

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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FILIPINO AMERICANS TACKLE ISSUE OF 'EDUCATIONAL DOWNWARD MOBILITY' AND SELECT COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS AT GALA BALL

Nicole Reyes knows what it's like to search for money to pay for college. For years she's filled out financial aid forms—an arduous process that she says frustrates most students and parents.

"There was no warning or guidance from counselors and teachers," says Reyes, "about navigating the complexity and difficulty of the application process."

Reyes is a college senior studying business administration at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois. Last year, she won a \$2,000 scholarship in the Sampaguita Scholarship Competition—an annual written and verbal essay contest for Filipino American women studying at U.S. colleges and universities. Like the other five finalists against whom she competed, Reyes was required to submit a 300-word essay on the topic of Educational Downward Mobility. According to statistics, Reyes is an anomaly within her Filipino American community because of the sole fact that she is succeeding in college.

Among Asian American populations, the hidden trend sociologists call Educational Downward Mobility is unique to Filipino Americans. For decades, Census numbers have shown that a significantly fewer percentage of Filipino Americans born in the United States succeed in college compared with their immigrant counterparts. A puzzling phenomenon since those born in the U.S. would seemingly have an advantage over their immigrant peers in English language proficiency and familiarity with American culture.

Moreover, studies show that, because of cultural family biases, Filipino American women may have fewer opportunities to attend college than their male cousins and siblings. It's a disturbing trend that one Chicago group is attempting to reverse. Since 2015, The Sampaguita Group has awarded \$9,500 to Filipino American female students matriculated at 12 U. S. colleges and universities. The scholarships, raised from the community, range from \$200 to \$2,000. While the amounts may appear insignificant, when compared to other financial assistance awards, the Sampaguita Scholarships are impactful because of the messages that they carry.

"Every little bit helps," says Rose Tibayan, a co-founder of The Sampaguita Group, the non-profit which organizes the annual competition. "We do this, not only to encourage women to stay in college by giving them financial assistance, but, more importantly, to heighten awareness about the issue of Educational Downward Mobility affecting second-generation Filipino Americans."

On Saturday, July 29, 2017, five student finalists will vie for \$3,000 in scholarship funds at The 3rd Annual Sampaguita Ball—a gala where all guests wear white as a tribute to the Sampaguita, the national flower of the Philippines. The 2017 finalists are Jane Baron, a graduate student earning a Master's Degree in Education at DePaul University; Katherine De Lara, a junior studying Physical Therapy at Marquette University; Alison Dungca, a junior studying Communication Sciences and Disorders at Illinois State University; Cas Relucio, a senior majoring in Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; and Stephanie Sagun, a senior at the University of Illinois at Chicago studying electrical engineering. The event will be emceed by Janella Manalang, a nursing student who recently graduated with honors from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

This year's \$1,000 Valedictorian Sponsors include Joe Flores of Jay Dee Corporation, Lourdes Livas of Livas Real Estate Investments, and Rudy Pamintuan of Sherman Consulting.

To learn more about Educational Downward Mobility, visit: sampaguitagroup.org/references/ ###