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# MLA Mable Elmore calls for return of unspent Lapu-Lapu donations



*Vancouver-Kensington MLA Mable Elmore says survivors and families of victims need the continuing support of the Filipino and wider communities.*

*A B.C. MLA is calling on groups that received Lapu-Lapu donations to turn over unspent funds so these resources can be redirected to support survivors and families of victims of the April 26, 2025 festival attack in Vancouver.*

Mable Elmore, MLA for Vancouver-Kensington, says that people impacted by the incident continue to deal with the effects of last year's tragedy.

"Survivors and families of those whose lives were taken continue to bear the weight of their loss. They need all the help we can give in their healing," Elmore said.

In line with this, Elmore has written United Way BC, asking the charitable organization that launched the Kapwa Strong Fund to receive and distribute donations, to assist in the repatriation of unspent funds.

Specifically, the Vancouver MLA requested United Way BC to ask groups that it granted monies out of the Kapwa Strong Fund to give back leftover funds.

"I am confident that with your suggestion, groups

that received part of the Kapwa Strong Fund will show compassion and respond favourably," Elmore wrote in her letter dated April 21, 2026.

Elmore's letter was addressed to United Way BC CEO and president Michael McKnight, board chair Nicolas Jimenez, and the senior leadership and board of the charity.

**The Kapwa Strong Fund raised more than \$2 million.**

A big portion representing \$1,574,556.04 went towards grants to nearly 40 groups, while Lapu-Lapu festival organizer Filipino BC was allocated \$451,570.

In addition to \$451,570, Filipino BC also got \$50,000 from the grants totalling \$1,574,556.04.

**Here is a breakdown of how that money was distributed:**

1. Alliance Philippines Cultural Heritage Association – \$50,000

2. Amici Curiae Friendship Society – \$50,000

3. Association for Neighbourhood Houses – Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House – \$20,000

4. Association for Neighbourhood Houses – South Vancouver Neighbourhood House – \$49,483.12

5. Bandits Community Foundation – \$30,000

6. Bibak Organization of British Columbia – \$25,000

7. British

Columbia Bereavement Helpline – \$25,000

8. Dance West Network – \$25,000

9. Filipino Canadian Community & Cultural Society of British Columbia (Filipino BC) – \$50,000

10. Formative Motion Society – \$25,000

11. Gallery Gachet Society – \$3,189.54

12. GJ Multicultural Services Society – \$65,000

13. H.I.M. Health Initiative for Men's Society – \$25,000

14. Himig Kabataan Cultural Society – \$25,000

15. Indigenous Wellness Training Society – \$50,000

16. Kathara Pilipino Indigenous Arts Collective Society – \$25,000

17. KCH Collective Society – \$25,000

18. LatinCouver Cultural & Business Society – \$55,000

19. Mabuhay House Society – \$75,000

20. Maple Bamboo Network Society – \$15,000

21. Migrante BC – Filipino Society – \$25,000

22. MovingForward Family Services – \$25,000

23. Multicultural Helping House Society – \$25,000

24. National Pilipino Canadian Cultural Centre Society – \$25,000

25. Philippine Cultural Arts Society of BC – \$20,800

26. Philippine Nurses Association, British Columbia, Canada – \$25,000

27. PNA Philippine Nurses Association – \$50,000

28. Pinoy Pride Vancouver Society – \$25,000

29. REACH Community Health Centre Association – \$12,370

30. Sher Vancouver LGBTQ Friends Society – \$75,000

31. St. John Society – \$22,800

32. The Landing Youth Centre Foundation – \$49,955.27

33. The Little Mountain Neighbourhood House Society – \$50,000

34. United Filipino Canadian Associations in BC – \$145,000 & \$100,000

35. University of the Philippines Alumni Association in British Columbia – \$10,000

36. Vancouver International Centre for Contemporary Asian Art – \$25,000

37. VS. Creative Society – \$25,000

In her letter to United Way BC, Elmore suggested that any funds returned should be disbursed directly by the charity to survivors and victims' families.

The Lapu-Lapu attack happened near Elmore's community office. She is the only Filipino MLA in B.C.



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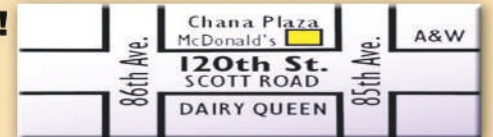
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# UFCABC Disburses \$100,000 from United Way to Support Victims and Families

*By Janice Lozano*

Vancouver, BC — The United Filipino Canadian Associations in British Columbia (UFCABC) has successfully distributed \$100,000 in financial assistance, provided by United Way, to 37 victims and their families. The disbursement, held at Max's Restaurant, marks another important step in the community's ongoing recovery efforts.

With this latest distribution, UFCABC has now supported a total of 114 beneficiaries. This progress reflects the organization's continued commitment to delivering aid promptly while upholding transparency, accountability, and care for those most affected.

"This initiative goes beyond financial assistance—it is about standing with families during some of their most difficult moments," said Mylene Lim, Vice President of UFCABC and Chair of Pinoy Vancouver Strong. "We remain deeply committed to carrying out this responsibility with openness, integrity, and accountability."

The effort was made



UFCABC disburses the final \$100,000 from the United Way Kapwa Strong Fund, providing direct financial assistance to victims of the Lapu Lapu Tragedy at Max's Restaurant

possible through the dedication of volunteers, board members, and community partners who continue to give their time and resources in service of others.

The gathering at Max's Restaurant underscored a shared commitment to supporting victims with dignity and compassion. Every step of the process was carried out with care to ensure respect and empathy for all recipients.

UFCABC extends its sincere gratitude to United Way and to everyone who continues to support these efforts.

As recovery work continues, UFCABC reaffirms its strong commitment to transparency, accountability, and ongoing support for affected families. Updates on future disbursements and initiatives will be shared as they become available.

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# Lapu-Lapu Day of “Togetherness and Healing” — But for Whom?

By Janice Lozano

What was presented to the public as a space for “togetherness and healing” at this year’s Lapu-lapu commemoration has left many in the Filipino community asking a difficult but necessary question: who was this event truly for?

While the event was intended to bring the community together in the aftermath of tragedy, and while organizing such gatherings in a post-trauma context is undeniably complex, many still found themselves reflecting on whether the format aligned with the needs of those most deeply affected.

Organizers framed the rebranded Lapu-lapu Day as a response to community need—a moment to gather, process, and begin healing. They also acknowledged that it might not resonate with everyone. However, when an event is positioned as a healing space, particularly in the context of trauma, expectations naturally center on care, intention, and meaningful listening rather than spectacle.

For some attendees, what unfolded felt misaligned with those principles.

Upon arrival, the setting resembled a large-scale public festival, with an outdoor stage, sponsor tents, food vendors, and a visible operational presence that included Vancouver Police, firefighters, ambulances, and reinforced barricades. While such infrastructure is not unusual for large public events, the overall tone for many felt more performative and celebratory than reflective.

This created a sense of disconnect for those who expected a quieter,



**Overwhelming turnout and support from the victims, families community leaders and supporters**

more contained space for remembrance and grief.

