had turned her down were staring at us strangely because I was assisting an elderly woman who didn't appear to have taken a bath in days. We went for a little stroll looking for a place where we could sit down and eat properly. She was chatting to me about her life while we were strolling. She told me about how her family had abandoned



her when they obtained jobs, and how her children were disrespectful to her when she asked for help. When we got to the little food stall, she thanked me profusely and insisted that she just wanted the cheapest food available. I didn't listen and bought her the same fried chicken, rice, and mineral water that I had ordered.

Because of this instance, I was reminded of the teachings we learned in school as well as the lessons my parents had been teaching me since I was a child. It reminded me that no matter where we are in life or how much we accomplish, we must never forget those who have always been there to support us in our endeavors. It made me realize that our families, especially our parents, sacrifice so much of themselves to support us I order that we may build good lives. Spending time with the old woman was a major moment for me, one that I would not forget, because it taught me that everyone has their own share of suffering made worse in this pandemic. It is much easier to say no when someone is knocking on your door; it is much more convenient to remain in unbothered in your comfort zone. However, offering a helping hand to those in need is essential because you are not just helping others. You are also helping yourself grow in compassion and love—elements of a meaningful life.

ENTRY 34:

Grateful for the Care

By Hannah Faith Paciencia
Curie, CU SHS

This pandemic hurt so many families in different ways, and my family was not exempt. I can honestly say that this has been the hardest year for my family and me. We have had to say goodbye to two very significant people.

Around August, all of my family members became ill and showed symptoms of COVID-19. Luckily, I did not get sick but I was the only one. On August 17, my beloved grandfather died due to the Coronavirus. Three days after that, my father died also because of the same cause. I cannot explain in words how traumatic this time was for me and my family.

While dealing with the loss of our grandfather and father, we still had to follow protocol and observe a 14-day quarantine. In the midst of quarantine, my mother decided to leave our house for a while to disinfect it so my mom, lola, tita, and I transferred to an isolation facility to ensure that we were not carriers of the virus.

I'm afraid I did not have experiences of giving in the pandemic because my family was in desperate need of help. I know some individuals wanted to assist us, but they were also worried that they might get infected by us. Nevertheless, I am so thankful to those who did not hesitate to help. The care they have shown is greatly appreciated. When we were in isolation, my relatives sent us food and vitamins and never forgot to ask as how we were doing or if we needed anything. We appreciate their kindness and we hope



that we get the opportunity to repay them and to give back the care and concern they have shown us. We hope to also be able to help others who badly need assistance.

Even though we have been unable to provide any material assistance, we give in a different way. We ensure that we check on others to see whether everyone is doing well. Even if we can't give goods or groceries, we still show our concern for their emotional and mental health. It is truly beneficial to our well-being if we show greater concern for one another.

Perhaps the biggest challenge of our time is our incapacity to care about anything other than our own needs. However, when faced with a dire situation, it is the kindnesses of those around us that keep us going. When shown compassion, generosity, and care, it inspires us to pay it forward, starting a cycle of gratitude and love. I believe this is key in surviving even the most difficult of times.

Isha

By Fradine Jean A. Portrias
Einstein, CU SHS

I am a member of our church and very active in the choir. In the middle of December, our church produced an event called "Bro," which essentially was a Christmas party for kids. The Catechists were in charge of the planning and the rest of us assisted with preparations such as blowing balloons, wrapping gifts, and practicing songs for the kids to enjoy.

When the program started, there were so many lovely youngsters that it brought back memories of my childhood. We played so many games and it was a lot of fun. When it was time to eat, the children all sat down waiting for us to serve them food. While I was serving, one girl approached me and said, "Ate? Pwede pa ko mangayo og food?"

"Ngano man langga? Wala pa ka nahatagan?"

"Ay mana man ate, para saakong igsuon man jud, kung okay lang?"

"Asa man diay imong igsuon?"

"Dili siya sugtan mugawas kay 3 years old pa siya."

"What's your name gani langga?"

"Trisha ate, Isha nalang kay mao man akong nickname"

"Ay sige wait sa Isha ha mag kuha sako og small gift nalang pud, okay?"

"Okay, ate, salamat kaayo."

I handed over the food to Isha and she thanked me, which made me feel good. But then I saw that she was just waiting at the gate, so I went up to her and asked, "Naa kay gihulatan Isha?"

