

Padayon Edukasyon

The official publication of DepEd Caraga, Vol. 1, No. 2, September 2020

CARAGA



"Our resilience and innovativeness are the keys that will meet our expectations. I'm very confident that, with the support of all stakeholders and the entire community, our basic education learning continuity plans will come to fruition."

FRANCIS CESAR B. BRINGAS, CESO V
Regional Director

IN THIS ISSUE

ABOUT THE COVER:

This dried, almost lifeless twig defies the natural elements that threatened its survival; it struggles to draw out every ounce of life from within; moves from a world of decay towards a new world of wholeness, symbolic of DepEd Caraga's resilience and victory over the challenges posed by the pandemic.

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A HAPPY TALE OF AN IP TEACHER p.15

not for sale

Surigao del Norte Division acquires new school building, ICT equipment from LGU

DepEd Surigao del Norte Division Superintendent Ma. Teresa M. Real accepted the new three-storey school building of Claver National High School (CNHS) turned over by the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Claver, Surigao del Norte on August 20, 2020.

In her speech, SDS Real thanked Claver Mayor Georgia D. Gokiangkee and other LGU officials for their continued support and active participation in the implementation of the DepEd-Basic Education for all.

"This historical event exemplifies the great partnerships between the Local Government Units and the Department of Education. Claver High's newly received blessings only manifest its strong ties with our partners in education and further indicates that Claver High is a school that sets an example for others to do the same in achieving greater heights," Real said.

LGU-Claver also donated 60 units of laptops and 20 prepaid routers for the schools/teachers in the District as tools for the Modular/Online Learning Modality. Mayor Gokiangkee assured DepEd-SDN officials of her deep support for education. *"Just like in Mayor Eddie's watch, the education sector is one of the top priorities of my administration,"* she said in her speech.

She also emphasized that the technologically advanced facilities aimed to transform the image of the school.

The new P46 million state-of-the-art school building is equipped with advanced ICT



SDS Ma. Teresa M. Real (R) accepts the ceremonial key from Claver Mayor Georgia D. Gokiangkee. Above is the new school building.

amenities and other facilities. It lodged the administrative offices on the first floor. The music room, faculty room, records/archives room, theater room, and other classrooms occupied the second and third floors.

"Our school is indeed fortunate to have received all these supports from LGU-Claver," Marisol M. Galido, the school principal, remarked.

Also present during the blessing and turnover ceremony were: Vice Mayor Narlito G. Jamesola; former mayor of Claver Mr. Eddie P. Gokiangkee; Rev. Fr. Almarion C. Ramada, Jr., DCS; Dr. Alicia L. Amalla, the District Supervisor of Claver District; PTA Officials, Claver District Administrators, SB Members, and other LGU Officials. - **By Rose Jeane O. Suarez, Education Program Specialist II-Social Mobilization and Networking.**

Bislig Division receives, distributes 10 machines for module reproduction



Ten (10) units of Duplo copying and printing machines arrived at the Division Office and prepared for distribution to the 10 districts on July 27, 2020.

Bislig City Division acquired ten (10) units of copying and printing machines on July 27, 2020.

This was made possible following the Local School Board (LSB) approval of SDS Dr. Gregoria Su's proposal presented during a special meeting at the mayor's conference room on June 16, 2020.

The LSB approved the purchase of 10 printing machines and other budget requests through Resolution No. 2, series of 2020 which allowed for the reversion of funds from Sports

Development Program and Support to Operation & Maintenance of Public Schools amounting to P1,500,000.

Subsequently, the Local Government of Bislig City passed Appropriation Ordinance No. 2020-002 allocating said amount to Capital Outlay for the purchase of said items plus five (5) television sets.

The City also approved over 3 million pesos for the purchase of thermal scanners, health and safety essentials for schools, and materials for

upgrading the Radio-Based Instruction facilities.

The printing machines were immediately delivered to the ten districts right after validation and inspection by the Division Supply Office.

The acquisition of such machines thus assured the faster and easier reproduction of modules and other learning materials, enabling all the districts to sustain the delivery of quality, accessible, relevant, and liberating basic education services for all learners despite the COVID-19 health crisis. - **By Demosthenes J. Quinal, OIC-Chief, SGOD, Bislig City.**

2019 Regional SBM Practitioners Convocation revisited



Regional Director Francis Cesar Bringas, CESO V (3rd from right), on stage with regional and division officials during the closing program. Also in photo are (L-R): SDS Lorenzo O. Macasocol, SDS Jeanie L. Mativo, FTAD Chief Carolina M. Niepes, SDS Marilou B. Dedumo, ARD Arsenio T. Cornites Jr., (ret.) Dr. Elena Capampangan, Dr. Elsa M. Cataluna, SDS Nelia S. Lomocso, and SDS Karen L. Galanida.

