

Social Pension benefits more seniors in Central Luzon

(City of San Fernando, Pampanga) At least 44,134 older persons are benefiting from the Social Pension Program for older persons this year.

Regional Director Gemma B. Gabuya of the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office III (DSWD FO III) said that there is an increase of 13,027 beneficiaries for this year due to the lowering of the age requirement from 77 to 65 years old and above.

From the 31,107 beneficiaries in 2014 with P500 monthly stipend or P6,000.00 each for one year or the total amount of P128,780,500, the allocation has increased to P264,804 million for the implementation of the program this year, Gabuya said.

The senior citizens were identified based on the result of the data generated by the Listahanan or National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) of the DSWD.

The provision of the P500 monthly social pension to indigent senior citizens is provided under Republic Act No. 9994, also known as the "Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010."

The DSWD has issued operational guidelines that senior citizens who are 65 years old and above who meet the eligibility criteria will benefit from this program. All qualified senior citizens shall receive their P500 monthly social pension on a quarterly basis.

Under RA 9994, indigent senior citizens shall be entitled to a monthly social pension of P500 to augment their daily subsistence and other medical needs. Indigent senior citizens are those who are frail, sick, disabled, not receiving monthly pension from Government Service Insurance System (GSIS),

Social Security System (SSS), Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO), Armed Forces of the Philippines Savings and Loan Association, Inc. (AFPSLAI) and other private insurance companies. Senior citizens who do not have permanent source of income or regular support from their families or relatives are also qualified to avail of the program. ### (Social Marketing Unit)

Reyes' formula for success

“Magsikap, magtipid lalo na pag nag-uumpisa pa lang sa pangkabuhayang proyekto at ang mga gastusin ay di dapat sosobra sa kinikita.”

The Reyes couple believes that through perseverance and simple living, their family will overcome poverty. This is the story of their transformation from sheer poverty to improved quality of life.

Looking Back

The Reyes family belongs to the Set 3 beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program of Floridablanca, Pampanga. The family was however one of those tagged not enrolled resulting to non-subsidy for one (1) year. Upon completion of the requirements, they received retroactive payments of P15,000.00. Rizalita, 43, recalled that she cried with joy when she received the amount, “Nuon lang po ako nakahawak ng ganuong kalaking pera kaya nagpapasalamat ako sa pamahalaan sa tulong na ibinigay sa pamilya ko’”.

With the P15,000.00 cash grants on hand, the family prioritized the most important things which include the food and school supplies of their three children enrolled in the

program; down payment of one motorcycle worth P3,400.00; and P6,000.00 as payment for the two Aetas whom they commissioned to plant ampalaya and string beans.

The family used the remaining P2,600.00 as capital in trading vegetables and charcoal from the upland areas which they brought to Guagua and Floridablanca public markets. After a month, they started harvesting the vegetables planted by the two Aetas which resulted to more sales and profit.

Before their inclusion in the Pantawid Pamilya in 2010, Joseph Reyes, 45, worked as a farm laborer earning P200.00 a day during planting season and 4-5 sacks of rice during harvesting season. Rizalita used to do laundry jobs two or three times a week. Between planting and harvesting seasons, Joseph was jobless.

To cope with their basic needs, the family had to approach sari-sari store owners in the barangay for their daily food subsistence through credit basis. She said that they could hardly meet the educational expenses of their children especially during lean months of farming. "Life was so hard because of the rebuff we received from our relatives and neighbors whenever we tried to borrow money from them," Rizalita lamented.

Their house is a one-room affair made of light materials, cogon and sawali. During rainy season, they sometimes experienced uncomfortable nights because the strong rain would usually rouse them from sleep soaked with rain. They could not afford electricity so a lampara (improvised lamp) was all they had that time.

"We were a 'nobody' in the community because of our economic status. That's why we felt very inferior and had to remain on the sidelines for so long," Rizalita said. She said that the financial difficulty they had for a long time was their motivation for their hard work and for not spending any amount for unnecessary expenses.

