

Pinoy MMA fighters fight for typhoon victims

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
AJPress

LOS ANGELES – WHEN 22-year-old Fil-Am Raymond Villamor checked one of his favorite mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter Brandon Vera's website and saw that he was going to be in Los Angeles to host an MMA workshop event to benefit the typhoon victims in the Philippines, he dropped his Sunday plans to attend.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity," said Villamor, a Pharmacy Tech from Riverside. "It's a great experience. I might never see a collection of Filipino fighters like this again."

Pinoy MMA fighters Vera, Mark Munoz, Shane Del Rosario and Romie Adanza were among the Pinoy mixed martial art fighters who participated in the first ever Their Fight is Our Fight MMA workshop to benefit the typhoon Ondoy and typhoon Parma victims last Sunday (October 25).

The daylong event held at the Legends MMA-Training Center in Hollywood, gave participants a lesson in MMA training including jiu-jitsu, Muay Thai strikes, grappling and wrestling from world-class Pinoy athletes.

It was also the first gathering of Pinoy MMA fighters in one event for a good cause.

"I had to do something," said Vera, a UFC Light Heavyweight contender who took time out of his training for an upcoming fight to participate. "I know it's hard in the Philippines right now. There are people who lost a lot – their homes, cars, aunts and uncles. I just want to tell them to keep their heads up and keep moving forward."

Vera added that after his fight against UFC legend Randy Couture on November 14, he would be donating some monies to the cause.

"You know how Filipinos are," said Vera. "You have to do anything that you can do to help and do what you can."

Organized by Their Fight is Our Fight (TFIOF) non-profit organization in conjunction with Fil-Am Arts and Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA), the MMA workshop was created in an effort to raise relief funds for the victims of Typhoon



(L-R) TFIOF Founders Paul Factora and Tamara Suguitan, WBO Muay Thai Champion Shane Del Rosario, WBC Bantamweight US Champion in Muay Thai Romie Adanza, UFC Light Heavyweight Contenders Mark Munoz and Brandon Vera, and FilAm Arts Board Member Winston Emano pose with the participants of the first ever "Their Fight Is Our Fight" MMA workshop to benefit the typhoon Ondoy and Parma victims at the Legends MMA Training Center in Hollywood last October 25.

AJPress Photo By Joseph Pimentel

Ondoy and Typhoon Parma in the Philippines.

TFIOF co-founder and a MMA event organizer Tamara Suguitan said she wanted to do something to help those victims so she called up her friends in the MMA industry and they all jumped on board.

"I'm just so happy that these guys are all donating their time and energy for this cause," said Suguitan. "When I called Brandon, Mark [Munoz] and Shane they didn't even hesitate. They were all like 'heck yeah! Anything that I can do to help.'"

UFC Light Heavyweight contender Munoz said he was personally affected by the typhoon. Many of his dad's relatives still live in the area where the typhoon hit and were displaced during the storm.

"It's our obligation to help and support our kababayans," said Munoz.

All proceeds of the event were donated to the Philippine Red Cross, according to Suguitan.

Given the magnitude of the devastation in the Philippines and the positive feedback from the participants in the workshop, Suguitan and the other event organizers said this would not be a one-time event.

She said TFIOF plans on hosting more event workshops.

For more information about TFIOF, visit www.theirfightisourfight.org. ■

Pacman gets special 'Firepower' pairs...

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Hatton, Manny wore the "MP shoes" which were also exclusively designed by Nike for the pound-for-pound king. However, after the fight, Manny wanted some modifications done for his boxing shoes.

Spencer Clifton, Nike's footwear merchandising manager, and Jesse Milliken, Nike shoe designer, shared in an exclusive interview with *Asian Journal*

all about the new boxing shoes (they also call it "boots"). "Manny told us that modifications were needed to be made on the shoes for his fight with Cotto," said Jesse Milliken.

"We had a meeting in July and talked about what Manny wanted. It was really done in partnership with Manny," shared Spencer Clifton.

"We took photographs of his feet, which is size 9," said Jesse.

"Manny said his feet didn't feel as secure as he wanted them to be. Also, he wanted the shoes to be lighter, without taking away the thickness. That is really needed to hold the shape."

Spencer said they worked on the new shoes for 3 1/2 months at Nike's Oregon headquarters, in a place they call "The Kitchen". "Only Nike has such a facility which has the capability to

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