The First Regional SBM Practitioners Convocation was held on November 26, 2019 at Almont Inland Resort, Butuan City with the theme *“Celebrating Successes in School-Based Management.”* This activity capped the four-month validation process for the schools that applied for SBM Level of Practice validation in 2019. Of the 83 applicant schools, 33 were recognized as Advanced Level Implementers based on Document Analysis, Observation, and Discussion (DOD) as per DepEd Order 83, s. 2012.

The following schools shared their SBM journey and best practices through video presentations:

1. Matin-ao NHS, Surigao del Norte: *“Take the first step”*
2. Tagbina NHS, Surigao del Sur: *“Shared planning, shared vision, shared mission, shared decision making, transparency.”*
3. Calamba NHS, Cabadbaran City: *“Expect the unexpected, but now we’re here.”*
4. Tubajon NHS, Dinagat Islands: *“Stakeholders are the real owners of the school.”*
5. Caraga Regional Science High School, Surigao City: *“Take a humble beginning.”*
6. Buenavista NHS, Tandag City: *“SBM is a strategy to achieve higher education.”*
7. Magallanes NHS, Agusan del Norte: *“Manage with an open communication.”*
8. Bislig CES/SSS, Division of Bislig City: *“The wonders of vegetables/plants.”*
9. Tagpulangi ES, Butuan City: *“Cooperation matters most, sa pagtutulungan walang imposible.”*
10. Pamosaingan ES, Siargao: *“Success is not how high you have climbed.”*
11. San Francisco Pilot CES, Agusan del Sur: *“Sa pagtambayongay nakab-ot ang kadaugan.”*
12. Agusan Del Sur Pilot Laboratory School: *“It takes a whole village to educate a child.”*

The presentations highlighted the importance of establishing harmonious relationships with the teachers, learners, parents, LGU officials,

community leaders, NGOs, and private individuals as one of the requirements for SBM recognition.

The presentations also emphasized that any school can achieve Advanced Level of Practice in the School-Based Management (SBM) if the school head works together with people willing to extend extra effort, energy, and expertise.

Last year’s awardees included an MG school from Butuan City Division; Monograde School from Surigao del Sur; Pilot Elementary School in Agusan del Sur; Mega Schools in Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur; and Island Schools in Dinagat Islands and Siargao.

These schools vary in sizes, classifications, number of teachers, and levels; each with its own story to tell for future benchmarking by other schools throughout the region. More importantly, they are all implementers of Inclusive Education,

In his message, Regional Director Francis Cesar B. Bringas, CESO V challenged the participants to be united amidst diversity, respect each other, and focus on similarities. *“If we focus on our differences, we will never succeed in our schools. I believe that you did not focus on these differences; you focused on your similarities, that is, to make your schools great,”* he articulated. - **By Alejandro P. Macadatar, PhD.**

Agusan del Norte, Radyo Trumpeta ink MOA for Radio-Based Instruction



L-R. Hon. Mayor Norbert Pagaspas, SGOD Chief Glorina L. Siclon, SDS Romeo O. Aprovechar, Norbert Pagaspas Jr., Vice Mayor Amy C. Pagaspas, and news anchor Chris Timogan (seated).

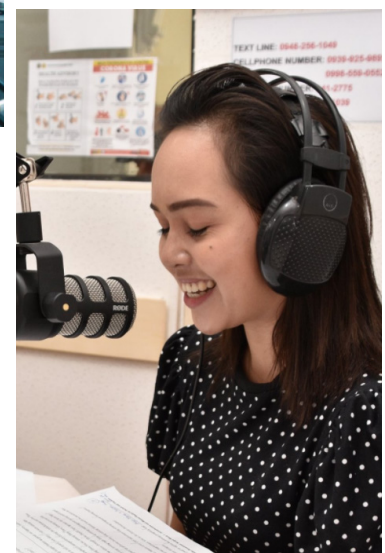
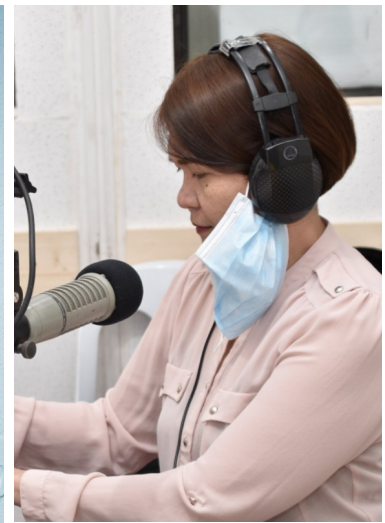
Agusan del Norte Schools Division Superintendent Romeo O. Aprovechar, CESO V, together with top division officials, signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Radyo Trumpeta 103.9 FM for Radio-Based Instruction (RBI) on August 27, 2020. Signing in behalf of the station were owner and Buenavista Mayor Hon. Norbert Pagaspas, President and Vice Mayor Hon. Amy Pagaspas, and Vice President Norbert Pagaspas, Jr.

