

Way to success: Monica's story



“Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value.” – Albert Einstein

This holds true for Monica Beltran, 13 years old and a grade-8 student at Aningway Scatihan High School Annex VI, Aningway, Subic, Zambales.

Monica Beltran belongs to an Indigenous Peoples (IP) community. Their house is a one-hour travel from the town proper. With the abundant agricultural land area in the community, her father, Joey Vigilia, 43, manages a small vegetable garden which serves as their means of living. He also engages in construction work as a laborer earning P250.00 a day on an irregular basis.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Beltran, 41, works as a housemaid in the neighboring town and earns P3,000.00 a month. This year only that the couple got married and the birth certificate of their children bear the surname of their mother, Beltran.

“Dati po mahirap ang buhay namin lalo na nang magkasakit ang asawa ko ng isang taon at ako lang ang nagtrabaho. Buti na lang at nakasali kami sa Pantawid at gumaan ang buhay namin. Hindi na naging problema ang gastusin sa school at pamasaheng mga anak namin sa araw-araw. Nakapagpundar na rin kami ng maliit na tindahan at ang aming kinikita duon ay pandagdag na rin sa mga gastusin sa bahay,” Elizabeth said.

The fourth child among the couple's six children, Monica got a scholarship and able to study in a private school. She is a consistent first honor student and often times a school representative for co-curricular and extra-curricular

activities. Her dedication towards learning can be seen through her achievements from 2005 up to present. She also actively participates in the National Commission on Culture and Arts (NCCA), School of Living Tradition project under the supervision of the Foundation of Our Lady of Peace Mission, Inc. which aims to develop the skills of IP students.

In spite of her long travel from their home to school, nothing can stop her. "I am not studying just to fulfill my dreams but to fulfill others as well, Monica said. In her humble beginnings, she even wanted to share her knowledge within her Sitio by teaching the people how to read and write.

Beyond her achievements, she knows what aspect should be given more importance. In her answer to the question "Sa lahat ng nakamit mo at natutunan mo sa eskwelahan at sa komunidad, ano ang pinakapinahahalagahan mo at bakit," Monica said, "Una po ay huwag kalimutang tumawag sa Diyos dahil kahit na gaano ka katagumpay, kailangan pa rin natin ang gabay at paghingi ng gabay at kalasakasan tungo sa magandang buhay. Pangalawa po ay ang pagkakaroon ng magandang pag-uugali/asal dahil mas maganda ang taong malinis ang kalooban na handing tumulong sa nanganailangan ng walang kapalit. Sabi nga nila, Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value."

In sharing the positive change in her family, Monica said, "Mas naging magaan po ang aming pamumuhay at mas lalo pang naging matiwasay at payapa sa tulong ng Pantawid. Mula noong nagsimula ay gumanda ang antas ng aming pamumuhay. Sa ngayon po ay third year college na ang isa sa aking mga kapatid. Nang dahil po sa inyong tulong, makakamit na niya ang tagumpay. Bilang benipisyaryo ng Pantawid kaming pong lahat na magkakapatid ay makakatapos din sa pag-aaral. Kayat salamat po sa inyo, ang laki ng naitulong ninyo sa amin at pati na sa ibang tao. Sana po ay lumawig po ang programa."

Isa po kayong inspirasyon sa paggawa ng mabuti sa napakaraming

Pilipino, Monica concluded. ###