"Wala ate, mahadlok kog uli basin mabunalan ko ni mama."

“Wala ka nananghid diay?”

“Wala ate kay kabalo ko na dili ko niya sugtan man jud.”

“Asa man dapit inyong balay?”

“Sa Isla Bugnaw, ate.”

“Ali ta, ihatod tika.”

“Hala, ate, sure ka?”

“Oo, ta baklay nalang ta kay duol raman ha?”

“Sige, ate.”

She told me several stories while walking, such as how her father is a retired police officer and her mother is a housewife.

“Ngano man nag retire imong papa? Nag sakit siya?”

“Oo, ate stroke man siguro to dili ko sure.”

“Ah okay kinsa man ga work sainyo?”

“Wala ate, si mama kay ga labada ra sa silingan.”

“Pila mo kabuok mag igsuon?”

“Duha ra ate, ako magulang”

“Hala diay? Busa ikaw mag tarung kag skwela ha? Para makatabang ka saimong family.”

“Oo, ate, Grade 4 naman ko tapos mag grade 5 na dayun. Hapit na ko mag High School”

“Maskin unsa ka lisud ang kinabuhi, don’t give up ha?”

“Yes, ate.”

I heard her mother crying when we arrived at their house, so I knocked on their door and said, *“Hi po, Ako si Fradine, iuli lang unta nako si Isha.”*

Isha’s mother asked, “Aha man diay ni gikan dai?”

“Nag apil siyag ‘Bro’ ate, katong Christmas Party sa mga bata.”

“Ay mao ba dai? Salamat sa paghatod.”

“Sige te mag hinay hinay nako, Isha adto nako ha.”

I observed Isha trembling and asked her why before I left.

“Wala, ate”

“Pag sure?”

“Lagi ate amping saimong paglakaw salamat kayo”

“No Problem langga”

When I saw Isha eating a banana in the store a few days later on my way to church to practice, I approached her and said, “Hi Isha musta naman ka?”

“Hala hello ate okay raman ko ikaw?”

“Okay ra sad ko man. Hapit naman ala sais ngano wala paka niuli?”

“Dili ko pasudlon ni mama sa balay”

“kay ngano man?”

“Naulit siya saakoa”

“Nya mana kag kaon og paniudto?”

“Wala pa ate nag palit ra gani kog tag treson na saging”

“Aha man ka gikan saimong kwarta?”

“Nagtabang ko saakong amego, nagpa timbang og mga botelya”

“Adto ta balay ta, pa kan-on tika.”

“Ayaw na ate oy, busog nako.”

“Sige na kulang rana.”

“Ayaw na lagi ate hugaw pa kayo ko.”

“Sus, ngano man diay basta makakaon ka.”

I texted my choir companions that I would be late after persuading Isha to come to our place for a while. When we arrived at our house, she said that:

“Ate, ulaw man.”

“Ayawg kaulaw, walay tao sa balay.”

Her eyes couldn't stop roaming around our house when we got inside.

“Ali na diri, pag kaon na.”

“Ate, mahadlok ko basin makasala ko.”

“Ayaw lagig ka hadlok kay dili ka ma asenso ana,” I joked. I told her that she needed to wash her hands first before eating, and she did so.

“Ate, chada kayo inyong sink.”

“Sige na paghuman nimog panghugas og kamot pagkaon na dayun kay para makauli ka before mugabie.”

She talked a lot while she was eating, and I was attentively listening to her.

“Salamat kaayo, ate.”

“No problem.”

“Chada inyong house, ate no?”

“Simple raman.”

“Ang amoa bitaw, ate, kay layo kaayo among CR tapos mag igib pamig tubig.”

“Isha wala mana nag matter okay? Basta kay naa tay balay mapuy-an og pagkaon na makaon pasalamat nato perme ang Ginoo ana ha?”

“Okay, ate, always man ko ga pray, Pwede ko maligo sainyong shower? Ibalik ra nako akong sanina.”

“Sure, wait mangita kog sanina na dili na masigo saakoa ha”

“Thank You kaayo, ate.”

I winked at her. I gave her some of my used clothes when I found some.

“Go ligo na, paghinay ha basin maligyas ka.”

“Salamat ate, promise dali rako.”

“Take your time.”

I washed the plates she used while she took a bath. After a few moments, she said, “Ate, naignorantihan kos shower.”