The agreement allowed the division to broadcast instructional materials for learners who opted for radio-based modality of learning.

According to Mrs. Love Emma B. Sudario, OIC-Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, the daily timeslot is from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm (excluding weekends) to be handled by Education Program Supervisors and Focal Persons.

Ms. Lover Rose Joy R. Antigua, Division Information Officer, and Mr. Zenon G. Hernandez, SHS Nurse, anchored the first live broadcast aired on September 1 which focused on preparatory topics for parents, teachers, and learners, with ASDS Sudario as resource person. Ms. Antigua disclosed that starting October 5, 2020, radio instruction will shift to canned broadcast.

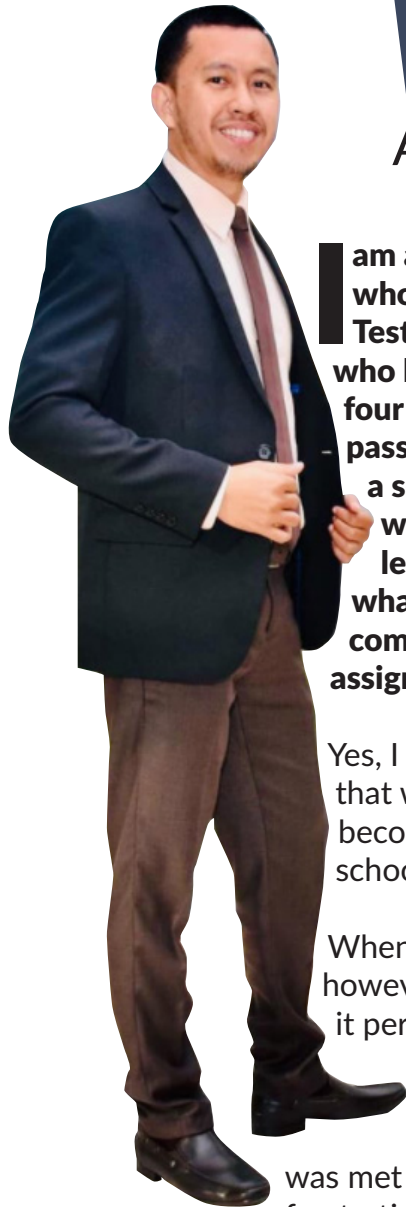
Focal person for the Radio-Based Instruction is Fe M. Dizon, with SGOD Chief Glorina L. Siclon and CID Chief Rayfrochina T. Abao, PhD as supervisors. - **By Public Affairs Unit. Photos by Robert Pepe Jr.**



From top: Love Emma B. Sudario, Loverose Joy R. Antigua, and Zenon G. Hernandez.

VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP

A School Leader Standpoint



I am a budding school leader who passed the Principals' Test two years ago, and who has been assigned to four schools. Not only am I passionate about the job of a school leader, but also I want to impart a lasting legacy by striving for what's best for the school community where I am assigned.

Yes, I am a beginner—but that will not hinder me from becoming a leader that every school deserves.

When the pandemic started, however, all of my plans—be it personal or job-related—were put on hold. My passion to scale greater heights for the school was met with fear, anxiety, and frustration, as though I had lost sight of what I had set to accomplish even before I started.

However, news of good deeds, humanitarian works, and bravery of our front-liners awakened my sanity as I realized that, despite staying at home, I could still become a school leader I always wanted to be.

On relief operations

Most of us, I believe, have had difficulties adjusting to a new routine — from working full 8 hours to doing practically nothing at home. One day, while trying to find ways to help the community, I decided to launch a video campaign. I asked friends on social media to stay at home and spare one canned good for those massively affected by the quarantine.

By Reylan R. Alas

School Principal, Pigdaulan NHS, Butuan City Division

Unbeknownst to me, and without direct instructions from me, my teachers had already responded to the campaign by organizing a relief operation by themselves. They raised a considerable amount of money, procured sacks of rice, groceries, and other goods, which they gave to several families who had suffered either loss of jobs or daily income.

My teachers' pro-active generosity and compassion inspired me so much. I never thought that my little influence could lead them to do great things beyond my expectations.

Realizations crept in. We school leaders have this influence over our teachers. Intentional or not, our influence can always inspire them to do greater things and make a difference.

Online Meetings

The "new normal" greatly affected our jobs. We called it "work-from-home" wherein we communicated with our teachers mostly through online meetings using Google Meet.

