



**PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL
PRESS RELEASE**

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**PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY 2009
INDEPENDENCE DAY BALL - PIDCI**

13 JUNE 2009, NEW YORK – The Philippine Consulate General New York, honorary chair of the Philippine Independence Day Council Incorporated, joined PIDCI President Gerry Austria, Parade Grand Marshall Dra. Fely Malanun-Santos and the members of the PIDCI in celebrating the success of the Independence Day Parade with a ball held on 13 June 2009 at the Grand Ballroom of the Sheraton Newark Hotel.

HE Ambassador Willy Gaa, Philippine Ambassador to the United States, Consul General Cecilia Rebong and Congressman Hermilando Mandanas, Representative of the 2nd District of Batangas honored the event with their presence.

A marked departure from the programs followed by the annual ball in years past, for this year the entire event was conceptualized not by the leaders of the organization which took part in the parade but by their children, second generation Filipino-Americans whose everyday experience as “children of two cultures” gives a unique perspective to the evolution of the Filipino community in the United States. This culminated in the short play entitled “Liham ng Bagong Bayani” written by Anna Mercado, Mark Mendoza, Michael Espiritu, Carlo Leabres and Joanne Garcia and directed by Anna Mercado and Basilio Valdehuesa, all second generation Filipino-Americans.

The play is summarized by the writers as a showcase of the providing a glimpse of the “resilience, compassion and generosity that mark true heroes...through the eyes of a Filipino-American actively trying to uncover his identity; a doctor willingly sacrificing his title but never his pride; a war veteran entrusting the youth that follow in his stead with his life calling; a mother aching for a daughter for whom she suffers solitude; we witness what it means to be the new heroes of our great nation.”

The Consulate General has long been concerned about how to involve the second-generation Filipino-Americans in Philippine projects, when many of them were born in the US and have no nostalgia for home-towns, schools or family left behind, and may not even identify themselves as Filipino. With the presentation made that evening, it appears that the younger generations of Filipino-Americans have a clear appreciation of Filipino identity. END.