I laughed and said, “Parehas raman tubig gagawas ana. Ali na iuli na tika

kay basin gipangita naka”

She stated this while walking.

“Ate, kabalo bitaw ka, gusto ko nga naa koy ate parehas saimo kay but-an.”

“Isha, to be honest dili sa tanang adlaw but-an ko ha, pero I always care.”

“Okay ra basta kay wish nako ma ate taka or naa koy ate parehas saimo.”

She informed me when we got at their home that, “ayaw na panoktok ate kay basin nangatulog na sila”

“Sayoha gud? Hahaha aw sige adto nako ha kay mag practice pa ko, ka tuod naman kas among balay no, adto lang if u need something ha?”

“Oo ate, salamat jud kaayo ate.”

I went to Consolacion Elementary School a few days later to pass my cousin’s modules, and I noticed Isha outside the school.

“Hi Isha ngano naa man ka dari sa gawas?”

“Mag hatod unta kog module ate pero dili paman diay pwede bata musulod tapos si mama busy pa.”

“Ako nalang mag hatod bi, What section man?”

“Bonifacio ate, dadto dapit sa may canteen ha.”

“Aw sige hulati ko ha?”

I stepped inside, first passing by my cousin’s modules, and then looking for Isha’s room.

“Hello, Ma’am, Good Morning.”

“Ay hello langga, unsa may tuyo?”

“Mag hatod kog module ni Isha Ma’am”

“Aw wait lang kaunsa man diay ka niya lang?”

I hesitated to respond, but I did so honestly. “Friend po.”

“Asa man diay iyang parents?”

“Busy pa daw, ma’am.”

“Aw lagi akoy gakuoy sa bata kay ginapasagdan ra sila.”

“Diay Ma’am?”

“Oo lang kay usahay naa mi daily check saamong mga students, timingan nakita nako si Isha nang laba tawon sa ilang gawas.”

“Asa lugar iyang mama ato na time, ma’am?”

“Gipangutana nako asa nitubag sad si Isha na busy daw kuno, Naa ra langga oh, igna na naa silay project mag buhat sila’g slogan.”

“Okay Ma’am Noted, Salamat”

I noticed Isha anxiously waiting for me, and she thanked me when she saw me. “Salamat kayo ate.”

“Naa daw moy project”

“Unsa na project ate?”

“Slogan daw”

“Wala ko kabalo ana pero mag patudlo nalang ko.”

“Kay kinsa man?”

“Kay mama.”

“Sure ka? Willing ko mu help.”

“Ayaw na ate oy daghan nakag na help saakoa payts nato.”

“Basta adto lang sa balay if need nimog help ha?”

“Yes ate, salamat. Una nako nimo. Amping.”

I told my mother about Isha when I arrived at our house.

“Mao ba nak? Kaluoy ba asa man siya karun?”

“Naa sa ilang balay ma, ambot ma oy pero gusto nako siya tabangan perme.”

“Ako sad willing ko mu help, proud kay kos iya at her young age.”

“Yeah same, sunod ipaanhi to nako para makita nimo.”

“Sige ganahan ko ana na idea”

I was surprised to see Isha outside our house that morning. *“Sayoha gud nimo Isha namahaw naka?”*

“Sorry kayo sa disturbo ate ha, mana kog kaon, pwede pa help sa slogan ate?”

“Sure, wait, mukaon sako. Sure ka mana kag kaon? Kaon balik.”

“Okay rako ate, busog paman sad ko.”

“Pagkaon nalang og pan oh.”

“Salamat, ate.”

After eating, I cleaned and my mom woke up. She asked, *“Mao ni si Isha?”*

Isha stood up and greeted my mom, *“Hi, te.”*

“Hello langga mana kag kaon?”

“Oo, ante.”

I assisted Isha with her slogan, and she carefully watched me while answering her modules. *“Patabang kas imong module?”* I asked.

“Ayaw na ate kaya raman.”

“Sure ka? Pag ask lang dayun if naa kay wala nasabtan” She just nodded.

“Mana kos slogan, nawa gani.”

“Hala, ate, nice kaayo, maayo man diay kag inana.”

I laughed. “Salamat, pero dili kaayo.”

“Salamat ate,” Isha said.

“Muoli naka? Pagkaon sa.”

“Oo ate muoli nako kay pakan-on pa nako akong manghud.”

“Sure ka? Sige hatod na tika.”

“Ihatod pa nako ni sa skwelahan.”

