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Angels Today #ProtectMe

Young ladies mobilized to provide personal protective equipment to health workers in Philippine hospitals.

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Everyone needs an angel. Who doesn't? A guide, a helping hand, someone to share joys and sorrows with.

This is what *Angels Today* had as peg when it was established in 2017, an initiative of Kaye Zita Alquiza's

family. "The founder and driving force is my mom, who has untiring passion for this work," Kaye says. The objective is to undertake what the family calls "love-driven social projects and collaboration-centered initiatives."

The present pandemic was a perfect platform for the "Angels" to work.

In response to the crisis, *Angels Today* launched the #ProtectMe project. Initially it was a family-initiated movement to secure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for chosen hospitals that had low to limited stocks. "The motivation was more personal, as we had family members and dear friends working in the frontlines," Kaye explained. "This project was a way for us to help protect them."

As time went on, the concern grew and went beyond family to the wider group of "frontliners" who are

risking life and limb to take care of the sick in hospitals. The latest figures in the Philippines show that 1,062 health workers have been infected with the virus, with 26 fatalities, 19 of them doctors.

“In a group chat with Cel, Lauriz, Nathalie, Trix, Diane, Cedes and other former co-residents at Tahilan Center, among other things, we got to talk about the present crisis,” Kaye narrated. “Desires to help came up, considering that we had family members and friends who were in the medical field. We started looking seriously into what we could do, what items were needed, which hospitals... That was the defining moment!”

The first idea for the #ProtectMe project was to provide N95 masks. “We had an initial budget of P150,000 (a personal pledge from my mom),” Kaye said. “I forwarded to my

Tahilan group the proposed electronic poster. They gave their inputs and we shared this Call for Action through Facebook,” Kaye explained. “The pledges came in, doubled and tripled: donors, funds, suppliers. The response to the Call was inspiring and a big boost for our drive!”

“We had raised rather quickly more than P700,000 from different “Angels”: individuals and groups contacted by us members of the #ProtectMe project,” Kaye said.

As of April 5, the group had released 3,260 face shields and 200 goggles to the Philippine General Hospital, Lung Center of the Philippines, Philippine Heart Center, East Avenue Medical Center, P. Gonzales Memorial Hospital, ACE Medical Center in Pateros, and the National Kidney Transplant Institute. *Angels*

Today is scheduled to release more items.

“We will be staying on duty to help our health workers, for as long as donations keep coming in and for as long as we can secure authentic and reasonable suppliers to match their needs,” Kaye said.

“Through this project, I have come to appreciate and love more the friendships with my Tahilan Residence alumnae,” Kaye shared. “Despite our diverse circumstances and personalities, we came together responding as a team for *Angels Today* #ProtectMe project.”

“My personal take is that this crisis is bringing out the best in people,” she reflected. “Most important is how, at the end of the day, we are all moved to help and care for each other.”

“What is notable is the fact that in every *Angels Today* Call to Action, the

first to respond are “Angels” from the middle class. It has been like that since we started,” Kaye observed. “They have the biggest hearts, even when they need cash themselves for their families. They give from 200 pesos to 5000 pesos. *Angels Today* community believes that no amount is too big or too small for a heart that cares and loves.”

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