Our first faculty meeting on May 1 was very exciting as it was our first time to meet online. We're all ecstatic seeing one another virtually after 1 month and 15 days, more so because I was giving them our school directions for the school year.

Several online meetings ensued after that, but with many disruptions. An unstable internet connection sometimes halted the meeting. Participants' background noises, choppy audios, crowing roosters, and kids interrupting their moms were unwanted distractions. A more serious struggle was Google Meet's lack of option to see the faces of participants during the presentations. Hence, I couldn't visually gauge their full participation or the lack of it.



Continued from page 6

OPINION: Virtual Leadership

The worst part is talking as if to nobody—interacting only with a lifeless computer screen instead of a living, breathing person. Yet, we hurdled these challenges. We were able to resolve concerns and issues before hitting the “leave the meeting” button. Hence, our online meetings were just as effective as doing it in-person.

Virtual communication is a must during this work-from-home era. That’s why school leaders must deal with the needs of the time, technological or otherwise. We must provide effective guidance to teachers so that they can gradually adapt to the changes and cope with the current difficulties. We must show them that, in these difficult times, they matter more than ever.

On Being Techy

Working from home is made easier because of Google. We have become techy not only with Google Meet but also with Google Forms, Google Sheet, Google Drive, and other related features. Online attendance of teachers is recorded using Google Forms. We also made an option for remote or virtual enrollment.

Teachers also had to compile and submit learning resources, worksheets, and activity sheets while working from home, but their only way of submission was online. My teachers did this by accessing the link to my Google Drive where they could paste or drag files in a folder, enabling me to check their outputs and give comments or feedback in real-time.

This proves that working from home can still be efficient as long as we keep ourselves abreast of what technology could offer. When we allow ourselves to see every option possible, there’s no limit to what we can accomplish as school leaders.

On Leading Virtually

In these trying times, school communities must stay alive to inspire learners to keep learning. Learners must understand that they can still attain a good education even within the confines of their homes.

Despite schools being closed, the principal, the teachers, students, parents, and stakeholders are still able to work hand in hand because school leaders have committed to lead virtually. Virtual leadership is an emerging skill that we need to master and practice effectively.

A virtual school leader still guides, facilitates, and organizes his team, communicates effectively, and takes care of teachers in ways that make them appreciate their real worth and importance. The virtual leader sees the virtual world as a place where he can still nurture his dreams, set his vision, and get things done.

Nothing can stop us from becoming a leader that every school deserves. With or without a pandemic, and regardless of experience or means of communication, we must continue to influence and inspire our teachers and the school community by our impassioned service. Whether we lead inside the classroom or out, we can still impart a lasting legacy by striving for what’s best for the school community through virtual leadership. ●



MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST:

Teacher's friend or foe?

By **Benedicto Y. Mindajao**

T-III, BCSAT, Division of Butuan City

One of our tasks as educators is to measure how our students have understood all the lessons and principles we have taught them. That's why we need an assessment tool. More importantly, we need a convenient, comprehensive, and reusable tool geared towards developing students' thinking skills. Is there a single tool that does this? Is Multiple-Choice-Test a teacher's friend or foe?

Fair Test, a US-based educational organization that studies student test-taking and scoring, published an article in 2007 explaining how multiple-choice tests (MCTs) can be so unfair to its takers (see www.fairtest.org). The article claimed that MTC's objectivity is suspect. It is also limited in terms of developing students' critical thinking skills since it tends to encourage mere guessing. Besides, the article said, this type of test does not give adequate information to teachers. So, does this mean MCT is not viable?

In my teaching experience, I often observed that students would usually finish early during a major multiple-choice test. When asked, they would typically respond, "*sayon ra man test sir, pili-pili*" (the test is so easy we simply had to choose).

Most of us might view MCT as the easiest test type because all possible answers are already given. If so, then why so many still failed the licensure exams? Anyway, I think this is not enough reason to devalue MTC as an assessment tool.

According to Roediger et al. (2005), when done correctly using properly constructed questions, MTCs can yield significant positive results. This finding is supported by Boris Korsunsky of Weston High School Weston, Massachusetts in his article published at <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>.

Unlike Fair Test, Korsunsky argued that MCT may help in the determination of student's potential, knowledge, or even difficulties. It may be used in any teaching situation and phases of learning, may it be at the start, in between classes, or in the latter part. Because of the options, the study said, students can identify, examine, weigh, and decide on the best answer.

Also, a study by Little et al. (2012) on the benefits of using MTC showed that taking an initial multiple-choice test can help students improve retention more than the cued-recall test, and the misinformation effects were reduced.

