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Foundation offers family, community assistance

Inspired by the message of St. Josemaría Escrivá, Alalay sa Pamilya at Bayan Foundation (APBF) empowers public school communities, youth, parents and teachers through character formation, to become productive, responsible and self-reliant members of society.

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In one of his homilies, “Passionately Loving the World,” St. Josemaría Escrivá, said quite emphatically, “Understand this well: There is something holy, something divine, hidden in the most ordinary situations, and it is up to each one of you to discover it.”

Inspired by the message of Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei who taught that everyone was called to be holy in their ordinary duties, Alalay sa Pamilya at Bayan Foundation (APBF) was established to address this concern.

Launched on June 16, 2010, the foundation has reached more than 20,000 public school students, who are grateful to have discovered the value of faith and daily work, faith and study, and faith and family life.

APBF empowers public school communities, youth, parents and teachers through character

formation, teaching them to become God-fearing, productive, responsible and self-reliant. It aims to revive the high moral and cultural values of Filipinos and make them responsible and happy members of society.

APBF believes character education is key to helping young people see what is true, good and beautiful in life despite hardships at home, in school and elsewhere. Volunteers share their time and talent, skills and experience to teach children the basics of Christian living and values formation.

Testimonies

Roselle of Nueve de Febrero Elementary School said, “I used to (disobey) my parents. Now, I’ve learned to go to Confession and receive Holy Communion properly.”

Cecille Andrade, the school’s guidance counselor, said, “We used

to have several disciplinary cases ... Because of the patience of APBF volunteers and the classes they gave to our students, [the cases had been reduced].”

Ma. Theresa Gamboa, the school’s assistant principal, said, “By attending seminars and values education classes, Grade 6 pupils appeared to have realized the importance of life, studies and family.”

Yollie Leon, APBF volunteer, said the name of the foundation spoke for itself as volunteers were supposed to be “assistants” of the family and the country as a whole.

“My significant contribution is to motivate volunteers to commit themselves for the benefit of the students,” she said.

Imelda Vier, corporate partner of APBF, said volunteers were on call

24/7. Everyone, from the board chair to the security guard, attended classes and training as volunteers, she added.

Camille Sarmiento, APBF volunteer, said even if they worked under pressure, they were happy because they were helping others. “We hope more people would share their time and talent without expecting payment in return ... so we can continue giving to others,” she said.

APBF president and founder Annabelle Brown said the program, which started at Nueve de Febrero and Pleasant Hills in Mandaluyong City, went to Ramon Magsaysay High School in Cubao, Quezon City, on the request of the priest of Immaculate Conception Church.

Now, volunteers were also working in Eulogio Rodriguez Integrated School, Potenciano Bernardo Elementary School and Libis

Elementary School, all in Quezon City.

Training students, teachers

The foundation's character education campaign and services includes classroom teaching, mentoring of students, religious instruction, leadership training and ARTS (Always Ready to Serve) Club.

It also facilitates professional development training for teachers and school heads and organizes parenting lectures and livelihood seminars.

APBF volunteers undergo training every first Saturday of the month to prepare them for their tasks.

Becoming a volunteer is a choice and a commitment to help others, especially the young, by teaching values that will make them better persons and citizens of the country.

The volunteer has to be a mentor and a guide by talking to people, listening to them and spending time with them.

For more information on APBF, e-mail apbfoundation@ymail.com.

Glecy Gamboa // Philippine Daily Inquirer

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