That tension was further shaped by developments in the lead-up to the event. The night before, several performers reportedly withdrew, along with some vendors. While the program proceeded, these last-minute changes contributed to broader questions within parts of the community about readiness, alignment, and whether concerns raised earlier had been fully addressed.

In the background, tensions had already been building.

Victims and families had expressed requests to pause this year’s gathering in favour of trauma-informed healing spaces, alongside calls for transparency and accountability regarding funds raised in their name. These concerns were not abstract—they came directly from those most impacted.

A recent announcement that Filipino BC had received \$500,000 in provincial funding, in addition to support from the Kapwa Strong Fund through United Way, further intensified these concerns for some families. Alongside this, there were also ongoing questions and



**MLA Mable Elmore stands in solidarity with families and victims at last Sunday’s rally, calling for transparency and accountability.**

uncertainty raised by some families regarding direct donations made to Filipino BC specifically intended for victims, and how those funds have been managed, allocated, and distributed.

While funding of this nature is often intended to support recovery and community programming, for many victims and families, these

overlapping streams of funding have only deepened ongoing questions about transparency, clarity, and whether those most directly impacted are receiving the support they need.

NEXT PAGE PLEASE...

LAPU-LAPU FROM  
LAST PAGE PLEASE...

Others raised concerns about transparency and accountability, and whether funds were truly reaching those most affected. At its core, for many, these concerns were not only financial—they were deeply tied to trust, recognition, and whether those who suffered the most felt seen, heard, and meaningfully supported.

Within that context, the scale and format of the event felt to some participants out of step with the needs being expressed by victims and families.

Some community members suggested that a smaller, more intimate setting—such as a cultural centre—may have better supported counselling, culturally grounded healing practices, and quiet reflection. Others felt the chosen format emphasized visibility over vulnerability.

When considering the scale of production for a day framed around “togetherness and healing,” questions have also been raised within parts of the community about the overall cost of staging such a large-scale event. With a full outdoor setup, staging, security presence, infrastructure, and vendor footprint, some have asked what the total production costs amounted to, who ultimately funded it, and whether full financial details and breakdowns of those expenditures will be disclosed publicly.

Underlying much of the discussion is a deeper concern about representation and decision-making within the organizing structures. Some within the community have raised questions about whether all segments of the Filipino Canadian community, particularly those directly affected,

are meaningfully included in planning processes.

One of the most striking moments of the day highlighted this contrast.

As RJ Aquino, chair of Filipino BC, delivered remarks on stage about supporting those affected and honouring lives lost, a parallel scene unfolded just beyond the event perimeter.

Outside the barricades, victims’ families and supporters gathered to voice concerns, calling for transparency and accountability in relation to donated funds. Importantly, those outside the barricades were not simply general protesters. They included individuals most directly impacted by the tragedy—families who lost loved ones, those who were injured, individuals who were displaced, and others now living with life-altering consequences.

It is also important to acknowledge that the April 26 tragedy affected the broader Vancouver community, particularly the Filipino community as a whole. The grief was collective. However, the impact was not equal.

What emerged was not simply a division in perspective, but a misalignment in how healing was being expressed and experienced. Grief was shared across the community, but the way it needed to be held was

not the same for everyone.

Some held placards encouraging passing drivers to show support, resulting in visible waves of honking and public acknowledgment from the broader community.

At the same time, bystanders—including members of the public—stopped to listen and offer support. Some first responders and emergency personnel on site also engaged directly with families in informal, human moments of care and conversation. These interactions were described by some present as deeply meaningful and grounded in empathy.

Among those present throughout was MLA Mable Elmore, who remained with victims and families for an extended period. Those present expressed appreciation for her consistent presence and attentiveness, noting that she took time to listen and help ensure the space remained respectful and grounded.

Sandra Gumboc, an organizer with Vancouver Maisug, also addressed those gathered outside, voicing concerns about what she described as a disconnect between public messaging and the lived experiences of victims and families. Her remarks reflected a sentiment shared by others: that meaningful healing requires inclusion

and accountability, not only public statements.

Meanwhile, several elected officials delivered remarks from the stage expressing solidarity with the community and those affected. However, according to those gathered outside, there was limited direct engagement from most officials with victims and families present beyond the formal program setting.

This parallel experience—formal messaging inside the venue and direct calls for accountability outside—underscored a visible divide in how the day was experienced.

Two realities unfolded at once:

Inside the event: messages of remembrance, unity, and support  
Outside the perimeter: calls for transparency, inclusion, and accountability

For many, this contrast became the defining feature of the day.

The core issue raised by some community members is not opposition to remembrance or gathering, but the question of how healing is defined and who gets to shape it. Healing, for many, cannot be delivered as a message from a stage. It must be built through trust, listening, and meaningful engagement with those most affected.

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# Surrey council candidate named finalist for Social Trailblazer Award

**Filipino-Canadian community leader and Surrey council candidate Noemi Victorino** has been named a finalist for the Social Trailblazer Award at the Surrey & White Rock Board of Trade Business Excellence Awards.

The Social Trailblazer Award recognizes individuals or organizations making a significant social impact through innovation, leadership, and a sustained commitment to community well-being. It highlights those who go beyond traditional service models to create meaningful and lasting change.

Victorino is the founder and executive director of Harvest for Hope BC, an organization established in January 2025 to address food insecurity and support underserved populations. Under her leadership, a struggling food program on the verge of closure was revitalized and

expanded. Within a year, the initiative grew to provide the equivalent of 1,200 meals weekly to individuals, families, and seniors in Port Coquitlam, Burnaby, Surrey, and New Westminster.

The organization has also developed partnerships with several community groups, including Surrey Urban Mission, Journey to Home, Order of St. George, and Heart of Ukraine, broadening its reach and services for vulnerable residents.

The awards ceremony was held April 16, 2026, at the Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel in Surrey.

“I’m deeply grateful for the opportunity to be part of something bigger—helping give individuals a second chance at hope,” Victorino said. “And it all begins with something so fundamental: ensuring there is food on the table.”



Filipino Canadian community leader and Surrey council candidate Noemi Victorino with Surrey Mayor Brenda Locke



From left to right: Lee Anne Theron, Erica Cusumano, Mayor Brenda Locke, Noemi Victorino and Sohal Singh Samra



Sohal Singh Samra, Noemi Victorino, Lee Anne Theron



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# Anne Curtis laughs off stumble during interview with Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway

**MANILA, Philippines** — What began as a dream interview for Anne Curtis turned into a memorable “Andy Sachs” moment after the actress and host tripped while approaching Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway at the Tokyo press event for “The Devil Wears Prada 2.”

Curtis, who attended the event alongside social media personality Mimiyyyuh, was set to interview the two award-winning actresses when the lighthearted mishap occurred. In a video she later shared on Instagram, the Kapamilya star was seen enthusiastically approaching Hathaway and Streep, even exchanging greetings with Hathaway, who playfully introduced herself as sharing the same name.

Moments later, as Curtis stepped forward to pose between the two actresses, she tripped over what appeared to be a metal stand.

Attempting to recover quickly, Curtis picked up the object and apologized, drawing warm and humorous responses from both stars.

“You’re not the first. You won’t be the last,” Streep told her.

