

QC, Bantay Bata 163 renew partnership

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Daily Tribune (Philippines) · 30 Nov 2019 · A7 · @tribunephil_alvi By Alvin Murcia

The Quezon City government renewed its partnership with ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Bata 163 Children's Village as part of National Children's Month celebration.

The memorandum of agreement marks the second year of cooperation between both parties.

"The youth is really close to my heart, since they really are the future of our nation," said Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, a known staunch advocate of children's rights since her days as city vice mayor.

She organized the First QC Children's Summit in 2010 to identify priority issues and concerns of the city's children.

This year, the mayor has pledged P28 million in financial assistance for Bantay Bata 163 Children's Village, which provides shelter and care to children who need medium- to long-term rehabilitation referred by the city's Social Service Development Department (SSDD). Based in Norzagaray, Bulacan, the Children's Village is a halfway home for children who are neglected, abandoned, abused and exploited. It ensures residential care services for its clients, providing basic needs, as well as holistic therapy and resilience programs, conducted by experts and trained social workers in a family-like environment.

"The partnership of the QC government with Bantay Bata 163 goes beyond the rescue and protection of children in situations of abuse that is provided thorough Hotline 163 and Children's Village. It extends beyond the village because of the various new programs, which aim to create a safer, more protective environment for our children," Belmonte said.

Quezon City Vice Mayor Gian Sotto, who signed in behalf of the QC government, said it is meaningful to be a part of this worthy endeavor since strengthening Filipino families is one of his advocacies.

Quezon City's status as a child-friendly local government unit was underscored after it received a Seal of Child-Friendly Local Governance from the Council for the Welfare of Children.

Jing Castaneda, ABS-CBN anchor/host and program director of Bantay Bata 163 said the 22-year-old NGO has also been able to help the QC government in ensuring that poor yet deserving children have access to inclusive and quality education through the Bantay Edukasyon scholarship assistance.

Several communities in Quezn City have also benefited from the various community outreach programs conducted by Bantay Bata 163 in collaboration with the LGU, the most recent of which was in Barangay Payatas.