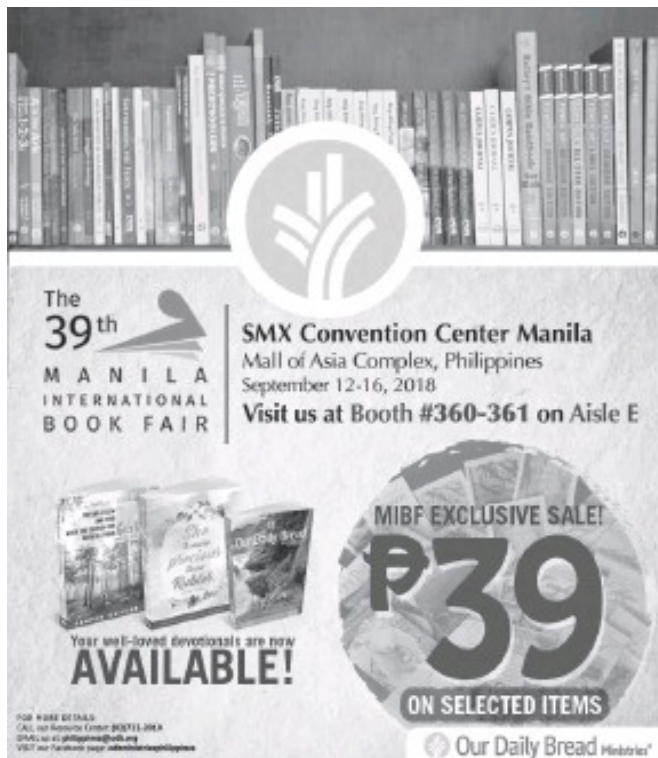


QC vice mayor bats for more urban farms to beat inflation

Manila Bulletin · 10 Sep 2018 · 4 · By CHITO CHAVEZ

Quezon City Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte is urging city residents and the public to cultivate backyard vegetable gardens to deflect the effects of rising inflation or the steady rise of prices of basic commodities.



Through a city-wide program, local residents are provided with free training and tools for people to grow their own food.

“Vegetables and other food are getting more expensive, but we still want to promote organic and healthy eating through greens and fruits. So how do you make it sustainable? We want urban settlers to grow them within their backyard or near areas where they live,” Belmonte said.

In 2010, Belmonte launched the “Joy of Urban Farming” which helps residents from the city put up backyard farms with the objective of mitigating hunger and providing nutritious sources of food, especially for low-income families.

So far, the program resulted in the establishment of 166 urban farms in different barangays of the city.

The main farm is located at the Quezon Memorial Circle.

“Even if you have a small space, we can develop it into a farm using, let’s say, containers or vertical gardens. There are a lot of farming techniques that can be taught which are useful for urban settlers,” Belmonte said.

The “Joy of Urban Farming” also provides a source of livelihood for backyard farmers.

Under the program, households that have been selling their produce earn as much as R400 per day, according to Belmonte.

“We are encouraging our citizens to grow their own food. We are really solving a lot of problems – the hunger problem, the livelihood problem, the climate problem and more. So maganda talaga siyang program (The program is really good),” she said.

In partnership with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the local government is also planning to put up an organic farming school in the city to provide hands-on training on backyard gardening, eco-waste management, production of organic fertilizer from kitchen waste, postharvest techniques and more. For interested individuals and organizations, Belmonte said her office provides free training, tools, and seedlings.