Hathaway, meanwhile, helped Curtis back on her feet and jokingly kicked the metal stand aside, prompting laughter from those in the room. Event staff also reassured Curtis, keeping the atmosphere relaxed.

Curtis later described the incident as her own “Andy Sachs” moment — Hathaway’s character in the original “The Devil Wears Prada.”

“A dream interview with actresses I absolutely admire. Had my Andy Sachs moment as soon as I walked in — ako lang talaga e noh? Of all times!!!! Haha,” she wrote.

“After that my heart rate was hitting the roof, until their warmth took over. As an actress myself, it was such an honor to meet them. I was part of the generation shaped by ‘The Devil Wears Prada’ 20 years ago and I can’t wait to see the sequel on the big screen,” she added.



Anne Curtis with “The Devil Wears Prada 2” stars Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway. PHOTO FROM INSTAGRAM/ANNECURTISSMITH

Despite the stumble, Curtis proceeded with the interview, reflecting on the film’s lasting cultural influence.

“I’m Anne Curtis from the Philippines. Mabuhay. So 20 years ago, this film really inspired a whole generation to fall in love with fashion, including myself,” she said.

Asked about the film’s legacy, Streep noted the sweeping changes since the original’s release.

“Well, it’s been a journey. The world has changed. iPhone has been invented. The year after we came out, the world of journalism, the world of television, everything has changed. And our film talks about how that has an impact on fashion,” Streep said.

Hathaway echoed the sentiment, expressing amazement at the film’s enduring reach.

“Isn’t that incredible? Just to hear you talk about it, the idea that it made you see a version of yourself out there in the world. It’s incredible. I don’t think any of us quite understood the impact that it would have, and the way the audiences would just turn it into something that was much bigger than we ever could have dared hope,” she said.

The conversation also turned to fashion influences, with Hathaway citing historical and contemporary figures.

“I love Joan of Arc in terms of what she was able to say with who she was,” she said, later

adding, “I just love Zendaya. Just everything she does — I feel like she never puts a foot wrong. And she always looks so glamorous, but it always feels so personal.”

Streep, for her part, pointed to a classic Hollywood inspiration. “I like Diane Keaton’s style. She had some real flair and joy in putting together an outfit every morning,” she said.

Curtis also posed a playful question about Streep’s iconic

character.

“If Miranda Priestly had a social media account, whether TikTok or Instagram, what kind of content do you think she would have on it?” she asked.

“Well, she would have someone do that for her,” Streep replied. Hathaway added with a laugh, “I’m just trying to imagine Miranda trying to do a cooking video.” (I. Iglesias/ Manila Times)

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# Lotlot de Leon not after mom Nora Aunor's inheritance — counsel

**MANILA, Philippines** — Tensions indeed appear to be brewing within the family of the late national artist Nora Aunor, particularly among her children.

Ate Guy, as fondly called by her fans and peers, passed away last year aged 71 from acute respiratory failure and was mourned by Filipinos worldwide

A few days before Nora's first death anniversary, Ian de Leon — Nora's only biological son, whom she had with ex-husband Christopher de Leon — told broadcast journalist Rico Hizon that he was Nora's sole legal heir.

In the same interview, Ian expounded on the establishment of the Nora Aunor Enterprise and Nora Aunor Foundation to preserve his mother's legacy and his seemingly strained relationship with adopted siblings Lotlot, Matet, Kiko and Kenneth de Leon.

Lotlot, the eldest daughter, then issued a statement through her legal counsel Atty. Mark Julius Estur to clarify some of the things Ian mentioned in the interview, particularly about her lack of involvement in the established initiatives and of Nora's estate.

Estur said that Lotlot was not involved or consulted at all in the establishment of a One Person Corporation or OPC, adding that in their party's view a foundation can't be established through an OPC legally.

"Any statement of attribution to Lotlot is misleading and a false representation," the lawyer reiterated. "She has not participated in the founding, management, or fundraising efforts of the OPCs that Ian has established and that her personal charitable efforts remain focused elsewhere."

Lotlot also denied what Ian had claimed that despite being the sole heir, she and their siblings would still be included in any plans regarding to Nora's estate, again not consulted or informed about her participation or administration plans.

As far as Lotlot knows, said Estur, there is no Last Will and Testament executed assigning sole administration and authority to Nora's

"Lotlot is not after any inheritance nor seeking for any gain attached to the estate and legacy of her mother," the statement continued. "She has stepped away completely and this was a conscious and respectful decision after Ian chose to take full responsibility for all legal matters."

In regards to a foundation Lotlot previously established with her sibling, Estur said Ian was informed and expressed support for the venture.

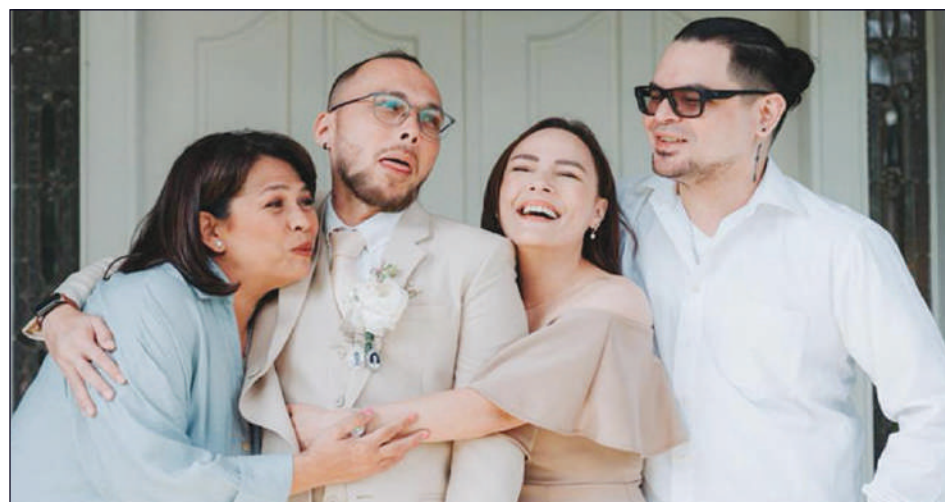
As such Lotlot find its "deeply hurtful and difficult to understand" why Ian denied knowledge about it after the said foundation's social media platforms were made public, hence why Lotlot and Ian have not communicated since.

"Lotlot has remained silent before out of respect for their mother and to avoid further conflicts during an already difficult time," the statement went on. "But that silence has been misunderstood. Our client will not allow her name to be dragged into something she is not a part of, or used in a way that does not reflect the truth."

Estur said Lotlot "stands independently and refuses to be part of a false narrative," asking everyone not to associate her with Ian's efforts and will no longer comment further on the matter.



(From top left) Sina Ian de Leon, Kiko Villamayor, Kenneth Villamayor, (from bottom left) Matet de Leon at Lotlot de Leon ang mga anak ni Nora Aunor at Christopher de Leon. Photo by kenvironment (IG)



Matet de Leon reacts to issue about Nora Aunor's inheritance: 'Mukha ba kaming may pake?'

"Let us continue to honor Nora's memories and remember her with love... Her legacy will continue to live on through those whose lives she has touched. Lotlot shall continue to honor her mother's memory privately, truthfully and in her own way," the statement ended.

