



Filipinos Success' Stories:
Kaya Ko, Kaya Mo
Marilda Francisco Kane
AWESOME.... Woman, Wife, Mother,
Grandmother, Friend and
Community Leader!

By Marjorie Carmona Newman

Marilda Francisco Kane lives a colourful life. She grew up in Pakistan, joining the expatriate community there of Filipino diplomats, engineers, or hospital and school professionals. She then received a scholarship at Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles, California where she studied Pre - School Education. Immersing herself in more academics, she then completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of the East, Philippines, majoring in English. She is not only brains, but her talent includes modeling, where in the Philippines she joined several beauty pageants and modeling stints for FINA Magazine, Avon, Philippines Airlines, Rough Rider and Wrangler Jeans. Returning to her trade with Mrs. Sonia Roco, as

the Directress, she joined one of the first Pre - schools established in the Philippines.

Her career took a turn when she entered Miriam College as a Language and Reading Teacher at Miriam College. Still, she aspired to do more with her degree. She went on to author a series of book for the National Book Store where to this day she still receives royalties. Not only did she have a passion for the arts, Marilda also has a business mindset. Having parents in the real estate business in the Philippines, she succeeded them and became a Property Manager for their assets.

However, Marilda was bound for international aspirations. Just before coming to Canada, she lived in Jakarta, Indonesia, where she taught at the International School.

When she came to Canada, Marilda was pregnant and had no connections or friends. According to Marilda, "It is very difficult to arrive in a new country and not know anyone. Ties are an important factor to settling." Still, she drew on her past international experience where she learned to interpersonal skills dealing with people of various backgrounds. Restless and unwilling to settle, Marilda volunteered herself to her children's school, hence landing her first volunteer experience in Canada. From then on, her career in Canada took off. Working as a Liaison Worker for the ESL Centre, in Edmonton Catholic Schools, she helped gauge English capabilities of students, especially those with

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native Filipino tongue, helping them transition to the Canadian system. Here in Canada, she found her calling in helping her kababayans. Her next position was Catholic Social Services, at the Millwoods Welcome Centre for Immigrants site, where she worked as a Settlement Counsellor for Immigration and Settlement Service, where she was in charge of Filipino Drop-In and Information Centre. Together with fellow Filipino volunteers, they helped welcome kababayans in need, even after office hours.

Before coming to Canada she taught at the International School in Jakarta, Indonesia. Her other educational attainments include being "Grandfathered" into the Alberta College of Social Workers, certificate in Emergency Paramedics and becoming a Doula.

In Canada, Marilda first worked as a Liaison Worker for the ESL Centre, Edmonton Catholic Schools. She assessed the English language

capabilities, as well the native tongue of new Filipino children entering into the Canadian school system.

In an interview, Marilda emphasized the value of volunteering. "Always remember those who have helped you along the way and be open and willing to give back to the community by volunteering your time. It doesn't have to be immediately but sometime down the road. It can be in many roles, the school where your children are going to, the church, an organization, a hospital, even a function at your work. Volunteering is an opportunity to connect with your community to create a positive impact. I believe volunteerism is crucial for creating healthy, vibrant, and connected Alberta communities. Through volunteering, you can create a positive impact and help shape the future for your community. It feels awesome when you can say, 'I MADE A DIFFERENCE!'"

During her 5 years break from Immigration and Settlement Services, Marilda still volunteered her time with the Community and helped in many projects. She is presently the President of the Filipino Support Services Society and

the Vice-President of the Association of Batangueños in Alberta, an honorary member in several Filipino Associations. She has served on several Boards. She was the first Filipino to serve on the Board of EISA (Edmonton Immigrant Services Association), was the Treasurer for one year and volunteers at their Casino fundraiser to this day. Her break took her to Westlawn Courts, a Senior's Complex of 199 suites, where she worked as the CAO (Chief Administrative Officer). She also worked at ASSIST Community Services Centre SW Office, which opened its doors officially to newcomers on March 28, 2013. She considers herself a "Social Entrepreneur" and is involved with many projects.

For her dedication in helping the Filipino community, she has earned various awards such as the HIYAS Award of Excellence, for Community Service, RISE (Recognizing Immigrant Success and Endeavours) Awards for Health, Human Services and Education, Rhoda Abada Award for Outstanding Leadership and Community Service and, the Alberta Centennial Medal, paying tribute

to individuals for achievements that have benefited fellow citizens, the community and the province. In addition to this impressive resume, she recently received the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers, which recognizes her significant contribution to the community. This award stems from the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award which was established by former Governor General Romeo LeBlanc, to recognize individuals who volunteer their time to help others and to build a smart and caring nation. And finally, to top it off, she was surprised to receive an invitation by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnson, Governor General of Canada, to a presentation ceremony of Canadian honours on Thursday, December 8, 2016 at 10 am at the Shaw Conference Centre, 9797 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton.

However, the awards did not come without the sacrifice. How did she face the challenges she encountered in Canada? Marilda believed because of her background and growing up with different cultures, she learned to adapt. In her opinion, adjusting to Canada

requires people to open their minds, to be flexible and, most importantly, to be willing to learn and strive. It is this tenacity and perseverance that keeps Marilda from balancing her commitment to her family with her admirable dedication to the community.

Marilda's advice to fellow immigrants, "As an immigrant you can be successful in Canada or any foreign country by learning about the country before you immigrate. Find settlement agencies in the area where you are going to settle. Let them help you and guide you. A good job is important but you need to also enjoy yourself and have your family enjoy the community where you live. Be open minded by learning about the different cultures in your community. Give back to your community when you can by volunteering. Be positive. Always remember your roots and those who have helped you in your journey to success. Follow the laws, they are there for your protection. Be happy. Follow your dreams. Your success as an immigrant will reflect on you, your family, your community, and your other future successes!"