

Belmonte honors COVID heroes

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Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte yesterday honored individuals who served their communities at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.



“All our awardees share a common denominator – they performed extraordinary tasks not because they were interested to receive accolades, but because they genuinely care for our fellowmen. In their own ways, they demonstrated the great power of forgetting one’s self in the service of others,” Belmonte said in a speech during the Dragon Star Awards 2022 organized by the Quezon City Association of Filipino-Chinese Businessmen Inc.

Among the awardees were Maginhawa community pantry founder Ana Patricia Non, teacher Lou Sabrina Ongkiko, nurse Kathrina Bianca Macababad, doctors Glenn Angeles, Hilda Co-Ong and Maria Asuncion Silvestre and tri-athlete Roy Maceda.

Also awarded were the Tzu Chi Foundation, Salamat PH Healthcare Heroes and the Federation of FilipinoChinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCII).

Former Quezon City mayors Feliciano Belmonte Jr. and Brigido Simon Jr. were also given special citations for their contributions to the advancement of the city.

“They have risen above the struggles of daily lives and grasped a nobler purpose. I am certain that we can draw inspiration from their sacrifices and acts of heroism to show time and time again how primordial it is in human nature to look after one another’s welfare,” the mayor said. At the height of the pandemic in 2021, Non founded a community pantry in Barangay Maginhawa, which was replicated in many parts of the country.

Ongkiko developed a critical learning continuity plan in the field of Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics at the Culiati Elementary School.

Non and Ongkiko were also honored during the 19th Manuel Luis Quezon Gawad Parangal Awards last year.

Angeles was credited for setting up quarantine facilities for frontliners, with the help of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and volunteers from the private sector.

Co-Ong was hailed for organizing national blood donation programs during the pandemic. Macababad was cited as one of the nurses who saved 35 babies at the neo-natal intensive care unit when the Philippine General Hospital was struck by a fire last year.

Silvestre was recognized for co-founding a non-profit organization, Kalusugan ng Mag-Ina Inc. The foundation worked with the World Health Organization in Geneva.

Maceda was credited for co-organizing the “BeSekLeta for Every Juan” that provided free bicycles to citizens, particularly medical frontliners in need of transportation.

Also awarded were the Salamat PH Healthcare Heroes, which organized a volunteer group of seven women who supported frontliners. The Tzu Chi Foundation and FFCCCII donated medical equipment and supplies to help in the government’s fight against COVID-19.

Belmonte stressed the importance of citizens’ participation in governance.

“When my father led the city government, one of his priorities was to strengthen the relationships with civil society groups. I have learned from him the value of participative governance, where the local government leans on the active role of citizenry toward development,” Belmonte said.