**Meanwhile, Matet de Leon reacts to issue about Nora Aunor's inheritance: 'Mukha ba kaming may pake?'**

Amid this issue, Matet posted a cryptic message on her social media accounts.

She shared a photo of her and her siblings—Lotlot de Leon, Kenneth de Leon, and Kiko de Leon—who were also adopted by the late Superstar. Her caption that caught the attention of her followers: "Post ko lang uli. Ito nga pala ang ngiti ng mga ampon na walang mana. Mukha ba kaming

may pake?"

Fans quickly flooded the comment section with messages of support, with many praising her for prioritizing peace, happiness, and family.

Matet's post came after her recent call-out to bashers who targeted her family during Nora Aunor's death anniversary.

"Yung mga bashers ko ha.. Pag pinatulan ko kayo, huwag kayong mapipikon. Durugan tayo! Let's go! Hindi puwedeng kayo lang ang salbahe. Pare-parehas tayong tao lang. Ibabalik ko lang binibigay niyo sa akin. Ako sa inyo, ayusin niyo ang kanya-kanya ninyong pamilya bago niyo kami pakialaman apat. Magpost ako weekly ng mga stars natin na bashers. Pansin ang gusto? Papisikatin ko.," she wrote.

(K. Purnell/Philstar; K. Kang/M. Ruiz/MSN)

# Desert spotlight, Filipino pride: How BINI and Sophia Laforteza turned Coachella into a global stage for OPM

The California desert has long been a proving ground for global music acts—but this year, it became a powerful stage for Filipino pride.

When P-pop powerhouse BINI stepped onto the Coachella stage, it wasn't just another festival set. It was a milestone. Backed by a growing international fanbase and the unmistakable energy of Filipino creativity, the group delivered a 45-minute, 10-song performance that resonated far beyond the Mojave tent. Fans arrived early, many draped in Philippine flags, turning the crowd into a sea of national pride as BINI made history as the first Filipino act to perform at the globally revered Coachella.

But the spotlight didn't stop there. Adding another layer to the Philippines' cultural breakthrough was Sophia Laforteza of global girl group Katseye, whose presence at the festival underscored the growing footprint of Filipino talent in the international music scene.

For the Department of Tourism (DOT), the moment was more than just a musical achievement—it was a cultural statement.

“This is a defining moment for Filipino talent on the global stage,” the DOT shared, positioning itself as both proud observer and advocate. “BINI and Sophia Laforteza have showcased not only world-class artistry, but also the vibrant spirit and identity of the Filipino people. Their performances brought joy to global audiences in a way that is uniquely ours.” Beyond the lights, sound, and spectacle, what unfolded at Coachella was a subtle yet powerful shift: Filipino artists are no longer just participants in global culture—they are shaping it.

In recent years, the rise of P-pop has mirrored the trajectory of K-pop, building a distinct identity rooted in Filipino storytelling, musicality, and visual flair. BINI's Coachella



debut felt like a culmination of that movement—a declaration that Filipino music is ready for the world stage.

And the world, it seems, is ready to listen.

From viral fan chants to international media buzz, the group's performance became a rallying point for Filipinos across the globe. Social media lit up with clips, reactions, and messages of pride, as audiences—both local and international—took notice of the Philippines' evolving sound.

For the DOT, this moment aligns seamlessly with its broader vision of promoting the Philippines not just as a travel destination, but as a cultural force.

“Moments like these amplify the Philippines' presence globally—not only in tourism, but in arts and entertainment,” the agency noted. “We celebrate this milestone and look forward to seeing more Filipino talents inspire future generations.”

As the final notes faded into the desert night, one thing became clear: this wasn't just a performance. It was a statement of arrival.

From Manila to California, Filipino talent is no longer waiting in the wings—it's taking center stage. And if Coachella



**KATSEYE performs on the Sahara stage at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in Indio, Calif., on Friday, April 10, 2026. Taya Gray/The Desert Sun**

is any indication, the world is finally watching. (MB online team/ Photos courtesy of BINI\_ph | KATSEYE | Screengrab from Coachella.)



# Rundown: Prime Video expands local slate with 7 star-studded Filipino originals



Cast from Prime Video Philippine Originals (Prime Video/Released)

Streaming giant Prime Video has announced seven Filipino original series as part of its expanded local content slate unveiled at the “Prime Video Presents: Philippines event” on Tuesday, April 14.

The lineup includes collaborations with ABS-CBN and GMA, spanning family drama, political thriller, psychological suspense, romance, crime and comedy.

Among the titles is “LOL: Last One Laughing Philippines,” which returns for a second season with Vice Ganda as returning host. The comedy competition format features ten comedians trying to make each other laugh while keeping a straight face. Next stop: tawanan

Nandito na si #ViceGanda at aandar na ang LOL PH Season 2! Walang traffic patungong saya, basta sa #LOLPHOnPrime. Arriving soon! #PrimeVideoPresentsPH #WhereStoriesBegin



“The Silent Noise,” which is already streaming, stars Angelica Panganiban and Zanjoe Marudo in a crime drama about a deaf son uncovering hidden truths after a body is discovered in their town.



The Silent Noise

“Love Is Never Gone” stars Joshua Garcia and Ivana Alawi in a romance-thriller about an ex-convict who discovers his presumed-dead lover is alive and living under a new identity.



Original poster for “Love Is Never Gone”

“The Loyalty Game” features Janine Gutierrez, Jericho Rosales, and Sofia Andres in a psychological thriller involving a relationship test that turns dangerous.



The Loyalty Game



“Honor Thy Mother” stars Sharon Cuneta, Barbie Forteza and John Estrada in a family drama about a mother and daughter forced to work together amid a conspiracy.



“Kopino” stars Paulo Avelino and Kim Chiu as former childhood sweethearts who reunite in Korea’s corporate world while dealing with issues involving Kopino children.



Behind Closed Doors

“Behind Closed Doors” stars Marian Rivera, Dingdong Dantes and Jillian Ward in a political thriller involving a radio host whose affair with the Philippine President leads to an assassination investigation.

Prime Video said the slate reflects its continued investment in Filipino storytelling through partnerships with ABS-CBN and GMA.

“This slate represents the depth of our collaboration with Filipino creators and studios,” Chaitanya Divan, head of Content Acquisition, Prime Video Southeast Asia, said.

“Working closely with ABS-CBN and GMA, we’re supporting local storytellers to bring their visions to life—stories that speak to our local Filipino audiences while showcasing the incredible Filipino talents.”

David Simonsen, director of Prime Video Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand, said the platform aims to offer both local and global content in one service.

“We’ve seen Filipino audiences embrace global Prime Video hits like The Boys and The Summer I Turned Pretty, which shows the appetite for premium storytelling. Now we’re bringing that same commitment to quality with local originals featuring Filipino talent. Prime Video brings Filipino audiences everything they love to watch—all in one place: local stories that reflect their experiences, international entertainment that connects them globally, and live sports with NBA, which resonates deeply with basketball-loving Filipino fans,” Simonsen said.

Alongside the originals, Prime Video also announced licensed Filipino films including “Samahan ng mga

SEE NEXT PAGE ...

