

# Volunteerism by heart

“Masaya ako sa pigiging volunteer kung saan nagkakaroon ako ng self-fulfilmeant. Hindi ko maipaliwanag ang saya na nadudulot nito sa aking sarili,” a quote from Tata Pio (Romulo P. Alejandro), 73, of Brgy Sta. Rita, Quezon, Nueva Ecija.

An active volunteer for KALAHY CIDSS, Tata Pio was born and raised in Quezon. He is a member of Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (FSCAP) Quezon chapter and president of the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) for more than 10 years. He is also a barangay secretary in Barangay Sta Rita, a member of the civil society organization (CSO,) co-chairman of the Bottom up Budgeting Local Poverty Reduction Team (BUB LPRAT) and a Team Leader of all the co-chairperson in the Provincial BUB LPRAT. At the age of 73, he still manages to be active with all the tasks expected from him without asking anything in return.

Tata Pio raised his own family and started working in Metro Manila as an Accounting Staff from 1967 to 1989. But his heart really belongs to serving his municipality, which made him decide to go back and serve the people in his community. He also serves as a Barangay Secretary from the year 2000 to the present.

Whenever KALAHY-CIDSS has an activity, he is always present and encourages people in the barangay to attend both the municipal and the barangay assemblies. “Para sa akin, ang layunin ng KALAHY-CIDSS ay hindi lamang sa pagtulong na umunlad ang isang bayan kundi upang turuan at paunlarin ang kakayahan at isipan ng mga mamamayan. Tinuturuan sila upang magkaisa at matutong tumayo sa kanilang sariling mga paa. At ako ay handang maging instrumento at taos pusong tutulong sa pag-asenso ng mga taga Quezon,” he said.

For him the program’s initiative for bayanihan is a good

practice. “Napakalaking bagay ang salitang bayanihan at Ito ay kitang-kita sa programang KALAHI-CIDSS; tinuturuan nito ang mga tao sa barangay na magmalasakit at tumulong sa kanyang komunidad na walang hinihintay na anumang kapalit,” he stressed.

With his other organizations, Tata Pio also does activities that promote bayanihan. He organizes a clean-up project in every purok in their barangay at least once a month. Indeed, being a modern day hero doesn't require any age, sex or capability.

His voluntary works paid off when the DSWD Field Office III awarded him the “Bayani Ka!” Award for Best Senior Citizen Volunteer. DSWD cited him for rendering voluntary service and invaluable support to Kalahi-CIDSS by advocating community empowerment through Community-Driven Development and for mobilizing his fellow senior citizens to become volunteers and advocates of the program.

Tata Pio has proven that regardless of your age or status in the community, for as long as you have the heart to serve, you can be a bayani. ###