

FICA Launches Las Vegas Chapter

On October 8, 2016, the Filipino International Community of America, a rapidly growing organization of families with Filipino heritage in the United States, held a national assembly and launched its chapter in Las Vegas at the beautiful International Peace Education Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. The assembly gathered more than a hundred guests from Las Vegas and officers and representatives of FICA from states such as California, New Jersey, New York and Florida and Massachusetts. Local guests came from the local Family Federation members, Korean community and Zamboanga community association members.

As an opening to the program, Rev. Ken Doo, pastor of the Las Vegas Family Church, offered a sincere prayer. Next, Ms. Cat Rian led the singing of "The Star-spangled Banner" while the MC, Bishop Emiljun Rapada led it for the "Lupang Hinirang", the Philippine national anthem. Bishop Giovanni Paquit, who member of the FICA board and who was from New Jersey, got help in welcoming the audience to the event by inviting some local Las Vegas to come to the front.



Group photo at the end of the FICA Assembly and Las Vegas launching.

Then it came time to explain to the audience what FICA was about. Bishop Greg Agulan, narrated FICA's history, goals and activities since its founding in 2007. Bishop Ruben Olgado, the president of FICA next shared about the big projects since he came to office and his vision for the group. He was happy that FICA grew by having a new chapter in Las Vegas.

The induction of the local officers was next. Judge Cheryl Moss, a prominent local public servant with Filipino heritage, administered the oath-taking for the five officers led by Mrs. Lorna Todd. In her speech

after the induction, Ms. Todd felt that the time was ripe, for Las Vegas to have its own FICA chapter since Las Vegas is home to a Filipino majority among its Asian demographic. She also expressed her desire to serve the elderly through a flower donating program, Flower Love Project.



The officers of FICA Las Vegas taking their oath with Judge Cheryl Moss as inducting officer.

Engr. Rev. Julius Malicdem, the guest of honor and president of the Family Federation for World Peace in the Philippines, gave a presentation on how to achieve peace in our world. He taught that only when we change ourselves and live out true love in our relationships and family and in every field and endeavor can we achieve peace. This is true whatever our religion, race or cultural background is. His message served as a call to action for FICA to be an instrument of peace in American communities.



Engr. Rev. Julius Malicdem receiving a token of appreciation from FICA President Mr. Ruben Olgado and FICA Board member Bishop Giovanni Paquit.

Throughout the program, the audience got to see talent from Ms. Cat Rian singing her soulful version of Maroon 5's "Sunday Morning", the FICA Mommies who gracefully danced a Philippine folk fan dance and "Country Roads" in country costume. Ms. Gloria Papin, the singer of some popular songs in the Philippines, also delighted the audience.



Ms. Cat Rian and the FICA Mommies performing.

Finally, a sampling of a typical Filipino feast was served for lunch consisting of *lechon* (roast whole pig), *pancit bihon* (stir-fried rice noodles), *kare-kare* (oxtail on peanut sauce), *adobo*, *buko* salad (coconut salad), rice cakes and *halo-halo* (sweet toppings on crushed ice). Raffle winners were picked while guests were at lunch. The prizes were cash, gift baskets, Trader Joe's gift certificates, and items from vendors at the event including free tickets to Ms. Papin's upcoming concert. To cap off the program Mr. Gerry Servito, a Family Federation educator, gave the talk *Culture of Hope*, a powerful advice on how we can become great families.

The program was made possible with support from the Las Vegas Family Church and its pastor Rev. Ken Doo, the founder of Family Education Empowerment Foundation, Mrs. Mimi Morse, and with the hard work and perseverance of the chief organizer and FICA Las Vegas head, Mrs. Lorna Todd.