

# Tahanan News

**Bi-annual Newsletter of Save A Tahanan, Inc.**

**Taha'nan** n. [Filipino] home.—root word, **tahan** v. to live, to reside, to stop crying

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## A BANNER YEAR

by Honesto Tria

The year 2004 has been a banner year for Save A Tahanan, Inc. The success of our fundraising events provided additional funds that are now being used to help better the lives for Filipino families. We were a little bit daring this year in coming up with two major fund-raising events, namely the *First Charity Golf Tournament* and the *Charity Christmas Concert* featuring the Saringhimig Singers.

The success of our events have been possible in large part from the trust of reliable supporters and help of friends ready to lend a hand in our undertakings.

The *First Charity Golf Tournament*, held last June, was a huge success that we are planning the second tournament for Summer 2005. This event not only provided much needed funds to continue our work but also gave us the opportunity to rekindle old friendships. The day was filled with good conversations and good

laughs, with golfers providing good golf stories. To maintain a competitive environment, we awarded the tournament prizes. Typical of a Filipino gathering, we provided a sumptuous lunch with the help of volunteers. At the end of the day, all agreed to come back to the next tournament.



Late last summer, two good friends Cory and Henry, came up with the idea of a pre-Christmas concert. When presented to the group, the idea was immediately approved. Having known and admired the world-renowned Saringhimig Singers for years, we asked them to be our featured artist and they gladly accepted. For the venue, we approached

Fr. John Prochaska, the pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fremont, California, who allowed for the use of the church and also agreed to co-sponsor the concert. With this, sponsorship letters were sent and tickets were sold.

Our desire to develop cultural awareness among Filipino-Americans led us to arrange for tickets to be donated to some young Filipino-American students so that they can experience the spirit and beauty of Filipino music. On November 7, everyone enjoyed the evening as The Saringhimig Singers put us into a spell with their enchanting performance.

Our on-going fundraising efforts continued. Like last year, a wonderful supporter from Sacramento commissioned us to prepare the holiday gift baskets for their key clients. From the gift baskets produced for them last year, we gained two more customers of gift baskets. They were so

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**Have your golf clubs ready for the 2005 Charity Golf Tournament at Sunol Valley Golf Club on June 25, 2005**

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## A Banner Year (continued)

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impressed by our product that they ordered gift baskets from us this year.

Good news has not been limited to our fundraising activities. Halfway across the world in Calabanga, Camarines Sur, Philippines, the groundbreaking ceremony for the first joint venture with Couples for Christ occurred last March. As featured in our previous Tahanan News, a Gawad

Kalinga (GK) Village was established in Calabanga, on property to Save A Tahanan, Inc.

Monthly reports from various STM Chapters are positive and encouraging. Testimonials from beneficiaries abound, detailing positive changes brought about by our programs. We had a chance to see and visit some beneficiaries during our visit this November.

These activities are the fruits of nine strategic planning meetings

that started on September 2002 and culminated in a weekend retreat on May 2003. With renewed spirits, we dared to step out and try different ways of reaching out to people.

To date, 2004 has been our best year ever. This banner year showed much camaraderie and support from all of you. We wish to thank all who worked with us in our fundraising efforts and all who supported us financially. We ask for your unfailing support as we face the challenges of the year 2005. ☐

## “Our Gift . . . Our Music” Binds Us All

by Frederick Esteves

Music is considered the universal language of the soul. We Filipinos are known worldwide for our extraordinary gift of music. We associate our daily lives with certain types of music. Go to an Filipino gathering, be it a wedding reception, birthday party, fiesta, baptism, or even a funeral, and music will be an integral part of the gathering. We took the cue from this and agreed to hold a fundraising concert as proposed by our two very good friends, Cory and Henry.

