

Commission on women lauds QC

BY JAIME R. PILAPIL

THE Quezon City (QC) government was awarded by the Philippine Commission on Women for implementing comprehensive gender and development (GAD) programs.

The city government was recognized for its enactment of GAD ordinances that uphold human rights, gender equal-

ity and women empowerment along with six other local government units (LGUs).

Vice Mayor Josefina "Joy" Bel-

monte, who received the award on Friday, said Quezon City had instituted programs for victims of gender-based violence and abuse.

"In behalf of the Quezon City local government, I would like to thank the Philippine Commission on Women for recognizing our programs on gender development, and our efforts in providing a gender-responsive governance," she said.

"Quezon City has a comprehensive gender-fair ordinance and

we are the only one to establish a Quezon City Pride Council for our LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community," she added.

The QC Pride Council is a pioneer initiative of the city that "oversees the integration of all city programs and projects for the LGBT community."

"Through the city GAD council, awareness and recommendation are promoted down to the *barangay* level through GAD

focal persons in every office. The council also works and coordinates with the violence against women desks in police stations in the city," Belmonte said.

"Our City Social Hygiene Clinics were established to care to men who have sex with men and transgender people providing them with free, safe, non-discriminatory and confidential HIV testing along with free counselling services," she added.

Belmonte said the establishment of the social hygiene clinics was part of the city's HIV response program which had been recognized a model for other cities by the United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS.

"Now that our two GAD facilities have been validated and certified as local learning hubs, we are encouraged even more to sustain and expand the implementation of our programs and facilities," she said.