

Drop off points across the US for donations to Typhoon Ondoy victims

NEW YORK
NAFCON (Nat'l Alliance for Filipino Concerns)/SANDIWA Nat'l Alliance of Fil-Am Youth are now receiving relief donations (clothes, blankets, medical supplies, monetary). NY drop-off @ BAYANIHAN Filipino Community Center, 40-21 69th St. Woodside, NY 11377. Call (516)901-1832 or email sandiwa.national@gmail.com if you would like to help.

New Jersey
Drop-Off Points:
1) Sinugba Cafe – 561 Westside Ave. Jersey City, NJ 07304

2) Casa Victoria – 691 Newark Ave. Jersey City, NJ 07306-2803 You can send CASH through Metro Bank acct. 3 189 14540 1 For BAYAN's "BALSA" (Bayanihan Alay sa Sambayanan)

For donations in New Jersey please contact: (201)621-3156-Yves Nibungco (917)476-7855- Nick Cordero

Los Angeles
In Los Angeles area please contact Kuu Hilo (818)395-9207. You can send CASH through Metro Bank acct. 3 189 14540 1 For BAYAN's "BALSA" (Bayanihan Alay sa Sambayanan)

San Francisco/Bay Area
For donations in San Francisco/Bay Area, please contact Ryan Leano (626)534-4971. Monetary donations can also be dropped off at these sites.

Checks can be made out to "Lakasdiwa," a non-profit organization that will send the funds directly to MIGRANTE International in the Philippines, a workers' organization directly helping the victims in the disaster relief efforts. Please put "Typhoon Ondoy Relief" on the check's note.

Filipino Community Center
4681 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94112
Liwanag Cultural Center
Hillside Park Clubhouse
222 Lausanne Ave.
Daly City, CA 94014
Mondays 3:30-6:00
Tuesdays 3:30-6:00
Wednesdays 3:30-8:00
Thursdays 3:30-6:00
Asian Pacific Islander Youth Promoting Advocacy & Leadership
Attn: Armael Malinis, AnakBayan-East Bay
310 8th Street, Suite 215
Oakland, CA 94710

Stanford's Pilipino American Student Union (PASU) is also collecting donations to be sent to the Philippines to help victims of Typhoon Ondoy (international name Ketsana). If you would like to make a donation, please contact AV David at avhdavid@stanford.edu or (650) 491-4561. ■

Relief aid, and rescue ongoing, . . .

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is imperative that Filipinos who are able to help out SHOULD help out. Victims of the typhoon Ondoy require every bit of aid and assistance they can get. We need to give our unified effort in saving our fellow countrymen, as well as our country," said Villar.

"As shown by my recent experience, efficiency is needed in

these times of calamity. Our relief and assistance group exhibits this trait with 68,372 victims receiving help since Saturday", Villar further said.

People who need relief and assistance can call the 24-hour Tulong Villar Assistance Hotlines: 0905-3316626 and 0917-4226800. ■

Global Fund suspends grant . . .

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The *Star* tried to get a comment from TDF President Dr. Thelma Tupasi but to no avail.

According to Department of Health (DOH) director Dr. Yolanda Oliveros, the suspension could lead to delays in the implementation of programs against TB, malaria and AIDS, the coverage of the TDF grants.

"There may be some delays but the programs

won't be stopped totally because the Global Fund will look for new recipients in place of TDF," she told *The Star*.

Oliveros said the designs of the TDF programs were "supportive of the national program" but the foundation has its own financial system.

"It complements the national program so that 100 percent of the goals can be achieved." ■

Feds seek ban on texting truckers, bus drivers

WASHINGTON—The Obama administration said Thursday, Oct. 1, it will seek to ban text messaging by interstate bus drivers and truckers and push states to pass their own laws against driving cars while distracted.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said the administration also would move to put restrictions on cell phone use by rail operators, truck drivers and interstate bus drivers.

"Driving while distracted should just feel wrong—just as driving without a seat belt or driving while intoxicated," LaHood said at the end of a two-day conference on the problem. "We're not going to break everyone of their bad habits—but we are going to

raise awareness and sharpen the consequences."

As a first step, LaHood said President Barack Obama signed an executive order late Wednesday banning all federal workers from texting while driving on government business, driving government vehicles or using government equipment.