“Aw ako na basin dili nasad ka pasudlon.”

“Hala, salamat ate.”

We rode a sikad to the school.

“Hulati ko dari ha?”
“Sige ate.”

I arrived at her classroom and greeted her teacher. “Good Morning, Ma’am.”

“Hi, kay Isha na?”
“Oo, ma’am.”
“Aw sige Salamat.” “Salamat pud Ma’am”

I went outside and saw Isha sitting in the corner

“Ali na ihatod na tika.”
“Sige, ate.”

While walking, Isha talked about her days when I saw someone selling Ice Cream. I bought her one.

“Diri nalang ko taman ha kay mag hinlo pami sa church man gud.”
“Sige lang, ate, salamat.”
“Isha, are you happy?”
“Englischerist kayo ka, ate,” she laughed. I laughed too.
“Nalipay ka?”
“Sa unsa ate?”
“Sa imong life? I know bata paka pero curious rako.”
“Usahay happy, usahay dili.”
“Well, that’s life Isha, ma sabtan ra nimo na puhon ha? Trust God lang perme okay?”
“Oo, ate. Salamat. Amping.”
“Amping pud.”

This was the last time I saw Isha because when I asked her teacher about where she was after not seeing her for some time, her teacher told me Isha’s family had gone to Tagoloan. They will be there for a long time. I



was still concerned, and I hoped Isha would find happiness with her family and that they would start looking after her. When I care about someone, their happiness matters more than mine.

Love and Sorrow

By Neco Joseph A. Cosmiano
Einstein, CU SHS

This story is about my aunt whom I consider to be my second mother. Since my mother is often busy working at a hospital, she could only take care of me when she was home or when she was off-duty. My aunt was always home. She was the one who took care of me from the day I was born until I reached the age of 15. She cooked my breakfast, packed my lunch, washed my clothes, and did almost everything for me until I was old enough to learn how to do these myself.

On June 22, 2021, my aunt fell ill. I took care of her then; I helped her stand, eat, and change her clothes. I would check on her every now and then to make sure she was alright. At around 1:00 AM of June 23rd, I heard a loud bang and I went to check on my aunt. When I went inside, she was lying on the floor. I was ready to panic but I gave my best effort to compose myself and think clearly. I tried to help my aunt sit up, but she did not listen to me or more like it was as if she could barely hear me. She asked me to grab her pillow and so I did. After a while I asked her to sit down on the floor, but then I saw that there was blood coming out from under her. I immediately woke my father and my sister and told them what happened. I called my mom to ask her what to do since she was at the hospital at that time, assigned at the COVID ward. My mom told us to clean the blood from my aunt and put some diapers on her because she might be bleeding internally again.

We helped my aunt get up and sit in the bathroom to get cleaned up. We mopped the floor to remove the blood, soaked her clothes, and set up the



couch. Around 3 AM, she was sleeping on the couch and I stayed beside her, reading some novels so I would not fall asleep. At around 6 AM, she asked for some water. After drinking, her eyes rolled up and she was taking deep breaths. My sister panicked and started pleading to my aunt that she should hold on. Thankfully, my aunt's breathing went back to normal and she rested. At 7 AM, we sent her to the hospital. When I saw her inside the car, a part of me felt that she would not make it but I disregarded this and chose to be optimistic.

I was praying for my aunt to get well and hoping that she would be fine the following day. Unfortunately, this did not happen. At around 7 or 8 PM, I received news from my father that my aunt was gone. I thought I knew what pain was, but the pain I felt at moment was new to me. It seemed unspeakable and it hurt to the core. For a moment, I felt like slowed and I remembered everything my aunt did for me. I suddenly remembered everything starting from my first memories with her until the last few moments. Her love and care were constant; in my entire young life, she was always there by my side. Now that she is gone, that love has turned into sorrow.

Losing my aunt is still unbearably painful but I know that one day, there will be less pain and more gratitude. I am grateful that we had an aunt like her who taught us how to love without conditions.

The Grace of Giving and Receiving

By Royce Lei G. Gabriza
Dell, CU SHS

I have a story to tell you and I hope that it will make you believe that kindness is everywhere. When I was 13 years old, I was a bully and admittedly I was not a very good person. During that time, I did not know or care about the difference between good and bad. I fought with my parents all the time. I would curse at them for being bad parents even though they were good. I thought that behaving badly was the only way to make cool friends, to make someone like me or have a crush on me, and to idolize me for being a badass. I did a lot of bad things throughout my childhood, but this would change when I started Grade 9.

