

Sixty-Four Years of Championing JCI in Asia

JCI Manila was formally established on January 18, 1948, with the induction of its officers by then Secretary of Commence Placido L. Mapa, with Mayor Manuel C. dela Fuente as guest-of-honor. The Mayor challenged the JCI Members to help clean the City of Manila of the debris war. Not long after the induction, Artemio L. Vergel de Dios was feted by Junior Chamber International for bringing the JCI movement to Asia. On March 10, 1948, Jose N. Mayuga and Gregorio M. Feliciano were sent as delegates to the 3rd JCI World Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where they received their Certificate of Affiliation as a member of Junior Chamber International. On that Congress, Feliciano was elected as the first JCI Vice-President for Asia.

The fire of JCI Spirit was impressively stoked by the pioneers throughout the islands that, by the end of 1948, ten other JCI local organization sprouted around the country. This paved the way for the founding of the Junior Chamber of the Philippines, which held its first National Convention from February 11 to 13, 1949 in Manila, where its constitution and by-laws were approved. Ramon V. del Rosario was elected as JCP's first National President.

The remarkable leadership and community initiative best exemplified by JCI Manila were recognized even beyond Philippine shores. Thus, it was on March 1, 1950, using much creativity and imagination, Manila had the distinction of hosting the 5th JCI World Congress in Asian soil. There, Ramon V. del Rosario was unanimously elected JCI World President. The Congress marked the esteemed with which JCI regarded the Philippine Jaycees and the caliber of its members.

The "Voice of Democracy," conceived by Amelito R. Mutuc and Ramon V. del Rosario, and later instituted by the chapter in 1951, for example, aimed to encourage the Filipino youth to evaluate the president form of political rule in the country. A second example of the chapter's involvement was seen during election time when civic consciousness was encouraged among the citizenry. Through the launching of "Get Out the Vote" campaign by Benjardi M. Crame in 1948, people were made to see the significance of their right to vote. Another JCI Manila Project, organized to recognize and award young citizens who have directly contributed to the progress of the Filipino national was "The Outstanding Young Men" Awards, first conceived on April 15, 1959 by Project Chairman Howard Q. Dee; the project was since adopted by the National Organization.

"Not only hindsight allow us to say that nation-building would have been impossible without rallying the youth and applying all its vast talents and energies..."

--- Amb. Ramon V. del Rosario, Sr.

1948 Charter President, Manila Jaycees

The fifties were a time of innocence and innovation. Many of the traditional projects of the chapter were instituted during this period. Sports competition, such as the "Diamond Gloves for Boys" national boxing competition in 1955, and the "Walkathon" endurance contest, first launched in 1958, aimed to promote a community of healthy citizens. But perhaps the most acclaimed public service deed was shown when medical teams were sent to Vietnam in 1954 on a project named "Operation Brotherhood," the primary purpose of which was to give medical assistance to war-stricken victims. The brainchild of 1951-1952 President Oscar J. Arellano, the project ran for three years and reached global proportions, as it was later adopted by Junior Chamber International. Indeed, the fifties have successfully set a great example for the next generation to follow.

As the fiscal year of JCI was made to coincide with the calendar year, the members of JCI Manila joined in the commitment and furthered the goal of "service to humanity." The decade opened with the chapter hosting the 10th JCI Multi-National Conference from April 26-30, 1960, where more than a thousand Jaycee delegates from all over the Asia-Pacific region attended. This was followed by a second hosting 18th JCI Multi-National Conference held on April 30 to May 4, 1968, which was attended by over 1,200 delegates from 18 countries, within the same decade. The projects in vogue were "Operation Saklolo" in 1960, which aimed to provide relief operations to typhoon and flood-stricken victims nationwide; "Operation Godparents," which paid monthly visits to various orphanages in Manila, "Travel Philippines," a tourism campaign of the Manila Jaycees in 1961 that sought to encourage more foreign visitors to visit the Philippines; and the launching of the Blood Bank Building in Leveriza, Manila in 1967, among countless other projects.

Sensing the need to reach out to other chapters who look up to them for guidance, JCI Manila conducted an ambitious provincial visitation program in 1963; and later, to key cities around the world, under its "Operation Friendship" program. Through their indefatigable efforts, the chapter was awarded its first Minneapolis Trophy for the "Most Outstanding Chapter of the World" during the 17th JCI World Congress in Tel Aviv, Israel in 1963. This same feat was followed in 1966 and 1967, an unprecedented accomplishment indeed, for any single JCI local organization in existence at that time.

"(JCI) was heaven-sent for the young... it served as the vehicle for the young men to serve the community, while learning the ropes of management and leadership training. It widened their horizon and enlarged their contacts with people who mattered..."

---Amb. Alfonso T. Yuchenco, Sr.