# ABS-CBN's official statement on recent claims and issues related to the Lopez family dispute



*There have been continued PR attacks against ABS-CBN as part of a family dispute over the company's future.*

The latest PR article purports to be motivated by a concern about employee welfare by discussing the retirement fund.

Records show that one of our directors proposed shutting down ABS-CBN without so much as discussing how it would meet its obligations to its people. Records also show that the majority of the directors

strongly argued for continued financial support for ABS-CBN rather than liquidation to address the welfare of the company's employees and retirees, as well as its other stakeholders.

Contrary to what the article claims, the largest decline in ABS-CBN's pension fund was due to payouts to close to 6,000 employees who were retrenched as a result of the franchise loss. This is proof of ABS-CBN's commitment to fully meet all its obligations to its employees.

From ABS-CBN's perspective, we acknowledge that, following the loss of our franchise in 2020, we have experienced challenging financial years but have shown steady, consistent improvement. Our Board of Directors and the rest of the Lopez family have commended the company's progress and emphasized its existence as important to the country.

These continued public PR attacks against ABS-CBN are a disservice to the employees who have fought so hard to keep ABS-CBN alive, and to the public that has supported ABS-CBN throughout all its trials.

There are repeated lies that 68 individuals "received preferred treatment" in the payout of their retirement benefits, designed to sow intrigue among employees.

These have been clearly explained to the full ABS-CBN board and to its Compensation Committee. The majority of these individuals are retirees who have received only partial or no retirement benefits, despite already retiring.

They have agreed to voluntarily wait until ABS-CBN's financial position improves before receiving full payment.

They did not get preferential treatment. In fact, they deferred receipt of payment so that the thousands of employees who were separated from the company received their separation pay in full.

The remaining unpaid retirement obligation issue was raised with the ABS-CBN board late last November. Repeated allegations that a P2 billion capital infusion would be used to pay out retirement benefits are also false. This has been refuted by all the Board of Directors members except one.

These public PR attacks on ABS-CBN's pension fund, its business performance, and its leadership prove that the individual/s behind these releases do not have the best interests of the company at heart.

ABS-CBN has been fortunate to have been founded by Kapitan Geny Lopez. We were blessed to have spent time under his leadership and that of his son, Gabby. That leadership continues today through our Chairman, Mark Lopez. Each generation has remained true to the values and mission of our founder. It was Kapitan

Geny who said, "Our reason for being is and always will be to be in the Service of the Filipino."

In Kapitan Geny's own words:

"Profit alone is not enough reason to go into business. But if we serve our people, then I think that our growth and success will follow. If we take care of our people, they will take care of us. That's the kind of culture a company should have."

The series of press releases claims that many of the decisions around ABS-CBN are not in line with proper stewardship or good investment. We leave it to the public to decide whether those actions remain true to the family's espoused values.

This is a family dispute and should remain so. We also believe it should not be fought in public. However, ABS-CBN will not shy away from defending itself and any untruths leveled against it. (abs-cbn)

## RUNDOWN FROM LAST PAGE ...

*Makasalanan," "Gabi ng Lagim," the "Bayaniverse" trilogy ("Quezon," "Heneral Luna," "Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral"), "Bar Boys: After School" and "Open Endings."*



### Gabi ng Lagim

Prime Video also revealed three Korean titles set to premiere in the second half of 2026, starring *Seo Kangjun, Ahn Eun-jin, Ahn Hyo-seop, Park Min Young, Yook Sung Jae and Go Soo.*

(With Rosette Adel/Interskyon)

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# Balikatan wargames 2026: Canadian military trains for first time with Philippines and allies

By Carlito Pablo

From an observer nation, Canada is making its inaugural active participation in the annual Balikatan military exercise between the U.S. and the Philippines.

Now on its 41st iteration, Balikatan 2026 runs in the Philippines from April 20 to May 8, 2026.

The direct participation of Canada follows about half a year after Ottawa and Manila inked a Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA) on November 2, 2025.

The said pact allows the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to work more closely together through joint and multinational operations and exercises in each other's territories.

Balikatan means "shoulderto shoulder" in Tagalog.

"While in previous years the CAF participated as observers, this year, Canadian personnel will train shoulder to shoulder with partners in areas such as air and missile defence, coastal defence, logistics and sustainment, medical support, maritime strike operations, and multinational coordination," the Department of National Defence stated in a media release on April 17, 2026.

Meanwhile, the government-run Philippine News Agency (PNA) reported that more than 17,000

soldiers from seven participating nations will take in this year's Balikatan.

Quoting Balikatan Philippine spokesperson Marine Col. Dennis Fernandez, the report stated that troops will come from the Philippines, the U.S., Australia, Japan, Canada, France, and New Zealand.

The DND noted in its April 17, 2026 media release that Canada is deploying a broad range of CAF personnel and capabilities in Balikatan 2026.

These military assets include His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Charlottetown and its embarked CH-148 Cyclone maritime heli-



Canada and four other nations join the Philippines and the U.S. in Balikatan 2026. Photo by Canadian Armed Forces.

copter; and members of the 3rd Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI), CAF Cyber Command, Canadian Forces Health Services Group, Canadian Forces Military Police Group, and Canadian Special Operations Forces Command.

On February 1, 2026, HMCS Charlottetown set sail from its home port of Halifax, Nova Scotia, for a six-month deployment to the Indo-Pacific region.

The Halifax class frigate will support of Operations HORIZON and NEON. Operation HORIZON rep-

resents Canada's military strategy in the Indo-Pacific region. Operation NEON is Canada's contribution to the multinational effort to support United Nations Security Council sanctions against North Korea.

The DND described Canada's active participation in Balikatan 2026 as a "significant step in Canada's Indo-Pacific engagement".

"CAF participation in Exercise BALIKATAN is part of Operation HORIZON, Canada's contribution to promoting peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. This exercise is designed to strengthen long standing partnerships with like minded nations, enhance

combined military capability, and reinforce a shared commitment to regional security and stability."

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command issued a media release on the opening day of Balikatan on April 20, 2026, describing this year's joint drills as the "most expansive Balikatan exercise to date".

The release noted that Balikatan "directly supports the 75-year-old U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty".

A report by the Manila Bulletin newspaper on the eve of the opening of Balikatan quoted the League of Filipino Students (LFS) saying in a statement that these joint military exercises are a geopolitical risk for the Philippines.

The paper wrote that per the LFS, "expanding defense cooperation with the United States under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) and related military facilities could turn the country into a forward operating base for potential conflicts in the Asia-Pacific".

Moreover, LFS warned that the Philippines could become a

"target zone of war", endangering civilian populations in case conflict breaks out.

The SOVFA between the Philippines and Canada builds on the Canada-Philippines Defence Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding that was signed in January 2024.

A DND media release on November 2, 2025 on the day of the signing of the SOVFA pointed to a "new chapter in Canada-Philippines defence cooperation".

"The Philippines is one of Can-

ada's most important defence partners in the Indo-Pacific region. As a democratic nation, it plays a key role in promoting peace and stability in Southeast Asia and upholding respect for international law.