Meetings were set with different people and organizations responsible in mounting the concert. We were unanimous in our decision to acquire the services of the world-renowned **The Saringhimig Singers**, a choral group we've known over the years. We started to have initial talks with them regarding our plans and mutually agreed to push through with the idea. Next step was coordinating with Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fremont, California for the venue and to be

our co-sponsor. Fr. John Prochaska was very enthusiastic and was very accommodating with the project. With all necessary requirements addressed, we then printed the tickets and distributed solicitation

*The second part of their repertoire was mostly Original Pilipino Music*

letters for the s o u v e n i r program.

This was the time when we felt very b l e s s e d b e c a u s e companies and friends started pouring out their support. Some from as far as Florida responded to our call. With perseverance, we were able to fill the pages of our souvenir program with sponsors' ads. Things like these made us realize how working together brings about big results, which, in turn, can make a big difference to those in need.

Part of putting up this concert was to provide avenues for Filipino-American students, who were in a

journey of rediscovering their roots. Familiarizing them with our very own music was the best way we could think of. Some of our friends agreed and sponsored forty students.

On November 7, the day of the concert, our guests and friends were treated with a night of excellent performance from our featured artist. The second part of their repertoire was mostly Original Pilipino Music that brought back memories of the good old days and even guests new to Pilipino music enjoyed the performance. As Fr. John said “I didn't understand the lyrics but the melody was so wonderful.” Most of our guests couldn't help but sway along with the music, snap their fingers, or clap their hands as the Saringhimig Singers enchanted them.

**Our Gift . . . Our Music** is a fitting gift to most of our supporters, the Filipino-American youth, and most especially our beneficiaries who are waiting to be given opportunities to turn their lives for the better. ☐

## TESTIMONIALS

### *Josephine Borromeo*

In 1998, at the age of 49, I lost my husband. With eight school-age children, I did not know what to do. Knowing that wallowing would not do any good, I armed myself with determination and a strong faith in God and assumed the gargantuan task of supporting my family. My late husband was a farmer and I used to help him with his work. I started by pulling weeds and harvesting rice for a fee. I also started a barbeque business.

But since my income was not sufficient for our daily expenses, I started borrowing money from loan sharks and this made our lives more miserable. The interest charged on my borrowings started to worry me. Thinking of ways to earn more

money to provide for my children's needs kept me up at night.

One day, during our Parish Pastoral Council meeting, Father Ed Bellen, our parish priest at that time, invited us to attend a seminar. There, we were introduced to Save A Tahanan Movement (STM). The seminar provided us with the guidelines and procedures on how to become members. Those who signed up were trained on how to become responsible neighbors and borrowers.

With my first loan, I rented a portion of a farm at the back of our house and planted ampalaya (bitter melon) on a large scale. This first venture was a huge success. Fr. Ed was so happy with my renewed vigor and outlook in life. I never failed to offer some of my harvest to the church. Marketing my ampalaya was not a problem as I had buyers from as far as Manila.

*We would like to introduce our supporters to two of beneficiaries. Josephine is from Tigaon, Camarines Sur and Peping is from Bombon, Camarines Sur. This gives them the opportunity to express their gratitude for your support of Save A Tahanan, Inc.'s projects.*

From my earnings, I was able to renovate our house, provide comfort for my children, and save money for their tuition fees. Seeing the success of my ampalaya business and being a good member, STM did not hesitate to give me a big loan of P10,000 (\$200).

A number of natural disasters tested my faith. Twice, my ampalayas were damaged by typhoons. I planted again, but this time flood did not spare my crops. Rather than quietly accepting another sad part of my life, I decided to persevere. Now I am about to harvest the biggest fruit of my labor and perseverance.

With support of my STM family, I was able to overcome my fears, frustrations and weaknesses. They filled the void left by my beloved husband and ushered us toward a brighter future. ☐

### *Peping*

I used to be a fisherman. I had a pretty good and easy-going life. My friends and I would end our day drinking gin. We were able to catch buckets and buckets of fish without much effort, not until our foolishness caught us unprepared.

