

'Ordinary doing extraordinary' feted in QC's Gawad Parangal

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From the country's first Olympic gold medalist to community leaders who helped people affected by the pandemic, the **Quezon City government** on Tuesday recognized groups and individuals who have done the extraordinary amid these challenging times.

Six individuals and six organizations received the Manuel Luis Quezon Gawad Parangal Award, which is conferred by the city government on outstanding citizens and institutions for their exemplary service, performance and contributions to society.

A special posthumous award was also given to the late former president Benigno Aquino III, a long-time Quezon City resident, for his exemplary leadership and good governance as the 15th president of the Philippines.

"We honor and celebrate some of the most outstanding people and institutions that have demonstrated the great power of forgetting one's own self in the service of others," **Mayor Joy Belmonte** said. "They have risen above the struggles of daily life to grasp a noble purpose."

Among the awardees were Ana Patricia Non, who initiated the community pantry initiative in the country, and weightlifter Hidilyn Diaz, who won the country's first Olympic gold medal in the Tokyo Olympics.

Also recognized were Lt. Jean Aguada, who nursed a five-month-old child she found while walking on her way to a cleanup drive and feeding program in Quezon City; Rev. Fr. Ronald Mariano, who initiated COVID-19 relief operations that helped some 4,000 families, and public school teacher Lou Sabrina Ongkiko, who oversaw their school's distance learning continuity program.

The award was also conferred posthumously on Dr. Leandro Resurreccion III, a pioneering pediatric surgeon who died of COVID-19 last year.

Organizations that received the recognition were the Philippine Animal Welfare Society for its pet-friendly version of the community pantry; Safe Haven Community Center & Children's Home for providing shelter to abandoned, neglected and abused children, and ECPAT Philippines for giving shelter to children who are victims of trafficking and sexual abuse.

Also recognized were BeSeekLeta for Every Juan that collects old or unused bicycle parts and assembling these for those who need transportation assistance; Salamat PH Healthcare Heroes that pooled donations to provide food for night-shift frontliners, and OCTA Research Group for providing data analysis that helped the city government develop informed policy measures against COVID-19.

Belmonte said this year's theme, "Ordinary people doing extraordinary things during extraordinary times," highlights the selfless spirit in every person.