Things took a turn for the better

“With the income derived from our livelihood projects: planting rice to the agricultural lot pawned to us and the backyard piggery, we can now see positive changes in our living condition,” Rizalita said. According to her, their monthly income now ranges from P30,000-40,000.00 and that they already finished paying the motorcycle with side car which they use in their business. Their second motorcycle, which is being used as school service for their children, is now on the second year of payment. “Our children are now comfortable in going to school because they don’t have to walk very far,” Rizalita said.

The construction of our three-bedroom house is now underway, Rizalita said with a happy note on her voice. Although their present dwelling is made of cogon and sawali, it is a far cry from the one they used to have, Rizalita added. They used a lampara before but now they already have some appliances such as TV set and DVD player, electric fans, beds with mattresses, rice cooker and some electronic gadgets.

Rizalita said that she has gained confidence in dealing with people and can now express her ideas without fear of being rebuffed. She has to attribute this to the Family Development Sessions (FDS) and the trainings and seminars that she attended as a parent leader of the Pantawid Pamilya. As a result, she was elected as classroom secretary for her two sons enrolled in Grades IV and V. She is also one of the Barangay Health Workers in their community and was elected president of the Self-Employment Assistance Kaunlaran (SKA) because of her remarkable ideas during the Business Management Training (BMT) held in their town.

Meanwhile, Joseph personally attends to the agricultural lot pawned to them where they yield 30 sacks of palay every four months.

There is also a notable improvement in the health of their children because of the sufficient and nutritious food intake they have. Their academic standing in school has also improved, Rizalita proudly said.

Gains of the Sustainable Livelihood Program

In 2013, the family had also benefitted from the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the DSWD which they invested (P10,000.00) in expanding their livelihood endeavor, cogon and buho trading. Rizalita said that they are getting an additional profit of P1,000.00 per week.

We believe in the saying, 'save for the rainy days' that's why we opened a savings account after my attendance to the BMT, Rizalita said. She was convinced on the importance of savings and had learned how to prioritize the needs of her family especially the education of her children.

Today the family earns more than enough for their basic needs. Rizalita has this lesson to impart to other beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilya and Sustainable Livelihood Program: "Magsikap, magtipid lalo na pag nag-uumpisa pa lang sa pangkabuhayang proyekto at ang mga gastusin ay di dapat sosobra sa kinikita." ### (SMU/SLP)

Gawad Listahanan Winner

Mayor Santiago Austria (5th from left) of Jaen, Nueva Ecija receives the first Gawad Listahanan Award under the Municipal Category from DSWD field Office III Regional Director Gemma B. Gabuya during the 64th DSWD Anniversary celebration. Also in photo are former Regional Director Adelina S. Apostol (3rd from left), ARD Irene C. Crespo (2nd from left), MSWD0

Paperlyn Pablo (6th from left) and some DSWD Field Office III staff.

The municipality of Jaen replicated the social pension of the Department in their municipality to respond to the needs of many senior citizens who are not covered by the national government. Listahanan-identified poor senior citizens are the first priority of the municipality. Out of 990 indigent senior citizens listed on the database 770 are still alive and qualified for the assistance.

The Listahanan database became part of every program and services of the municipality. The focal person of each sector uses the database as priority in different services which they call as 'Listahanan Habit'. The Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office oriented all the barangay captains of Jaen to fully understand and appreciate the importance of Listahanan.

Aurora bags Gawad Listahanan Award

Regional Director Gemma B. Gabuya ((5th from left) awards the first Gawad Listahanan to the Provincial Government of Aurora under the Provincial Category during the 64th DSWD Anniversary celebration. Eleanor Olivar (6th from left), Provincial Planning and Development Officer IV receives the award in behalf of Governor Gerardo Noveras.

The province has registered 4,754 beneficiaries of its locally funded Educational Assistance Program in the Listahanan database of poor families. The Listahanan database serves as the province's directory in targeting and selecting

beneficiaries of the programs and services being implemented in the province. Also in photo are ARD Irene Crespo (3rd from left), former Director Adelina S. Apostol (4th from left) and DSWD Field Office staff.