"Canada recognizes the Philippines' influential position in the region as we strengthen defence and security cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its members. Continuing to work closely with partners like the Philippines demonstrates Canada's long-term commitment to support peace, security and stability in the Indo-Pacific," the DND statement read.

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# COMMUNITY CORNER

BY CHRISTIAN CUNANAN & APPLE PLATA



**18 April 2026, Vancouver, BC** — Family, friends, and members of the community gathered at the Dundee Court Amenity Room to celebrate Harley Sanga's Big 30th birthday.

Centered on the theme "New Age, New Chapter, Same Legend," the evening featured warm fellowship, delicious food, and warm well-wishes shared throughout the program. Proud parents Rommel and Nida Sanga, together with sister Fiya Sanga, graciously welcomed guests. Karaoke performances provided lively entertainment,

contributing to a vibrant and memorable celebration.

Surrounded by close friends, neighbours, and fellow volunteers, Harley was recognized not only for this personal milestone but also for a steadfast commitment to community service.

The M3ASBC family extended sincere birthday greetings, affirming unity, volunteerism, and Harley's continued contributions through church service and community engagement.

## Harley's Big 30th Celebration: A New Chapter Begins



## Dingdong Dantes heartened by Steve Harvey's praise of 'Family Feud PH'

Dingdong Dantes is heartened by Steve Harvey's praise of "Family Feud Philippines."

In Nelson Canlas' report on "24 Oras" Wednesday, the Kapuso Primetime King and "Family Feud PH" host shared that he could not believe that he was able to talk to Steve through a video call.

"Di ako makapaniwala. Dati kasi binati niya 'yung programang 'Family Feud' noong nag-uumpisa. Pero now on its fourth year, eh sobrang saya namin dito sa buong 'Family Feud.' Nag-video call kami. Nag-usap kami, nakakatuwa talaga," he said.

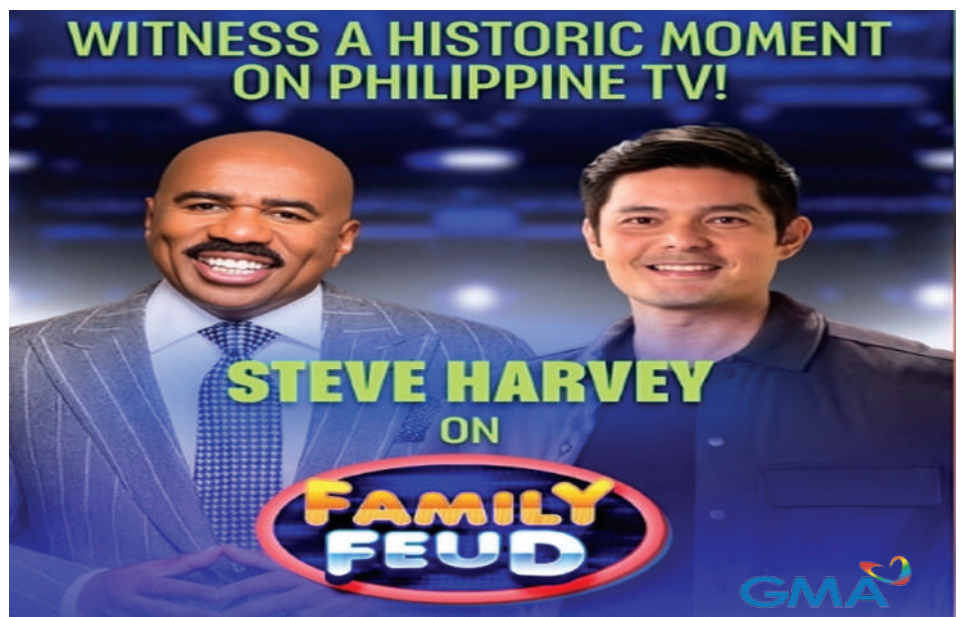
Per Dingdong, what stuck with him was the admiration he received from Steve. He said it warms his heart when he hears testimonies about the efforts they have put into the show.

"Binanggit din niya na talagang napapansin niya, napapansin din nila 'yung 'Family Feud Philippines.' That is definitely because of mga contestants natin, 'yung kung gaano kakwela 'yung mga sumasali, 'yung mga mismong tanong, 'yung formulation ng questions, talagang Pinoy na Pinoy," he said.

Canlas' report also showed a short clip of Steve congratulating the Philippine edition of the game show in what appeared to be an episode of the American version of "Family Feud," which is hosted by Steve himself.

Dingdong and Steve's milestone video call will be aired on "Family Feud Philippines" on Friday, 5:35 p.m., on GMA Network.

Steve Harvey is an American



host who famously made a mistake during the Miss Universe 2015 coronation night, calling on Miss Colombia as the winner and Miss Philippines Pia Wurtzbach as the 1st runner up.

Seconds later, he stopped the celebrations and corrected himself, pronouncing Pia as the rightful winner of the crown.5:4 (Jade Veronique Yap/CDC, GMA News)

# Ang Babáng Luksâ ng Bayan: The First Anniversary of the Lapu-Lapu Festival Tragedy

**Vancouver, April 20, 2026** - On the first anniversary of the Lapu-Lapu Festival tragedy in Vancouver, we remember the 11 lives lost, the many injured, and the communities impacted by holding a commemoration mass on Sunday April 26, at 10:30 AM at the St. Mary the Virgin South Hill Church, 808 East 50th Avenue, Vancouver. After the service, everyone is invited to the fellowship at the hall for coffee and light refreshments.

**Babáng Luksâ** is a Filipino tradition that marks the end of a period of mourning, usually one year after the death of a loved one. It is typically observed with a mass, prayers, lighting of candles, and a gathering of family and friends to remember and honour those who have passed.

It was exactly on this date, April 26, a year ago, when the vehicle-ramming attack happened just when the festival was winding down in the early evening. The following day, in collaboration with St. Mary the Virgin church, Migrante Canada, Migrante BC, and BAYAN BC, the urgent call was made for a Luksang Bayan (People's Mourning) by Migrante to its members and networks across Canada. Luksang Bayan was also observed by chapters in other countries and in the

Philippines with vigils, candle-lighting, flower memorials, and prayers.

Less than 24 hours after the tragedy, the first mass for the Luksang Bayan was held that Sunday, April 27, 2025 at St. Mary the Virgin South Hill Church. Little was known then about the names and number of those who died, how many were injured, etc. St. Mary the Virgin South Hill church opened its doors to a community that was still in shock, in grief, and in trauma. Many churches, regardless of denomination, offered vigils, prayers, masses, and the sense of comfort that we all had each other,

The tragedy did not just happen to individuals; it impacted families and communities. This is why this tragedy cuts so deeply.

Migrante BC and the PANCIT Art Collective summed up this public sentiment: "Grief and mourning bring us together. Kinship and friendship make us stronger. Solidarity holds all of us in its embrace as we move towards justice and accountability.

All are welcome to join us at the Babáng Luksâ Commemoration mass on April 26.

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## Wilbert Ross, Bea Binene to star in 'Peemak' PH adaptation

On-screen partner Wilbert Ross and Bea Binene are set to headline the Philippine adaptation of the 2013 Thai horror-comedy film "Pee Mak."