Of course, these studies may not end the debate as to what's the best tool to assess students' learning. The task of creating, developing, and utilizing such a tool remains a huge challenge for all educators. Nonetheless, it's almost certain that we would come up with diverse solutions, but the bottom line is that all solutions are always geared towards providing quality education for every student, and MTC will always be a teacher's friend. ●

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Benedicto Y. Mindajao
SST-III

Editorial

DIRECTOR'S
COMPASSEvery
Home a
SchoolBy Francis Cesar B. Bringas, CESO V
Regional Director

Sooner or later, this COVID crisis will pass. Everything will be back to normal, if not better. We will heal and we will win as one. As we move forward, let us understand that we will be providing our learners with quality education whose locus has dramatically shifted to the homes.

Preparations

Looking back, we responded to the crisis very well. We acted early that's why we were able to identify different learning modalities appropriate to our local situations. We came up with innovative, creative, and non-traditional solutions to the current educational problems as reflected in our Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (LCP).

Dry Runs

Our schools have been conducting dry runs on these modalities. This is because we want our teachers to test and understand the intricacies of these modalities and to address the challenges and issues that may arise before the actual implementation come October 5 and beyond. So far, more than sixty schools have shared on social media their dry run activities and the feedback has been very positive.

Catching Fire

I believe that the postponement of the opening of classes is providential because it gives us more opportunities to address every possible gap that we may have already encountered at this point. It also allows us more time to build up our ever-growing confidence in the new system. More importantly, I'm very glad that this revolution of solutions for education in Caraga has already caught fire in the hearts of our teachers and education leaders.

Strong Momentum

Some might still feel ambivalent. But that's understandable. After all, we are not aiming for perfection. What's important is that our teachers are making progress day by day. I know that they have worked so hard with unparalleled determination and enthusiasm. Our momentum is really strong.

Stakeholders on Board

I'm so happy that our pain-staking preparations are complemented by our strengthened partnerships with the private sector and other line agencies, especially in providing our parents and learners with psycho-social and material support. We now realize the importance of every single citizen in the barangays, in the municipalities, in the provinces, and in the region. We need each other now more than ever.

Confidence

Of course, there are doubters out there. But I am sure all doubts will dissipate in the long run. Our resilience and innovativeness are the keys that will meet our expectations. I'm very confident that, with the support of all stakeholders and the entire community, our basic education learning continuity plans will come to fruition.

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EDITORIAL: Every Home...

Public Interest

Still, we welcome all challenges with open arms. I'm sure our teachers will bravely face whatever challenges that may come their way, as they have already shown. I guarantee that they will continue to amaze us with their creativity, resourcefulness, and dedication. Indeed, this is the best time to show to the public that we are servants working for the public's best interest.

Inclusive Education

Lest we forget, we must also pay attention to our rural schools, our IP schools, our Special Education Schools, Special Interest Programs, our IS schools, and our hard-to-reach schools. This is because we aim for inclusive education. No Caraganon learner is going to be left behind. *Bawat bata mahalaga*. That's our battle cry.

In the Home

We used to think that every school is a second home. But to some extent, COVID changed that. We now understand that the new educational landscape has brought us back to the place where education ought to start, that is, in the homes.

New Family Dynamic

In this spirit, we invite our parents, guardians, and all concerned citizens to work with us, for this is the best time to collaborate closely with teachers for our children's sakes. We will do this under a new family dynamic wherein the entire DepEd educational system encompasses the bigger community but still finds its workspace in a smaller home. We are all in this together—let's make every home a school. ●



I believe that the postponement of the opening of classes is providential because it gives us more opportunities to address every gap that we may have already encountered at this point. It also allows us more time to build up our ever-growing confidence in the new system. More importantly, I'm very glad that this revolution of solutions for education in Caraga has already caught fire in the hearts of our teachers and education leaders.

- Francis Cesar B. Bringas, CESO V

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ONE EXTRAORDINARY DECISION AWAY

We are who we are because we decided to be. We would be who we should be because we are far greater than other people's opinion of who we should be.

We are not victims of circumstances. Instead, we are a consequence of the choices and the decisions we make. We are always a decision away from making that difference in ourselves. We just have to make that decision however difficult that may be.

We have the habit of being hesitant when confronted with something uncomfortable and inconvenient because, believe it or not, our brains are designed to keep us safe.

No matter how adventurous we are, there will always come a time that when we look down a cliff, our mind would tell us to step back. It's a normal body reaction because our mind is designed to protect us.

As we explore the vastness of space, there is a tug-of-war between our mind and soul. And more than anything else, what we need is to have that will to not listen to our mind, but our soul. Our mind is designed to make us safe, while our soul is made to make us soar. Our fear is not that we'll fall hard. Our fear is seeing

people fly, looking at people's lives on Facebook, wondering what it feels like jumping off the cliff without taking the leap, and we end up asking: "How to be you?" Again, our fear is not that we'll fall, but living what we thought a full life without ever trying to fly.

