



STEPPING STONE

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ANGELS WALK 2018

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MESSAGE BOARD



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Autism afflicts one in every sixty eight (1:68) children as reported by official US statistics. This is up from one in every eighty eight (1:88) only a few years earlier. Clearly the situation is not getting any better.

The **Autism Society of the Philippines (ASP)** brings together every year a gathering of children and adults with Autism thru the **Angel's Walk** with the aim of bringing **Awareness, Acceptance, Adaptation** and **Accommodation** of **Persons with Autism**.

This year, a record breaking number of participants, accompanied by their parents, teachers, developmental pediatricians, therapists and ordinary people joined the "walk" in support of this theme.

We thank the selfless and tireless leadership of the **ASP** and organizers of this years' event.

Atty. Louie Aseoche
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This year's **Angels Walk** for Autism is celebrating the contributions of the many angels and heroes who make life better for families who live and love with autism! Building an **Autism-OK Philippines** is what everyone aims for.

The **Angels Walk for Autism**, launched by the **Autism Society of the Philippines** in partnership with **SM Cares**, kicked off the **National Autism Consciousness Week** at the **SM Mall of Asia** in Pasay City last January 14, Sunday, with the gates opening as early as 6:30am. Other partners included **MOA Arena, SM Mall of Asia, National Council on Disability Affairs, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability** and the **ASEAN Autism Network**.

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This year’s theme, *“From Awareness to Acceptance, Accommodation and Appreciation,”* affirms the position that disability inclusion should not be limited to *“consciousness”* but must translate to visible, deliberate, policy-driven action. The event was attended by different families, schools, institutions , and ASP chapters of over 24, 000 participants.

Among **Stepping Stone** students, our very own *Nathan Dacuno* of *Functional Academic Class* and *Phil Armie* of *Teen-Adult Class* were present together with their guardians, with special participation of *Ms. Irish Gratela, Ms. Nelia Lyn Tuazon, and Ms. Maria Rosalia Apostol BEED-SPED* interns from *University of Makati*. Of course **Stepping Stone SPED Teachers**, *Ms. March Aive Estember* of *Early Intervention Class* and yours truly *Teacher Angelica Varona* were present.

Line up of the performers consisted mostly of **ASP** achievers who also succeeded in Acedemics and Arts. This year’s *Angels Walk* showcased the talents of people with Autism in the form of singing,



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dancing, acting and theater arts. There was father and daughter tandem too who sang a heartwarming song number. Most of the songs' message conveyed messages about faith, encouragement, belief in each and everyone's potential and to honor the heroes of today.

As awarded by children with Autism, they saluted all the Developmental Pediatricians, Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, Different Clinicians, SPED Teachers, Parents and Families Nationwide—who work tirelessly for the inclusion of persons with Autism in the Society. But of course, everything was to celebrate the life of people with autism who made a difference in our lives.

According to **Ms. Mona Magno-Veluz, ASP's National President**, from 23,000 participants last year, we had 24,000 registered participants this year. It is the biggest in the history of **Angels Walk** to date. Also, this event is simultaneously being carried out in Baguio, Cebu, Davao, General Santos, Iloilo, Lucena, Roxas, Tacloban, and Tagbilaran Cities all throughout January.



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Among the esteemed guests from government and non-government organizations were, **President of SM Cares, Mr. Hans Sy**, who was very energetic to join the walk together with Senator Risa Hontiveros who delivered a short message to congratulate all the heroes in our country who continuously supports people with disabilities.

One of the much-awaited highlights of the event was the **Walk around SM MOA** grounds. Being into the spirit of the walk as heroes, everyone were having fun gearing up with their families, schools and barkadas. We had fun with the concept — **be inspired; be a hero**. What better way to celebrate the heroes in our lives is to express our love for these amazing people with a thoughtful gesture.

The Philippines is a more inclusive place because autism heroes inspire acceptance, accommodation and appreciation of individuals with autism. Thank you to all the people behind the event, thank you all for making the **Angels Walk for Autism** a super success. Let's pray and continue to build an **Autism-OK Philippines!**

Thank you, **Autism Heroes!**





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