When I was in Grade 9, I met this wholesome group of devoted Christians who opened my eyes and helped me deal with my personal issues. They cared for me so much that they were always there to comfort me, teach me, rebuke me, and love me. There was one time when I felt so hurt because of my family. I thought of leaving our house and I even thought of killing myself. Before doing any of that, I texted the group with a simple message saying, "I'm hurt." They came right away and stayed by my side to comfort me. I was amazed by the kindness they showed me; before meeting them, I did not believe that genuine kindness existed in this world because I had never experienced it.

One of the most important things my group taught me is how to graciously receive kindness from others. Everyone stresses the value of giving but it is just as vital to learn how to receive aid, which requires a humble and grateful heart. I



gave 100 pesos to an old man one day because he seemed hungry and yet, the next day, that same old man gave me 1,000 pesos. I insisted that he spend it on himself instead, but he said, “If you want to make me happy, you should accept this because this is the only way I can give this blessing that I’ve received from God.” I was stunned by the old man’s gesture. I realized then that God is everywhere and He has unexpected ways of showing you that you are worthy and loved. He also rewards your efforts, so if you show kindness and care towards others it comes back to you tenfold.

Now that I am 16 years old, I continue to practice and show kindness to everyone I encounter. You may not always receive anything in return, but I have found that the more I give and help, the happier I become. I finally understand God’s message in the bible, that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

A Family's Tradition of Kindness

By David Ysrael Tolentino
Dell, CU SHS

My family, including my aunts, uncles, and cousins, all share the same purpose in life: to aid those in need. Since I was a child, I have been a witness to my family's efforts to assist others. We have an outreach program that gives food, groceries, and school supplies to families that are struggling financially. We have also reached out to communities that are not geographically accessible so they do not receive government aid. We believe that it is a privilege to be able to help others, because God also helps us financially and gives us bountiful blessings in life.

On December 15, 2019, the province of Davao del Sur on the island of Mindanao was struck by an earthquake with 6.8 magnitude. The earthquake caused severe damage on infrastructure destroying almost 26,000 houses, over 400 schools, and more than 60 health institutions. According to the Department of Education, the damage to classrooms has impacted over 188,000 registered pupils, and the repair and rehabilitation of damaged schools would cost an estimated PhP1.9 billion. This catastrophic event traumatized the people living there. Children were hoping for joyful days since Christmas was just around the corner, but instead they faced a disaster.

My family was eager to assist those who were affected, especially the children. Rice sacks, canned goods, and basic hygiene packages were bought and packed. We woke up at 2 AM in order to get there early. On the way, we were greeted by fractures on the roadways and along the sides of various facilities. Many individuals built temporary shelter beside the



road using only scraps of tarpaulin. Health centers were badly damaged, rendering them inoperable after the tragedy. We couldn't do much because my parents' salary is not particularly high, but we gave as much as we could. Nevertheless, the people there were overjoyed and grateful to have gotten some necessities. They were thankful that we were able to assist them. "You should thank God because he gave us the strength to do all of this; without Him, we wouldn't be able to do any of this," I replied with a smile.

My family has a long history of helping others. We derive pleasure in seeing the faces of those we are able to help; our weariness would dissipate when we see joy shining in other people's faces. I think that if we offer compassion to others, some of them will reciprocate and show compassion to other people as well. It encourages us to be kind when we see someone being kind or thoughtful, or when we are the receiver of kindness. In this way, kindness extends from one person to the next. Kindness is critical to creating a better, more trusting community.

I will leave this verse as an encouragement for you to start a cycle of kindness as well. Philippians 4:13, "I can do all through Christ which strengthens me".

CU Cares, Indeed

Anonymous
CU SHS

As a student in this pandemic, I have to admit that the online mode of learning is stressful and mentally exhausting. However, I understand that everyone is adjusting—not just us students but also all our teachers, staff, and our families. Despite all the challenges, I am thankful to have teachers who are kind, understanding, and caring.