One day, when we could not fill even a single bucket, we destroyed our source of livelihood by resorting to dynamite fishing for easy money. This contributed to the large-scale destruction of marine resources in our area. Eventually, the Bureau of Fisheries of the Department of Natural Resources declared our area a "No Fishing Zone."

With no source of income and no savings, my family and I started skipping meals and my children eventually had to quit school. All the stores in our area closed our credit lines and friends started to ignore us. My children suffered a lot. I could not bear to see them go to sleep with empty stomach. I was about to lose hope when someone introduced me to Save A Tahanan Movement (STM). He told me how STM made him a better person. I was skeptical in the beginning but still attended the initial seminar.

Thank God, I did. They not only provided me with capital for my business but also guided me in developing a business plan. They assessed my strengths, weaknesses

and capabilities and gave me the necessary training to develop and improve my skills. Believing in the my ability to create something functional and extraordinary with my hands, they encouraged me to take on basket making for which they have a steady and sure market.

Since joining STM, I took a 180-degree turn from my old habits. I am now a member of *Bantay Dagat* (Sea Watch). I want to make sure that no further harm will be done to our seas. I am hopeful that one day I could go out to the sea and fish in a responsible way. I can be a fisherman again and a basket maker at the same time. This can help me secure a good future for my children. ☐



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## WE NEED YOUR HELP

### Your Contribution Will Make a DIFFERENCE

Be a Donor of SAVE A TAHANAN, INC. (STI) and help provide opportunities for our underprivileged *kababayans*

- \$ 100.00 will sponsor a family with 5 to 6 children
- \$ 50.00 will start up loan for a mother or father with 1 or 2 children
- \$ 20.00 will help with other family development cost

Any amount will help.

Please make your check payable to Save A Tahanan, Inc.  
**Your donation is tax-deductible.**

*Save A Tahanan, Inc. (STI) is a tax exempt, 510(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization. It was founded in 1986 by a group of Filipino-Americans based in San Francisco, California, a group of seven families who originally came from Calabanga, Camarines Sur.*

*Its mission is to mobilize resources to improve the lives of families through training and microfinancing and to empower them as responsible members of the community.*

*Its vision is to promote self-sufficient and stable families, leading communities to develop opportunities and collective solutions to issues of poverty, and upholding respect for all people of economic levels. STI believes that a self-sufficient tahanan (home) is the foundation of a strong society. It is guided by the principles of sharing and participation that instills accountability.*

*STI works in close partnership with its target beneficiaries, community leaders, and other stakeholders to implement its various programs in the project areas.*

## Hope is Growing

by Freddie Esteves

As early as October, our volunteer basket makers were brainstorming on what to put in the baskets ordered from us. We were one of the lucky charitable organizations embraced by AES over the past years. They had been supporting us in our fundraising events. So, we wanted to repay their kindness by giving them the very best we could offer. We wanted this year's basket to be different from last year's.

Our gift-basket makers met and brainstormed and came up with gift items that would be a hit. They went to different stores and bought one of each food item and taste-tested each product. They had to replace items that did not meet their exquisite taste.

After weeks of taste tests and deliberation, they agreed on items that

would populate the baskets. Days of shopping ensued. Meanwhile, Mr. and Mrs. Tria, during one of their visits to the Philippines, ordered baskets from a group of beneficiaries. This was a good opportunity to advertise the craftsmanship of our beneficiaries.

While the volunteers were busy putting together gift baskets, they received more good news. Two of the recipients of last year's gift baskets placed gift basket orders themselves. They were so impressed with our gift baskets that they decided to order their gift baskets from us. Our volunteers then repeated the process of choosing the food items for the sample gift-baskets for the new orders. Fortunately, the new potential buyers were impressed with the samples and immediately placed their

orders.

When the volunteers filled the last gift basket, placed the ribbon and secured the cellophane sheet, they realized that good intentions can lead to endless blessings. The increase in gift basket orders leads to an increase in donation receipts, which leads to an increase in the number of families that STI's programs can help. ☐