On Saturday, April 18, Viva announced the news during "The Next Fan Takeover," a fan meet for stars of Viva One original series held at the New Frontier Theater.

The film marks Wilbert and Bea's first movie together following their pairing in the series "Golden Scenery of Tomorrow."

Originally starring Thai superstars Mario Maurer and

Davika Hoorne, "Pee Mak" remains Thailand's highest-grossing film of all time. Wilbert said landing the role felt surreal, noting he had long been nicknamed after Mario's character.

"Sobrang crazy lang isipin na I've been called Pee Mak since I was in high school for the longest time," Wilbert said in an interview.

He added that the nickname followed him through college and into show business, making the casting feel like something he had unknowingly manifested.

Wilbert also referenced Mario's



earlier hit "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," which contributed to the comparisons.

Viva has yet to announce a release date for the adaptation.

## Sarah Geronimo reunites with father Delfin, fans react

Sarah Geronimo was seen with her father, Delfin Geronimo, during a public event, marking what many believe is their first appearance together in years.

The sighting happened at the Earth Day Run 2026 – Manila Leg at the SM Mall of Asia on April 19, where Sarah joined the event alongside Delfin and her dog, Niña. Their presence quickly drew attention from attendees.

Sarah later shared a selfie on Instagram featuring the three, writing, “Tatay Delfin

gwapo.”

The post sparked emotional reactions online, with fans interpreting the moment as a sign of reconciliation within the family. Many described it as long-awaited, following years of reported distance between Sarah and her parents after her 2020 marriage to Matteo Guidicelli.

Supporters flooded social media with messages of joy, with some calling the moment “answered prayers” and expressing hope for continued healing. (J. Valdez/Manila Standard)



## Heart Evangelista moved by Ate Gay's public thanks amid cancer battle

Actress and fashion icon Heart Evangelista became emotional during a recent television guesting after learning that comedian and impersonator Ate Gay had publicly expressed gratitude for financial assistance he received during his battle with Stage 4 cancer. “I was surprised that he mentioned it since we haven't really met and we've never talked,” Heart said, referring to Ate Gay's public acknowledgment.

She added that the comedian had relayed his thanks through her assistant without knowing the source of the support.

“What he said was trivia that he talked to me and my assistant and that he just wanted to express his gratitude, though he didn't know that it was me. For me, it's sad, but I haven't given so much thought about it,” she said.

Heart said public life often comes with scrutiny.

“You know, there's always going to be color in whatever we do as public figures. But my points in Heaven are far more important,” she said. “Life is too short. So, I was really surprised when he talked about it.”

Despite initial discomfort over



*Heart Evangelista admits being surprised when she learns that comedian Ate Gay publicly thanked her for financial assistance during his cancer battle*

Ate Gay's revelation, Heart expressed appreciation for the gesture.

“I realized it's a nice feeling to hear someone thanking you for the good you've done,” she said. “Most of the time, people don't really know it's me, so I



*Heart gets emotional sharing how giving with purpose matters more than recognition amid life in the spotlight*

really appreciate it,” the actress shared.

She added that her actions are guided by a broader sense of purpose.

“To be honest, I was touched because I work hard not just

for me but for a purpose,” she said. “I do what I do is because I have my own goals in life... that only when you passed people might be able to read.”

(J.P. R. Gonzales / Manila Standard)

# Slater Young finally opens up on Monterrazas flood controversy—what the investigation revealed

Months after being at the center of controversy, Slater Young has finally broken his silence regarding the Monterrazas development and its alleged link to the devastating floods in Cebu.

The issue stemmed from the tragic impact of Typhoon Tino November last year, which led to severe flooding and claimed nearly 100 lives.

In the aftermath, residents and netizens pointed fingers at the luxury mountainside project developed by Mont Property Group, citing deforestation and its hillside location as possible causes.

In a video posted on April 19, Young addressed the controversy for the first time, explaining why he and his family chose to remain quiet while the issue was unfolding.

“Like many of you, our family was deeply saddened by the devastation of Typhoon Tino,” he said, offering condolences to victims. He emphasized that their decision not to speak out immediately was intentional, as authorities were still conducting investigations.

“We held back because we believed that the right thing to do was to let the proper investigations run its course... and let the science and evidence speak,” he explained.

Young also admitted that the backlash took a toll on his family, saying they endured “a great deal of criticism,” but chose to stay focused on the bigger picture, the suffering of those directly affected by the disaster.

Following the tragedy, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ordered a halt to the project and launched an investigation, which initially cited several violations. The developer later paid a PHP400,000 fine, and by April, authorities allowed construction to resume.

Young, however, pointed to findings from the University of the Philippines Diliman



College of Science Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology, which he said cleared Monterrazas of blame.

According to the study released in March 2026, the primary cause of the flooding was the unprecedented volume of rainfall brought by Typhoon Tino.

“Typhoon Tino dumped over a month’s worth of rainfall on Cebu in one single day. And that amount of water would have flooded those areas regardless of what was or was not built,” Young said.

He added that the project’s infrastructure may have even helped mitigate the flooding.

“Our detention ponds caught and held back up to 99.74% of the excess rainwater... releasing it slowly instead of letting it all rush downhill all at once.”

“The science does not just say we did not cause the flooding—it says that the systems we have built in place help reduce it,” he stressed.

Young concluded his statement by calling for responsible

discussions moving forward and pushing back against what he described as misinformation surrounding the project.

“We respect everyone’s right to their own opinion. But we will not stay silent in the face of deliberate misinformation,” he said, adding that he is prepared to take necessary steps to protect his family.

Young first rose to public attention after winning “Pinoy Big Brother: Unlimited” before transitioning into business and construction.

After his showbiz stint, he built a career in engineering and real estate development, becoming a co-founder of the luxury hillside development project. (N. Ramos/mb.com.ph)

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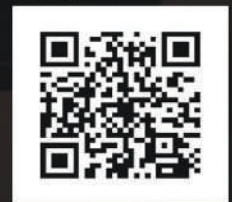


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**AT THE MOVIES**  
By Robert Waldman

Running Time: 1h. 30m

*Through the Years!*

I Some movies you just wish wouldn't end. Animated films can tell quite a story. Sit back, relax and enjoy a breathtakingly beautiful true life story unfold in A Magnificent Life. Acclaimed at last years coveted Cannes Film Festival this French-Luxembourg-Belgian co-production is visually stunning and boasts a wonderful storyline. Brought to BC. By Mongrel Media this Sony Pictures Classics is an absolute charmer bound to make you fall in love with the lure of France and early cinema. It will be showing at the VIFF Centre in Vancouver.

Made with a little help from Netflix and the good stewardship of the genius behind The Triplets of Belleville A Magnificent Life brings to life the up and down world of once upon a time writer Marcel Pagnol. At the outset we see Marcel as an elderly man but thanks to a very smart creative twist a young boy helps take us back in time to see how this French artistic powerhouse came into being,

With a focus on family we see just how a young boy deals with loss and a drive to become someone.

**A Magnificent Life (PG) \*\*\*\***

Through schooling, drive and hard work Marcel becomes a playwright and the toast of the Marseilles theatrical circuit. Director /Writer Sylvain Chomet wisely divides the film into yearly time spans and perfectly captures the colorful atmosphere of the different time periods.