In Capitol University, we are taught to imbibe and practice 5 Core Values and I would like to focus on the Culture of Care. Ever since I started my journey in CU, everything felt new; the mode of learning was new, my classmates and teachers were all new. There was a time when I went through a personal issue that made me skip 2 days of synchronous lessons. I was worried about my grades because of my missed sessions but thankfully, I had understanding and caring teachers who checked up on me and considered my situation. My teachers were not the only ones who helped me during this challenging time; my classmates were also kind enough to lend me a hand. They kept me updated on our activities so I would not fall behind class. Having to experience this made me realize that choosing Capitol University was one of the best decisions that I have made and I felt happy about this.

The assistance my teachers and classmates extended to me made me realize certain things. First, though the teachers are busy with their workload and their own personal lives, they were still able to give time to check up on me when I was going through a very rough. I thought I was alone but the teachers, along with my classmates, showed me care and concern even if



they must also be experiencing their own personal issues. Their care during this extremely tough time made me see them in a new light.

While the pandemic has greatly affected us, we shall not let it hinder the bright future that lies ahead of us. With each other's support, we shall band together and fight against the obstacles that stand before us. As a student from Capitol University, I have truly seen that the culture of care is very much alive among the teachers and the students who are all passionate about helping one another.

A Broken Heart

By Czarinah Q. Camaro
Euclid, CU SHS

There is no question that the pandemic made our lives difficult. My family and I thought the pandemic wouldn't last long, but it has already been more than a year and the Coronavirus is not showing signs of leaving anytime soon. We still cannot accept certain things that happened to our family during the pandemic. For example, we did not expect that my aunts and uncles would be infected with the Coronavirus. My family and I were so worried. We kept in touch with our relatives and being able to talk with them helped ease the emotional burdens we were all carrying. We kept reminding each other to stay safe.

In April 2021, my grandmother's eldest sister died. She did not die because of COVID-19, however because it was the height of the pandemic, we could not practice our funeral traditions. We had a hard enough time accepting her death, but it was made even worse because we could not be with her in her last moments. We could not see her off because it was against health protocols. We thought that this was the hardest challenge we would face but we were wrong.

Around August, we received more bad news. My aunt and her family, including my grandmother's sister, tested positive for COVID-19. We were all worried for them. After 14 days of quarantine, they all tested negative except for my grandmother's sister. We knew she was fighting for her life and we believed she was strong enough to withstand the virus. But on September 2, 2021, her body gave up and she died due to complications.



I will not deny that until now, I still cannot get over the loss. Whenever I see her pictures, I feel she is alive again and full of life. The death of beloved family members, one after the other, was just too difficult to bear. The process of acceptance is slow but I know in time, we will heal. For now, we continue to hope and pray that this pandemic will come to an end.

Life Goes On

By Victoria Lee R. Luna
Euclid, CU SHS

At the start of this pandemic, I couldn't stay still. I felt like I was suffocating in the situation I found myself in. I suffered a lot in the pandemic, but I was still able to help a lot of people by being there for them when they were at their lowest point. I was also able to heal from my past even though my present was a mess.

It was 3 AM on day 3 of no sleep. I was sitting near one of the four corners of my room, holding my phone. The notification kept on ringing, but I could not open my phone. I did not have the energy to turn it on, to type my password, or even just use face recognition to unlock. It is an understatement to say that I was not healthy. Out of nowhere, for no definite reason, I broke down. I cried, silent screams, and the pain was unendurable. My heart was carrying too heavy a burden, which left my mouth mute. At that moment, I bent my knees and I put my hands together in prayer. Tears were flowing down my cheeks. I surrendered myself to Him. I cried to God and I felt He was there. I knew I was safe.

I woke up with the sun on my cheeks. I opened my puffy eyes, stood up, washed my face, made coffee, and went outside my room with my phone in hand. That morning after my breakdown, I made a conscious decision to become a person who uplifts the people around her. Since then, my friends felt the change in me and they appreciated that I always reply to their messages or helped them when they had problems. I was there when they needed someone to talk to.

My family has fought many battles and survived difficult challenges. There was a



time when we could not eat three times a day and we had no basic necessities left. We couldn't do anything except to stay in the house and follow the safety protocols. During this time, I tried my best to keep my family cheerful and happy. I made sure that I was keeping their hope alive. I reminded them not to give up and to continue fighting for a way to survive. We all worked hard, especially my parents, for us to have food on the table. We did not stop striving and this led us to where we are now—a place of security and stability. We still have problems, but we know we can manage and somehow, we were able to adjust to this new normal.

