


# Lighting the Fire of Love

“Malakas na pamilya ang bumubuo sa malakas na bansa. Kung  ano ang nangyayari sa lipunan ay sinasalamain lang nito ang mga pangyayari sa bawat tahanan (Strong family entails a strong nation. The condition in a country mirrors the occurrences in every family),” said Ptr. Arnold Pascual during the Couples’ Day Off last February 27-28, 2016 at the Multi-Purpose Hall, Quezon, Nueva Ecija.

It was a Post Valentine Activity spearheaded by the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Municipal Action Team (MAT) of Quezon Nueva Ecija of the DSWD Field Office III in partnership with Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), Multi-Skills Training Institute of the Philippines Incorporated (MTIPI), Victory Church of Cabanatuan, and the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Quezon, with all intent to light the fire of love of the Pantawid beneficiary couples.

This was a pilot activity attended by 37 couples from the different barangays of the municipality of Quezon. It was aimed to let the couples’ voice out phrases that they missed to say in their everyday life since they were already centered to the well-being of their children. They were also given a chance to reminisce and bring back their teenage romantic moments; they exchange love letters and danced under the light of a bonfire.

The venue was filled with tears and laughter as each couple recall their past experience and encountered moments. To completely forget all their resentment for their partners, the participants were asked to write it in piece of paper and then let it be ashes and be blown away by the wind.

“Marami akong baong natutunan na pwede kong i-apply sa aking sarili at sa aming mag-asawa (I will take home a lot of learnings that I can apply to myself and to us as a couple),”

said Annie Rose Paloma, 19, wife of Jimboy Corpuz, 23. They were the youngest couple among the throng.

The participants also received lectures and seminars on matrimonial relationship, good communication, and the roles and responsibilities of a husband/wife. But among all the activities, the highlight of the program was the couples' renewals of vows.

"Maligayang maligaya ako at mas lalo pang nadagdagan ang aming kaalaman tungkol sa tiwala at pagmamahal (I am overjoyed for we gained additional understanding about trust and love)," said Marcelina Santos. "Pag-uwi namin, tulad ng mga bagong kasal, kami ay magho-honey moon (When we got home, just like the newlyweds, we are going to have a honeymoon," said Mariolito Santos. The couple was awarded as the sweetest of all; they were 28 years married.

The event ended with a gift giving to the newlyweds. It was a bedding set: a mat, which symbolizes purity or loyalty for it should not be stained; a blanket, which symbolizes warmth; and a mosquito net, which symbolizes their submission to God. They were also given PhP500.00 each, as a compensation for their supposedly working hours.

"Natutuwa kaming successful ang event dahil mag-asawa nang uuwi ang mga participants, 'di tulad nang pumunta sila rito na parang magkasama lang (We are happy that this event was a success since the participants will now go home as a couple, not just a mere comrade like when they arrive yesterday)," said Ms. Jocelyn Sebastian, Municipal Link ### (Andyleen C. Feje)