DSWD Field Office III awards first Gawad Listahanan

(City of San Fernando, Pampanga) The Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office III (DSWD FO III) conferred the first Gawad Listahanan to the Provincial Government of Aurora and the Municipality of Jaen, Nueva Ecija during the 64th DSWD Anniversary celebration held on February 6 in this city.

The Gawad Listahanan or the Data Utilization Awards is an award that aims to recognize Local Government Units (LGUs) as the Department's data sharing partners and advocates of objective targeting of social protection beneficiaries. It confers award to LGUs for providing services and assistance to the Listahanan-identified poor families.

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On the other hand, the Provincial Government of Aurora (PGA) uses Listahanan database to identify their beneficiaries in their locally funded Educational Assistance Program. The program aims to supplement and augment educational needs through financial assistance to poor but deserving students.

To ensure the utilization of the Listahanan database, the PGA makes sure that the Listahanan identified poor are included and given priority. "The challenge for a local chief executive is not the provision or delivery of programs/projects of services to your constituents but it is in identifying who among them are the neediest so as not to miss anyone deserving help especially with the scarce resources. The Listahanan database of DSWD serves as directory in targeting and selecting beneficiaries vis a vis programs and services. As the chief executive, it helps me in investing and planning for the right intervention for the right clientele, unlike before when there is no available data and one has to guess," Governor Gerardo A. Noveras said.

To qualify for the awards, the LGU must have an active Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department on Listahanan data sharing; it has funded and implemented a program that provides direct service/intervention to the Listahanan-identified poor, such as but not limited to Scholarship, Medical Assistance and Livelihood and Skills Training; and must be 100% compliant with the annual reportorial requirement of data sharing as specified in the MOA.

Currently, the DSWD Field Office III has 90 data users comprising of provincial governments, municipalities, cities and congressional districts.

Listahanan is an information management system that identifies who and where the poor are in the country. The system makes available to national government agencies and other social protection stakeholders a database of poor families as reference in identifying potential beneficiaries of social protection programs and services. (Alexis Myer I. Delicano)

Director Gabuya, DSWD Field Office III new head

Regional Director Gemma B. Gabuya (center) formally starts her stint as the new regional director of DSWD Field Office III in a simple ceremony led by Undersecretary Florita R. Villar (3rd from left) on February 2, 2015. Prior to her new assignment, Director Gabuya heads the Policy Development and Planning at the DSWD Central Office. She was installed by Usec. Villar, who served as the Officer-in-Charge of the Field Office for five months after the mandatory retirement of former Regional Director Adelina S. Apostol on September 2014. Also in photo are the members of the Regional Management and Development Committee. (SMU)

DSWD FO III hires field staff for Listahanan

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(City of San Fernando, Pampanga) The Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office III (DSWD FO III) is in need of 4,451 field staff, Regional Deputy Project Manager Lalaine R. De Leon said.

The hiring, which is in line with the conduct of the second round of household assessment in the first quarter of 2015, includes area supervisors, area coordinators, enumerators, encoders, and verifiers who will take part in ensuring that real poor households are selected, De Leon said. Central Luzon is one of the regions with large number of target households which is 1,451,248, De Leon added.

Listahanan also known as the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) database is updated every four years. It is an information management system that identifies who and where the poor in the country. The system makes available to national government agencies and other social protection stakeholders a database of poor households as reference in identifying potential beneficiaries of social protection programs like Pantawid Pamilya, Social Pension and Sustainable Livelihood Program.

For the past three (3) years, the National Household Targeting Office has implemented various activities that complete its project cycle. These activities resulted to the establishment of the database of 5.25 million poor households nationwide (322,622 identified poor households in Region 3), which became the basis for identifying beneficiaries of social protection programs of national government agencies.

The second round of household assessment aims to provide timely and updated data on poor households to public and private social protection stakeholders to enable them to develop and implement responsive policies, programs and services.

Interested applicants are required to submit their resume at the DSWD Field Office III or to the Social Welfare and Development (SWAD) Team located in the in the seven (7) the provinces of the region. Deadline for the submission of applications will be on February 28, 2015.(Alexis Myer I. Delicano)