1958 President, Manila Jaycees

Generation to move the youth of the 1940s burned on unflinchingly in a newer and more militant generation of young and idealistic men. With the sterling goal of surpassing the feat of their predecessors, a multitude of projects were undertaken, some of which were the "Operation Bagong Pag-Asa," a medical program aimed to provide family health education, family planning, medical check-up, medical consultation and treatment to 2,500 of the most impoverished families in Tondo in 1970; the "Mushroom Spawn" Project, a home-based mushroom-culture livelihood training program for the "out-school-youth" with the long range objective of boosting the export industry to bring in much-needed dollars; and the holding of the "First Manila Grand Prix," the first international competition of this nature, directed towards boosting tourism in the country.

JCI Manila refused to remain unattached to the activism of the decade. Where teach-ins and university-wide protest rallies have become a global phenomenon, the chapter showed its relevance by putting out position papers on the Price Control Bill, the Export Incentive Bill, and other important economic issues. Some of these projects even led to a call for sobriety, following the violent student demonstrations in 1970, with the distribution of several thousand posters, urging the public to "win changes without losing lives."

The declaration of Martial Law in 1972 led to abnormal times for JCI Manila. Due to the banning of many organizations, coupled by the unstable political climate brought about by a dictatorial decree, the chapter concentrated in the "reawakening" of the JCI spirit among its members, along with the community image-building objectives, which were thought to be made compatible with the changing times.

During this period, the chapter initiated meaningful community and youth-oriented projects, particularly with direct social impact. They worked for a greater involvement in public affairs, and the promotions of a vigorous Chamber image as a group concerned with the socio-economic and political problems besetting the nation, and committed to doing its share in their amelioration. Generous sponsors and donors made fruition the "bahay na tiza-style" JCI Manila Clubhouse which has completed on November 19, 1977, built at a cost of 600,000 pesos. With the world paying witness to rapidly shifting political and social structures, the fall of dictatorial governments and the rise of people-empowered democracies have led JCI Manila towards addressing the changing needs of a community in search of political direction.

Two of the most acclaimed projects stood out as becoming lasting institutions: the Camp: "PAG-IBIG" program for physically-challenged children in 1982, and the Mother Teresa Humanitarian Awards Search in 1983. The Mother Teresa Awards was launched to honor men and women who have devoted their entire lives to the service of the "poorest of the poor."

"I regarded (JCI) as an institution of practical learning where I could imbibe the realities of making a living, doing business and succeeding..."

--- Aurelio O. Periquet, Jr.
1963 President, Manila Jaycees

The decade started auspiciously as the chapter administration, fresh from a divisive election fight, undertook programs focused on building better ties with the community through a number of innovative development projects. Activities, such as the S.A.N.G.G.O.L. ("Save And Nurture God's Gift of Life") project, which was aimed to provide support to indigent pregnant women; and, the C.A.S.H. ("Create A Sports Hero") program, where JCI Members were tapped to adopt promising athletes in their quest for the gold medal at international sports meets, were all successfully done. Other worthy pursuits included the revival of some traditional projects, that included, "Pamasko Sa Caritas," "M.O.M.S." Awards, and the "Manila S.E.L.E.C.T."

The year 1991 also saw the birth of the VANGUARD Seminar, which was later made a requirement before attaining full membership in the Chapter. Under a string of an able and inspired leadership, the organization went on to conduct outstanding community projects, renewed ties with at least seven international JCI sister chapters and embarked on pursuing its bid for the 1998 JCI World Congress. A major undertaking was the "Animal Exchange Project" in 1993 that saw the exchange of local species of animals between the Philippines and Korea. In 1994, the Chamber swept all major awards in the Metro Area, National, and International Congresses, as it received its seventh "Most Outstanding Chapter of the World" Award and its fourth "Most Outstanding Chapter President of the World" Award at the 50th JCI World Congress in Kobe, Japan.

For a new generation of leaders, JCI Manila stepped up to meet the new challenges that faced the movement. It was an auspicious start for the chapter in Y2K: it marked a series of innovative achievements in the area of internationalism. The Year 2000 also marked a milestone in Seoul-Taegu-Manila relations with the establishment of the first-ever International Business Forum, a two day investment mission. In 2001, a strong, year-round sports development program, consisting of volleyball, bowling, billiards, golf, and basketball tournaments, was undertaken. In 2004, JCI Manila topped the nationwide JCI Philippines Efficiency Ranking (JCPEA) for the first time and garnered its fifth "Most Outstanding Chapter President of the World" award at the 60th JCI World Congress in Fukuoka, Japan. This was followed by a sixth-peat recognition for its president in 2008 at the 64th JCI World Congress in New Dehli, India.

In 2010, enthused with a spirit of purpose and renewed vigor, the JCI Manila leadership blazed on with such innovative projects as "Rock-and-Run," "Dare to C.A.R.E.," the first "Ramon V. del Rosario Award for National Building," and the "Smokey Mountain Field of Dreams," while hosting the widely-successful 61st Asia-Pacific Conference in 2011. As JCI Manila braces itself for its 64th term in 2012, the members can look forward to another year of excellence that is the hallmark of Asia's first and premier JCI local organization.

"When I was invited and challenged to be the President of (JCI Manila)... I was convinced to give it a try. I did this, hoping to share the vision of the (JCI) founders to all..."

--- Cecilio K. Pedro

1993 President, JCI Manila