I choose to focus on the blessings in this pandemic. My experiences were difficult but I am proud I came out alive, stronger, wiser, and more grateful. I believe that this pandemic has an end, so we just need more patience while waiting for everything to get back to normal. This may not be the life we wanted, but that's the way life is. We need to change our perspective and look towards the good in our lives. No matter how difficult challenges may get, life goes on so we shall try our best to make the most of the time we have left.

Life in a Pandemic

By Alger Gabriel C. Allena
CU SHS

When all the schools closed, I felt a little sad. I was in junior high school and I have always wanted to enjoy my high school life, but the lockdown made this seem impossible. We could no longer meet our friends and we were forced to stay in our own homes. Learning was also affected because in my former school, we only had modular classes and I realized that learning on your own is hard without the help of teachers. I had to rely on myself but I did not know what to do when the lessons became too difficult for me to handle alone. Currently, I am attending online classes and it's not easier. I even saw how unfair it is sometimes because there are students who cheat and they get the same score as the ones who really study. I hope this pandemic will end soon.

Aside from school matters, my family life was affected as well. My father is a nurse and he often gets exposed to various diseases. One time, around August, my father tested positive for COVID-19. Everyone in our home tested positive, except for me. A lot of people helped us by sending packed food, since we couldn't go out of our homes. I am really thankful to those people who helped us in during that difficult time. Thankfully, each one of us managed to recover.

We also experienced financial problems in the pandemic. Although my parents both have good jobs, we still suffer from time to time. This is why I am thankful that up to this point, we are still able to survive and live. I understand that many are having a hard time. I pray for all the people and I thank God that he looks upon us and guides us in our everyday lives.

Pandemic Problems and Possibilities

By Joshua Paul N. Baluyot
Aquilla, CU SHS

The COVID-19 pandemic is probably the toughest crisis I have ever faced. Who would have thought that a flu from China would become a world crisis? It seemed to me that the world stopped in just a blink of an eye. The pandemic caused a lot of anxiety and fear for me and my peers. Our normal lives were greatly affected, and eventually our mental health began to suffer.

I was in Grade 9I when the pandemic changed the world. We were advised to continue with our studies through online classes, and everything else was done through E-learning. I felt really sad because there were plenty of school activities that we had already prepared for. All of a sudden, our efforts seemed useless. But we understood the need to follow health and safety protocols because the numbers of infected patients were increasing every day. I also feared for my and my family's safety. It was safer to continue with E-learning at the comfort of our home.

Since we stayed home 24/7, my parents imposed safety protocols inside the house. We would disinfect our house and the surroundings once a week, we sanitized things before bringing these inside our house, we wore masks wherever we went, and most of all, we tried to eat healthy food and plenty of fruits, with a daily dose of vitamin C. Gargling of lukewarm water with salt became a daily habit. We lived by the saying, "*prevention is better than cure.*"

Social media was a vital tool in reaching out to our friends and relatives

during this pandemic. Aside from mobile phones, social media is a powerful tool where we got to express our love, care, and concern for our friends, family and relatives.

As days went by, we got used to the new normal. Ambulance sirens became a typical sound in our community since we lived near a private hospital. During this time, economic instability was a common occurrence. Our family's finances during the pandemic was not very stable. My older sister lost employment because of the unexpected closure of their establishment, and my mother also had to stop working. It was only my father who was working and earning for our family's needs. But in the midst of this crisis, our family did not lose hope. We prayed to God for our safety, protection, and good health. We never lost our faith in God and we believed that everything would turn out well through God's grace.

Indeed, God answered our prayers by leading our family into opportunity—an online selling business. My sister has a degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management and my mother has excellent baking skills. We discovered too that social media was a lucrative avenue to market our cakes and thus began our online pastry business. For over a year now, our family's small business has been growing and receiving very positive feedback from both loyal and new customers.

This pandemic has brought unspeakable losses and pains. For a time, everybody was helpless and powerless. Amidst the uncertainties and struggles, life must go on. I realized the power of prayer for it sustained my family and I in difficult times. We should always pray to God for our safety, protection, and good health. We should keep faithful and the world will one day be totally healed from this pandemic.

Finding My Course

By Kim Bernard P. Roa
Bezos, CU SHS

In 2019, the world was turned upside down. We thought the pandemic would be temporary and we expected for everything to go back to normal, but we were introduced to a “new normal” instead. Classes shifted online and many students like me struggled to adjust. I was devastated because it was not easy for me to learn online, and this was made even more difficult because of internet connection problems and the scarcity of devices.