Each character Marcel encounters is fully fleshed out and memorable. Backed up by some soothing music the animation effects are almost surreal and they paint a picture of the whole vibrancy that seems to surround this gifted artists life.

A joy to watch A Magnificent Life is a love poem to fans of the movies and young lovers of all ages. It's a movie well worth seeing on the big screen and definitely worth seeking out.

For more reviews please visit my website [moviereviewssite.com](http://moviereviewssite.com).



**The Things You Kill (PG) \*\*\***

Running Time: 113m

*Danger Point! t*

Deep divides haunt a troubled man in the high stakes drama The Things You Kill. Presented by Mongrel Media this haunting tale will resonate with all onlookers at the VIFF Centre in Vancouver.

Set in the muddled world of the backward Middle East American educated Ali seems to have his head on straight. Ah, but looks can be deceiving as actor Elon Koc so masterfully displays. Quite the lady's man the popular prof of literature at the local Turkish university shows a caring attitude as a momma's boy.

When a routine visit to check in on his aging mother becomes steeped in intrigue it sets off all sorts of warning bells. As if that isn't enough on his plate Ali has percolating friction with his wife. How it all turns out shows the layers of pain a family must endure as old values and masculinity issues wreck havoc on loved ones .

One must remember values in many Arabic counties are totally different than those common in the West and steeped in history and tradition. With pride also



coming into play The Things You Kill is quite the ordeal to watch and very revealing. It's the type of film that keeps you guessing which is a good thing.

For more reviews please visit my website [moviereviewssite.com](http://moviereviewssite.com).

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**SPORTS**

# Filipino Canadian Construction Society Announces 20th Anniversary Golf Event: "GOLF for a CAUSE"

The Filipino Canadian Construction Society proudly marks two decades of connection, collaboration, and community with a special fundraising golf day—GOLF for a CAUSE. This one-day event blends sport, fellowship, and philanthropy on the greens, culminating in an evening of celebration and recognition.

Support the Cause A portion of proceeds will support a charitable institution. If you'd like to support or learn more about sponsorship opportunities, please contact:

**Amado G Mercado III**  
Tournament Chairman  
Phone: +1 (604) 783-0875  
Email: infoatfccs@gmail.com

**Josephine Rose Fard**  
Tournament Co-Chairman  
Phone: +1 (672) 866-5959  
Email: infoatfccs@gmail.com

**Important Deadline Participation or support confirmation: \*\* by May 15, 2026**

This milestone celebration promises a day of sunny skies, friendly competition, and a warm gathering of colleagues and friends.

Let's come together to honor 20 years of leadership, service, and shared success in the Filipino Canadian construction community. See you on the course!  
(Credit Christian Cunanan)

The poster for the 'Golf for a Cause' 20th Anniversary event features a central banner with the event title. Above the banner is a large '20th Anniversary' logo. To the left, a green callout box provides event details: 'MAY 30, 2026' at 'Whisper Country Meadows Golf Club, Richmond BC, 70th 1E2', with a time of 1PM-5PM and a format of shotgun start. To the right, a white box states that part of the proceeds will sponsor a Sunday food giving program by the Filipino Seniors Club in BC. The bottom section of the poster lists various sponsors under categories: Diamond Sponsor (KAV INSULATION), Platinum Sponsors (A-TOP ROOFING LTD., GLEN BONIFACIO RAILING, TWIN PHOENIX BUILDING MAINTENANCE INC., AG&P CANADA), Hole Sponsors (MAG CONSTRUCTION, BC FLOORS, PROSECURE FINANCIAL, REYNOLD OROGO, AAABC, MANANSALA FAMILY, SENADOR GLOBAL, ALUMINUM AND IRONWORKS, PLATO FILIPINO), and Media Partners (ECCS SUPPORTER, PINOY FESTIVAL, COAL PINEAPPLE SIGNS, REYFORT MEDIA).



## Gilas women on track for LA Summer Games slot

THE Gilas Pilipinas women's 3x3 team is on track for a maiden Olympic berth in the 2028 Los Angeles Summer Games.

Thanks in part to a historic silver medal finish in the FIBA Asia Cup and clinching a berth in the FIBA World Cup, the country is now ranked second in the half-court game in Asia behind Australia and in strong contention of making the trip to L.A.

"The big dream that we have is to make the 2028 Olympics. And the campaign for that started this year kasi simula na ng qualification process. Kumbaga lahat ng napapanalunan natin at sinasalihan na FIBA tournaments contribute to the Olympic ranking points, which is what will qualify us to the Olympics," stressed

Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas Executive Director Erika Dy in Tuesday's Philippine Sportswriters Association Forum.

"The top two teams in Asia, which have the most points accumulated in the next two years, will automatically qualify to LA. 'Yun ang hinahabol natin na hindi na tayo dadaan sa Olympic qualifier.'" Afril Bernardino, Kacey Dela Rosa, Mikka Cacho, Cheska Apag, and Reynalyn Ferrer were with Dy in the session at the Philippine Sports Commission media room, along with coach Anton Altamirano and SBP 3x3 program director Ryan Gregorio.

"Kumbaga, kung bukas ang Olympics, pasok na tayo," said Dy in the program backed by San Miguel Corporation, PSC,

Philippine Olympic Committee, Milo, and the country's 24/7 sports app ArenaPlus. "So we have to maintain that, but it's not going to be an easy road, obviously."

Altamirano said a lot is in the pipeline for the Gilas women's team as some of its pool members will be leaving for Sanya, China, for the Asian Beach Games on Wednesday, followed by the country's hosting of the FIBA 3x3 Women's Series stop on May 7-8 at the SM Mall of Asia Music Hall.

"Dy mentioned the likes of Mongolia, China, and Japan as the other countries expected to crowd out the Philippines for the top two Olympic spots reserved for Asia. The most senior in the team, Bernardino said the Gilas team is

up to the task. "Hindi mo masabi, bilog ang bola. Possible naman na makuha namin 'yung slot na 'yun," said the three-time Southeast Asian Games gold medalists and three-time UAAP MVP out of National University. (Malaya)



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## Dustin Yu and Bianca De Vera's friendship



Rising actor Dustin Yu discussed how his friendship with Bianca De Vera developed after they worked together on a music video following his reality show stint.

"After I came out from Bahay ni Kuya, she was the first one whom I got to work with," Dustin shared. "From there, we did consecutive projects together. Outside work, our friendship gradually deepened because of our constant togetherness."

On their working relationship,

he noted, "It's good! Bianca's very nice to work with. So far, she's the most enjoyable screen partner for me."

Asked about their current status, Dustin expressed, "Currently, we're so much okay... the friendship is deeper now. I'll always be here for her!" he added, "Super happy is all I can say," while describing himself as still in the process of proving his intentions as their bond develops. (J. P.R. Gonzales/ Manila standard)

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<p><b>FRESH OUTSIDE ROUND BEEF ROAST AA</b></p>  <p><b>8<sup>88</sup> LB</b></p>	<p><b>SCAN FOR MORE WEEKLY DEALS!</b></p>  <p>FACEBOOK   INSTAGRAM   WEBSITE</p>

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