

QC taps volunteers to fight drug trade

BY JAIME R. PILAPIL

THE Quezon City government, through its Anti-Drug Abuse and Advisory Council (QCADAAC), has intensified efforts to fight illegal drugs by enlisting the assistance of volunteers in every *barangay* (village).

"Under QCADAAC, we have been making sure that the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (BADACs) are functional and effective in their mandate to suppress illegal drugs and criminality at the barangay level. One

way to ensure that is through the recruitment of volunteers to help in the barangay's campaign against dangerous drugs," mayor-elect and QCADAAC Chairman Josefina "Joy" Belmonte said during the recent oath-taking of

BADAC volunteers.

A 2004 memorandum from the Department of the Interior and Local Government requires barangay anti-drug councils to form a BADAC Auxiliary Team to strengthen anti-drug efforts at the grassroots level and involve all residents in reducing drug-related crimes.

"BADAC volunteers are expected to help in reporting drug incidents and cases, facilitating an information campaign through their families and communities, and implementing programs that prevent drug addiction," the outgoing

vice mayor said.

"We want to make sure that all BADACs have their auxiliary teams in place because we recognize that it is not only the barangay officials who know how best to combat illegal drugs in their communities," Belmonte added.

She said the help of senior citizens, retirees, youths, students, parents, volunteers, homeowners' associations and others with fresh ideas was also needed.

Through QCADAAC, the local government has implemented BADAC functionalization workshops for barangay chiefs from

Districts 1 to 6, as well as training for community-based recovery support services through BADAC focal persons.

"In my three terms [as] vice mayor, one of my advocacies was really the fight against illegal drugs. We are happy that, in Quezon City, we have seen many barangay progress from being severely affected [by drugs] to moderately affected or slightly affected," Belmonte said.

The mayor-elect also vowed that under her administration, they would continue to work closely with barangay officials

and volunteers to add more to the list of drug-cleared communities and ensure that these remain drug-resistant.

A total of 30 villages have been deemed as drug-cleared communities.

Some of the parameters of the Dangerous Drugs Board to declare a drug-clear barangay are: nonavailability of drug supply, absence of drug transit, absence of clandestine laboratory and warehouse, absence of drug dens and drug pushers, and active involvement of the government, among others.