Before the start of online classes in my last year in a previous school, I encountered so many difficulties not only in learning but also in the lack of a social life. It was a big adjustment that I could not interact with my peers in person. I was also stressed with all the requirements and modules I needed to submit; I have a tendency to overwork myself and neglect my mental health. Even with all the challenges, I try to remember how lucky I am that I could go to school and that I have parents who support, guide, and help me.

Christmas came and I realized I was so focused on school that I neglected to make time to bond with my family. In the New Year, I welcomed 2021 by resolving to be more independent and responsible. I said goodbye to 2020, which has been the worst for many of us, and faced 2021 with a more hopeful outlook. Eventually, I got used to online classes. I was able to become more consistent; I started sleeping and waking up early, started exercising, and I even started engaging myself with my father’s business. This was why I chose the course business management. I enrolled in Capitol University because it is the legacy of my father. He recommended for me to study in CU because

he had a good experience here. I understand his choice now because it feels good to be here with my new friends, classmates, teachers, and staff.

Caring for Yourself

By Uzziah Hai P. Malificiar
Plato, CU SHS

The pandemic brought about by the Coronavirus has had a great impact in different aspects of my life. At first, I was one of those students who were happy about the sudden ECQ. I thought I needed a break from school and finally we were given time to just stay at home.

I enjoyed the first few months of lockdown. I had time to exercise with my family every morning, to make Tiktok videos with my sister, to tutor my younger cousins, to watch as many K-K-Dramas and Anime series as I could, and to really get into K-Pop. I even started training for tennis because I had a lot of free time on my hands. Since the pandemic started, I became closer to my family. Every night, we prayed the Holy Rosary to keep us safe. We believe that praying the Rosary has protected us, because despite having 3 households in our compound with 2 frontliners working in the hospital, none of us has ever tested positive.

A year passed in the pandemic and I finally graduated from Junior High School with high honors. I felt like I took another step closer to my dreams. After Junior High, I started in a new environment with new adjustments in the new normal. I was excited because I will finally be able to experience online classes and meet new friends. However, I felt overwhelmed when everything went beyond my expectations. As online classes continued, I started feeling pressured, anxious, and scared. I felt like giving up; I was so unmotivated and I was starting to lose hope. Online classes were too much for me. I thought I could bear the tasks and challenges, but I was wrong. I felt so drained and



I lost confidence in myself. To make matters worse, I did not talk to anyone about how I was feeling because I believed that I would be a burden and my problem was too shallow.

I transferred to another school because I initially thought that the school's way of teaching that was not a good fit for me, but I was wrong. I felt the same in the school where I transferred to, so maybe the problem was not in the school but in myself. I was tired and ready to give up. I still gave effort towards my studies, but I received bad scores and I could not figure out what I was doing wrong. I studied hard but when I read the questions in exams, I could not remember anything. I wanted my performance to improve because failure was not an option for me; I am the eldest and my family's pride. That was my mindset but my situation just became worse. I couldn't stop crying and I blamed God for what he was doing to me. My body was also breaking down—I lost weight, had severe headaches, and developed astigmatism.

My mom and dad saw how much I suffered and they figured that maybe online classes were not right for me. They suggested for me to postpone my studies and to focus on healing instead. I was glad that they were concerned for my mental health, but I thought that if I stopped now, it would not make a difference and that I would only waste my time. I was worried about losing my place as an honor student, but my parents comforted me and said that it was okay and they know that I have been trying my best.

The love of my parents spurred me to change my perspective. I sought advice from different people and I also read self-help books. I made sure to rest, re-connected with my friends, and picked up relaxing hobbies such as diamond painting and learning to play the ukulele. I diverted my attention to forget my problems for a while. I realized that I should not crave academic validation because this does not prove my worth as a person. I also learned that if you just pay close attention, there are people around who appreciate



you for who you are and in turn, you should learn to appreciate them as well. Trust and have faith and believe in yourself. Your mental health matters so you need to check yourself once in a while and you should not be too hard on yourself.

Once you start consciously taking care of yourself, everything will begin to get better. Be courageous in moving forward towards your goals. You don't need to compare yourself to others, you just need to give your best effort and focus on having a good relationship with yourself. No external achievement can compensate for your mental health.





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