When we fall off, we are not afraid to die because we are scared of death.

We are scared because we might leave the world without people knowing we were here. So, we try to please other people without us realizing that we lose ourselves in the process.

Be who we believe we should be. Again, we just have to make that decision - the decision to give our dream a chance. We may think we are ordinary, but always remember that we are more than capable of making one extraordinary decision that is going to make a big difference in us. ●



By Ariem V. Cinco
Administrative Officer V, DepEd R-VIII

PAYBACK REDEFINED

I know people who have dug a pit for others, but they fell into it. I know people who have rolled a stone to others, but the stone rolled back on them.



By Jake Dinglasa Fraga
T-III, Carpenito Integrated School
Surigao del Sur

Many are too oppressive to gain money, power or influence, or even a lover. Their cruelty had, one day, hit them so heavily that they almost lost energy to get up. But still, they have not changed. They failed to reflect on what they have done because they always think of themselves as righteous beings. Saying lies and making excuses form part of their mechanisms. They have no shame. They have no fear. They have no God. For even if they appear so religious, they love to follow Satanic ways.

Hunger For Money. When someone uses his or her authority to gain money from the poor, it certainly offends God. True enough, the love of money is the root of all evil.

Power and Influence. When someone uses all the ways and means just to gain power and influence so he or she can manipulate others, it is not of God but Satan's.

Stealing a Lover. When someone makes trouble just to steal his or her lover, it is, and always will be, NOT right. Payback time, however you see it, comes in all shapes and sizes.

Proverbs 26:27, "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them." ●

Surigao del Sur tops enrollment performance in Caraga, Mindanao ranks 13th nationwide

Based on the DepEd Central Office Planning Service final report on LIS LESF Tagging posted on August 24, 2020, the Schools Division of Surigao del Sur ranked 1st in Caraga and the entire Mindanao, and 13th nationwide.

This was disclosed by Ucille P. Galvez in her article published in the July-August 2020 edition of An Madayaw, the official publication of Surigao del Sur Division.

According to Galvez, the Division has been steadfast in administering the Learner Enrollment and Survey Form (LESF) and encoding the collected data in the Learner Information System (LIS) as stipulated in DepEd Order No. 008, s. 2020.



File photo: Surigao del Sur Division Office

Enrollment procedures for this school year are facilitated by previous advisers tasked to collect and encode enrollment and survey data into the End of School Year LIS (EOSY-LIS).

“The Schools Division Superintendent Josita B. Carmen, CESO V expressed her thanks to all the counterparts in the field for the active response to the enrollment procedures and for making sure that all learners are in the system at the given duration time,” Galvez said. ● **-Public Affairs Unit.**

Cantilan 1 District officials visit IP school site

Public Schools District Supervisor of Cantilan 1 District Dr. Jeanette Urbizondo Guanzon-Quinto, together with her team of teachers, school heads, nurses, and other stakeholders, visited the site of the soon-to-rise Elementary School of Living Tradition in Sitio Anas, Brgy. Cabangahan, Cantilan, Surigao del Sur on August 14, 2020.

According to Mr. Voltaire C. Asildo, Senior Education Program Specialist, the lot was donated by a local chieftain, and the school building will be constructed in partnership with the Local Government Unit of Cantilan.

The team endured almost a 6-hour walk through rough terrain, crossed many rivers, and enjoyed the fresh and green sceneries going into a remote community of indigenous people.

The officials gave away for the locals relief goods and used clothing, including oral hygiene kits, deworming medicines, and multivitamins. ● **-Public Affairs Unit. Photos by Voltaire C. Asildo.**



Bislig City Madayaw Awards 2020, a huge success

Bislig City Division successfully held the annual Madayaw Awards 2020 for its most outstanding employees on August 18, 2020, at the Bislig City Sports and Cultural Center.

The event was part of the Rewards and Recognition Program of the Division led by Schools Division Superintendent Dr. Gregoria T. Su, in coordination with the Division PRAISE Committee headed by OIC-SGOD Chief Demosthenes J. Quinal.

The Human Resource Division, through Esmael P. Endaya, Jaime B. Omandam, Jecyl Q.



The Madayaw 2020 Awardees on stage.

Fuertes, and Gerhard N. Cano ensured the strict observance of standard health protocols during the entire proceeding. The awards were given to outstanding elementary and secondary teachers, Master Teachers, SPED teachers, school principals, multigrade

teachers, ALS mobile teachers, Public Schools District Supervisors, researchers, and schools.