The administration also will push to disqualify school bus drivers who are convicted of texting while driving from keeping their commercial driver's licenses.

Researchers, safety groups, automakers and lawmakers gathered to discuss the perils of distracted driving, hearing sobering data from the government

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Consulate and Fil-Am groups synergize efforts to help typhoon victims

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
AJP/Press

LOS ANGELES—The Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles and Fil-Am groups across Southern California are urging Fil-Ams to help the victims of the worst tropical storm to hit the Philippines in more than 40 years.

"This is one of those times people need to set aside their differences and go with synergy," said Vice Consul Daniel Espiritu. "We have to do the best we can do for our country and our people."

"Since the typhoon hit, we are so pleased that [our] *kababayans* in this area are so concerned and interested in how they can help and send their support and assistance to our *kababayans* back home," added Consul General Mary Jo Aragon.

On September 26, tropical storm Ketsana or Typhoon Ondoy hit the northern part of the Philippines, including Metro Manila, and dumped more than a month's worth of rain in just 12 hours, according to the Associated Press.

Consul General Aragon said more than 90,000 families or about 450,000 people have been affected by the deadly typhoon. Hundreds of thousands are in evacuation centers and many homes are flooded in waist high water. About one million people have no electricity.

Authorities said the typhoon has already claimed the lives of at least 280 people while several more are missing.

Aragon said President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has declared a "state of calamity" in parts of Metro Manila and 25

nearby provinces.

The Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles has directed *kababayans* wanting to help with relief efforts to the Philippine Emergency Disaster Relief Organization (PEDRO) in Los Angeles.

Consulate officials said the best way Fil-Ams can help the typhoon victims is to send money donations.

"Cash provides immediate relief," said Bing De La Vera of PEDRO. "The reason for this is because it is not clear what is the people's immediate need right now that are suffering.

Aragon warns *kababayans*, who do want to help and send donations, of "unscrupulous organizations trying to take advantage of this calamity."

"Always make sure the organization you are donating to is legitimate," she said.

Frustration

During the emergency meeting held at the Philippine Consulate General office in Los Angeles on September 28, several community members let out their frustration regarding the sending of aid.

The Consul advises those wanting to help the typhoon victims to send cash but with many Filipinos and Fil-Ams affected by the economic recession, some can't afford to do so.

A concerned community member asked why he can't send over rice, medical supplies or used clothing.

Consul officials said the sending of used clothing, medical supplies and food are all subject to customs checks in the US and the Philippines and those goods might take up to 30 to 60 days before they can be released to the typhoon victims.

"By that time those goods might not be needed," said a Consul official.

"All we're asking is for the consul here in Los Angeles to ask the Philippine government to relax the rules especially in a time of crisis like this," said a member of the Philippine Bar Association.

Donations

A few hours after the storm hit, many Filipino and US companies have stepped up to help the victims of the typhoon.

Xoom.com, a money transfer service, will waive their fee for money transfers to the Philippines.

PEDRO has collected \$3,000 from its members. Island Pacific Supermarket has collected \$2,000 and set up drop off points to collect goods and supplies.

According to Inquirer.net, Philippine Airlines (PAL) will be airlifting relief donations from the provinces to Manila in its domestic flights in the Philippines.

The Manny Pacquiao foundation has also set up Operation: Metro Manila, a project to help raise funds and awareness for the destruction caused by Typhoon Ondoy.

The foundation will hold a fundraiser to benefit the victims this weekend. ■

Some people play the odds on health care costs

Opting out of insurance a risky gamble, but pays off for many healthy adults

NEW YORK—Call it a health care gamble: The decision by some people to opt out of health insurance, paying cash for routine care while playing the odds that an accident or catastrophic illness won't plunge them into financial ruin.

President Barack Obama's goal of requiring everyone to carry health insurance has drawn a great deal of skepticism from this group. Many pay far less for health care than they would on premiums,

and doubt that insurance would even cover them if they needed it.

It's unknown how many of the nearly 50 million uninsured in the United States voluntarily go without coverage. Researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation, which studies the uninsured, said most are young, generally healthy adults who are self-employed or in relatively low-wage jobs that do not

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