

Saskatoon Shines and Celebrates!
**In recognition of Filipino Heritage Month In Canada and Filipino-Canadian
Month in Saskatoon--in commemoration of 122 years of Philippine
Independence Day-June 12, 2020**

Series #3: Next Generation Continues..

It was very important for my parents and grandparents that we spoke and understood Tagalog especially being born in Canada. My sister and I were fortunate enough to be one of the first students at the Filipino Heritage School when it first started in the 90s. It was always fun to go to Filipino school every Sunday at Estey School (Royal West now). I remember it being fun because it was time with my friends but it was also fun learning Tagalog.



I have many memories of Filipino School. Tita Mela was my first teacher when we were in the intermediate class. My Auntie Elvira Ferraro was also a teacher who taught the younger children and she was a great advocate to us learning Tagalog. As I got older Ferdie Ferrer was our teacher. We did many things at Filipino School such as learning Banduria and Octavia. We did plays, one in particular I remember is *Ibong Adarna* and the most fun was learning traditional filipino dances such as *Tinikling* and *Pandang sa Ilaw*.

In between high school and University, I taught the older students at the Heritage school which sparked my interest in teaching. This was one of the reasons why I became a teacher. I now teach at École St. Gerard which has a large population of filipino students. It is nice to be able to speak to my students in Tagalog but also French which is the language of instruction.

There is nothing but benefits when it comes to learning a new language! I encourage everyone to learn Tagalog. One of the benefits for me was visiting the Philippines and speaking to my relatives in Tagalog. I hope to one day send my own children to Filipino Heritage school so they too can keep the Tagalog language. – Shella Gonzales (Luistro)

Ang kabataan ang pag-asa ng bayan! Di ba't iyan ang sinabi ni Dr. Jose Rizal na paulit-ulit na pinapa-alala sa atin ng ating mga ninuno, mga lola at lolo, tiyo at tiya, mga magulang at kahit si ninong at ninang. At dahil sa paniniwalang ito, kahit na gaanong hirap ay sisikapin ng ating mga magulang na mapag-aral tayo. Ika nga at kadalasan nilang sabihin—"igagapang ko kayo kahit anong hirap upang hindi nyo maranasan ang hirap na aming dinanas." Sa pagsisikhay ng ating mga kabataan at pagti-tiyaga sa pag-aaral, dumadating din ang bunga ng kanilang

pinaghirapan. Sa ating mga kabataan, huwag sana ninyong kalimutan ang inyong pinagdaanan, tamasahin ang ganda at ligaya ng kasalukuyan at maging inspirasyon nawa sa inyo ang maginhawang kinabukasan upang matupad ninyo ang inyong mga pangarap. Ang pag-aaral ang pundasyon ng magandang kinabukasan na hindi maaring makuha ng kahit na sinuman dahil ang kaalaman at dunong ang gagabay sa inyong pang-araw-araw na hamon ng buhay. Sa inyong pagtatagumpay, nawa ay alalahanin ang pagpapasalamat sa lahat ng mga grasyang galing sa ating Panginoon. Pasalamatan ang ating mga magulang at ang inyong mga sarili sa pagbata ng hirap at sakripisyo sa pag-aaral na minsan pa ay sinasabayan ng pagtatrabaho. Alalahanin na may dugong Pilipino na dumadaloy sa inyong mga ugat at dapat na mahal in kahit na saan mang sulok ng mundo kayo makarating.

Thank you, Shella, for sharing your experience as a young student, a volunteer teacher, and an accomplished teacher. Thank you to other Filipino teachers who chose to be instrumental in educating our young generation. We are also proud of the growing second and third generation of accomplished Filipinos of whom many became doctors, nurses, accountants, teachers, engineers, architects, etc. Whatever field of study you chose to take, please remember where you came from. Although no fancy celebrations of graduation exercises and parties are happening due to COVID-19, we wish the best to those who graduated from elementary, high school, and university levels for the school year 2019-2020. We salute you!

--Felicitas Santos-Vargas, President, Filipino-Canadian Association of Saskatoon, Inc. (FILCAS)