The winners will represent Bislig City in the regional Bulawanong Sulo Awards in December.- **Public Affairs Unit.**

Safety essentials, thermal scanners, delivered to Bislig



Health & Safe Essentials inspected by ASDS Hector DN Macalalag (second from left), CID Chief Marvilyn C. Francia (left), OIC-SGOD Chief Demosthenes J. Quinal, and Administrative Officer-V Christianssen R. Trujillo.



Infra-red thermal scanners received by OIC-SGOD Chief Demosthenes J. Quinal (left) and Division DRRM Focal Person Engr. Mario O. Lesiguez (right).

After the Local School Board (LSB) approved Dr. Gregoria Su's budgetary request on June 16, Bislig City Division acquired several health and safety essentials in anticipation of the opening of classes in October, and in case face-to-face modality of learning will be allowed at any time within the school year.

The said items included alcohol, germicidal soap, washable face masks, and rubber gloves amounting to P870,000 and delivered on August 6, 2020.

Through the LSB, the Division also acquired 280 pieces of non-contact infra-red thermal scanners amounting to P 280,000, delivered on August 4, 2020.

The thermal scanners were equitably distributed to schools in order to check the temperatures of teachers, parents, learners, and other individuals coming in and out of school campuses.●

- **By Demosthenes J. Quinal.**

Philippine Education: Rising above the new normal

If we are to efficiently manage the alarming situations in this country, we need innovative approaches, new knowledge, and practical solutions.

The disruption to the traditional schooling processes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic caused massive changes in the country's biggest bureaucracy - the Department of Education.

Although the crisis amplified the existing educational disparities across the learners' socio-economic strata, the Department still came up with creative adjustments in the curriculum through the alternative teaching and learning modalities that have mitigated the negative impact of the disruption.

While our schools are still being closed, the blended learning approach remains our last resort to ensure continuity of education.

Moreover, the shift to alternative teaching modalities under the *learn-from-home* scheme compels those responsible for the learning success of students

to be more flexible and adaptive in dealing with the dramatic challenges of facilitating education. Undeniably, their respective roles have changed and expanded dramatically. Nonetheless, we still commit to helping all learners achieve optimum education.

DepEd is also aware of the digital divide that creates unequal learning opportunities among learners. This is why schools throughout the country strongly pushed for a multi-platform approach to remote learning as the most viable option to bridge the digital divide.

In this time of COVID-19, all sectors must come together, forge partnerships, and share best practices in the service of the Filipino learners, for this is the right track for Philippine education this school year and onwards.

The future may still be uncertain at this time, but our strategic plans and solutions remain clear and well-defined. This gives us enough confidence that, within the DepEd system, we can still find the best solutions to make Philippine education rise above the new normal. ●

By Edgar R. Gorgonio, Jr.

T-III, Sta. Fe NHS, Siargao Division

Innovation sparks in Surigao Sur Division

BY VON JASON A. CASA and RAYMOND JADE R. SILVOSA

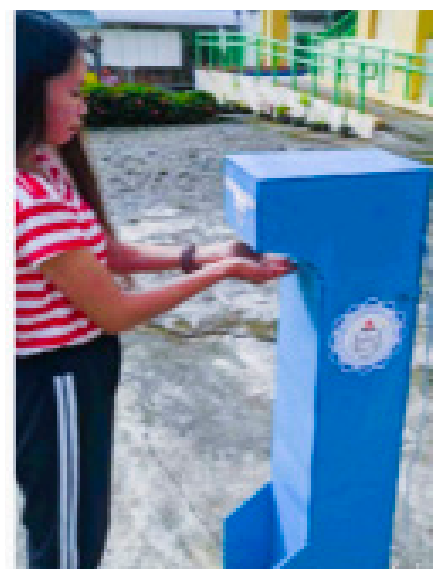
The Robotics Team of Florita Herrera Irizari National High School pushed back against COVID-19 with their newly-invented contact-free hand sanitation device called Automated Hand Sanitizer and Dryer.

The device is an Arduino-based invention that utilizes an open-source single-board microcontroller using an ultrasonic sensor to detect a person's hand below the nozzle, triggers the release of the sanitizing agent, and activates the blow-dryer to complete the disinfection process.

It is designed for hands-free operation and can be installed in strategic areas in hospitals, supermarkets, schools, restrooms, and other public places.

The Local Government of Lazuna will be supporting the production and distribution of said device for wider use of the public.

Robotics team leader Engr. Raymond Jade R. Silvosa said that they are still working hard to make their invention available to the public as soon as possible. ●



Arlene Lajera Timkang's quest for a teaching position in DepEd hadn't been easy; it had come to a point where she doubted herself and her capabilities, unsure of when her appointment would arrive. She would finally be assigned as a teacher to Manobo IP learners at Dagnasay Elementary School, Barangay Puting Bato, on June 2, 2018, after years of patient longing.

