

Milk, masks, food donations pour in for Taal evacuees

By CHITO A. CHAVEZ

Donations of food, hygiene kits, face masks, drinking water, and other forms of aid continue to pour in for thousands of evacuees staying in various temporary shelters in the province of Batangas. Mother's milk has now been added to the list.

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte on Sunday directed the city's Human Milk Bank to donate mother's milk to infants in evacuation centers in Batangas.

"Our Human Milk Bank at the Quezon City General Hospital (QCGH) will help breastfeeding mothers affected by the Taal Volcano eruption," Belmonte said.

Belmonte said this is a simple token from Quezon City following the request of the ►8



UNDYING DEVOTION – As millions of Filipinos celebrate the Feast of the Sto. Niño Sunday, evacuee Leila de Castro carries a statue of the Baby Jesus, defying a lockdown order on Laurel, Batangas, and risking her life so that she could return to Barangay Boso-Boso to recover the image of the Sto. Niño from her sister's house. (AP)

Milk, masks, food...

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Batangas provincial government for mother's milk donations. Belmonte and Quezon City General Hospital (QCGH) director Dr. Josephine Sabando checked on the supply of mother's milk that will be distributed to breastfeeding mothers in various evacuation sites in Batangas. Sabando said the Quezon City Human Milk Bank (QCHMB) will initially give 40 bottles (100 ml) of pasteurized human milk.

If the need arises, Sabando said, 200 more milk bottles are available for immediate distribution. She said pasteurized human milk was gathered through continuous milk letting activities in coordination with the QC Health Department done in various communities in the city.

Belmonte had earlier dispatched the QC Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office to provide 360 blankets, 360 sleeping mats, 300 partition tents, and two mobile showers for the evacuees

Free face masks BATANGAS – You don't need to have a lot of money to help.

A 61-year-old seamstress, Rosalina Mantuano, of Lipa City showed her kindness and generosity by sewing thousands of colorful masks and giving them for free to her "kababayans" affected by the Taal Volcano eruption in Batangas province.

Mantuano began Monday sewing masks after the volcano spewed heavy ash fall. Shortly after, the supply of face masks dropped and prices increased by twice or as much as three times the usual price. The volcano erupted on Sunday afternoon.

"After I heard the masks' prices have commercially increased, I decided to make more of them using some of my tailoring scraps and fabrics," she said. Mantuano did not have a second thoughts about making face masks when she learned from television news that these masks had become so expensive and the supplies had run out in stores. Supplies were exhausted even in pharmaceutical stalls in Metro Manila. "I thought I have nothing to offer and a lot of people needed masks. They can be bought but expensive, (so) I decided to make these face masks and give them away for free," she said. She is now making 100 face masks everyday.

Mantuano's neighbor lent her a sewing machine and her children helped in sewing face masks. She increased her capacity to 150 pieces of face masks per day. Mantuano recalled she had a rough start in life; that's why she knew how hard it is for the evacuees to be away from their homes. As much as Inay Rosalina is grateful that in her "own little way" she was able to extend a helping hand to her kababayans, her family was pleasantly surprised at how many people are expressing their gratitude to her.

(With a report from PNA)