

Three Basic Questions - Letter to Filipino BC

TO: Filipino Canadian Community & Cultural Society of BC (Filipino BC) & RJ Aquino

Answers to three basic questions are all that we ask.

We are members of the community who donated, promoted your fundraising efforts, and helped you raise funds in support of the victims and their families during a time of tragedy. When we gave, we did so with one clear understanding: **that the funds raised by Filipino BC would go to those who were directly affected.**

People gave because lives were lost, families were shattered, and others were left with permanent, life-altering injuries. The community responded with compassion and urgency because we believed we were helping the victims and their families rebuild.

What we are now hearing is deeply upsetting. Victims and their families themselves are saying that they received little to no meaningful support, whether financial or otherwise. At the same time, it is being reported that **over \$2,000,000 was raised from the public following last year's Lapu Lapu Festival tragedy by Filipino BC.** Despite this, all the community has seen from Filipino BC is that significant portions of those funds were directed toward programs such as public park healing circles, art therapy, a basketball court project, and other workshops that do not provide direct, tangible support to those most affected – the victims and their families.

There are victims who continue to suffer from the tragedy – some with debilitating and life-altering injuries. In one particular instance, we heard that a victim's family received only \$1,300 in total support. In another instance, a victim's family reported receiving only \$800 from Filipino BC. These amounts are a stark and shameful contrast from the figures you boasted to have received, and they are deeply inconsistent with what the public was led to believe their donations were meant to support.

In addition to concerns about how funds were used and distributed, there are growing questions about your organization itself. Many in the community have noted the number of individuals represented to be in staff and leadership roles, and there are concerns being raised that victim funds are being used to pay Filipino BC rather than going to victims.

What is equally concerning is the way these questions have been handled to date. Your past responses have been disappointing and, frankly, unacceptable. Your Crisis Response Impact Report does not answer any of these questions. Whether raised by members of the community or your own former directors, basic questions have been repeatedly asked – not only by the public, but also by the media – yet they remain unanswered. Each time concerns are raised, they are met either with silence or with responses that are grounded in obvious avoidance.

We ask these three questions plainly, because the community deserves answers:

- 1. Where did all of the money go if not to the victims?**
- 2. Did you or anyone at Filipino BC receive any of it or any benefit from any of it?**
- 3. Were any staff, board members, or persons affiliated with them paid, directly or indirectly, from the funds raised?**

These are straightforward questions. The continuing refusal to answer them directly, and the ongoing lack of transparency, is only deepening public concern and eroding trust.

We are concerned because victims and their families themselves are reporting that they received little to no meaningful support, despite the significant money raised and the promises of your organization.

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In light of all of this, the fact that Filipino BC continues to seek additional sponsorships, donations, and funding to organize and manage the 2026 Lapu Lapu Festival is deeply abhorrent and, to many in the community, unacceptable. Given that Filipino BC is again asking the public for money, there is a serious and legitimate concern about how those funds will be handled and whether they will be used as represented.

This is not just about accounting. It is about trust. Right now, our trust in Filipino BC has been broken. We, along with many others in the community, do not feel confident supporting your future events or fundraisers because, in the absence of basic answers to basic questions, we cannot trust that our contributions will be used in the way you represent.

To repair our community's integrity, it is important that any group or persons who wish to provide support to Filipino BC are provided with full transparency on the above issues to avoid ambiguity.

You raised funds in connection with this tragedy and represented that those funds would benefit the victims. The public deserves a clear and direct answer from you. Failing to address these basic questions, and instead pointing fingers elsewhere, deepens our concern and avoids accountability. Enough deflecting and enough finger-pointing. Shifting blame does not answer the questions being asked.

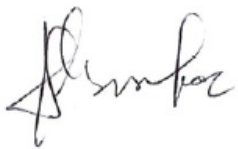
You cannot take the spotlight when it benefits you and then hide from basic questions when accountability is needed.

We want to continue to support our community. We want to continue to show up in times of need. But we need clarity, transparency, and honesty before we can do so again with confidence.

The victims and their families deserve and continue to deserve to be the priority. Our community that stood behind them deserves answers.

We ask that you answer our questions openly and directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Gumboc', written in a cursive style.

Sandra Gumboc
Maisug Vancouver
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