Sitio Danagsay—about 45 minutes away from Timkang's Caasinan hometown on land transport—is one of the more remote barangays in Cabadbaran City. Home to Manobo tribes, the town has no electricity, no cellular reception, and the only two elementary school buildings are built on separate locations, making back-and-forth communication between the teachers difficult.

When Teacher Arlene heard about the rumored NPA activities in the area, she feared for her safety. She wanted to be assigned to another school. But she accepted her assignment nonetheless.

On June 4, 2018, she welcomed her first school day with excitement even with her mind buzzing with so many questions about the place and its people. Upon arriving at the school, the Manobo community surprised her with their warmth and friendliness; the people were so tight-knit as if woven together as one solid presence. However, as open and approachable the adults were, she couldn't say the same of the children.

In the classroom, she observed they were quiet—as though afraid. As their teacher, she knew she needed to break down the wall between herself and the pupils, and get them to engage more in class as soon as possible.

That was only the first of the challenges Teacher Arlene would face. Learning the Manobo language proved to be difficult, on top of having to adjust to her pupils' diverse personalities while handling multi-grade classes. Asking help from her co-teacher would take quite an effort due to the 500-meter distance between their respective classrooms. Eventually,

they created a slam book as an aid to their communication. Yet, learning materials had been inadequate; there weren't enough books, and some pupils lacked basic school supplies like notebooks, pencils, and bags. Some pupils couldn't read, and still, others had a hard time absorbing the lessons. Thankfully, some concerned individuals donated school supplies for them.

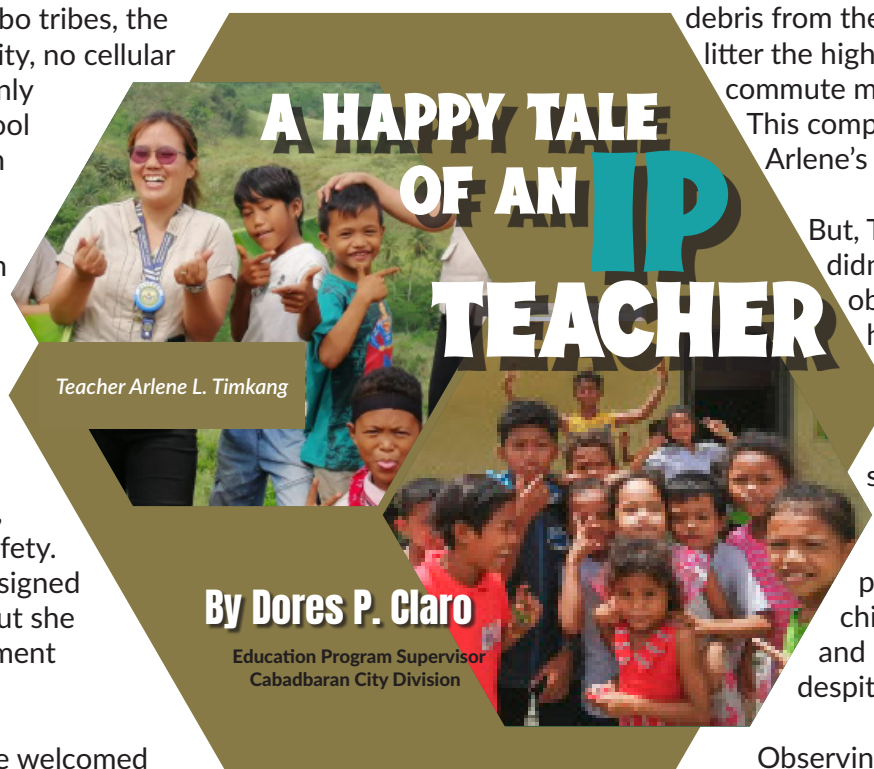
Traveling to and from the school was like taking a roller coaster ride, with the road twisting up and down along the hills; and on rainy days, fallen debris from the cliffside would litter the highway, making the commute more hazardous. This compounded Teacher Arlene's difficulties.

But, Teacher Arlene didn't let those obstacles deter her from what she was meant to do—teach. She pulled her strength from the Manobo parents' dedication to providing for their children's material and educational needs, despite their poverty.

Observing how the Manobo elders passed on the tribe's culture and traditions to their young also taught her a valuable lesson: that learning extends beyond a classroom's four walls. She realized that the more she gave, the happier she became. Seeing her students' enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge inspired her to improve her teaching skills to make learning easier for them.

Within a year of teaching at Dagsanay, all of Teacher Arlene's prior fear and trepidation had fully vanished. There weren't armed clashes after all. She considered herself blessed to have gotten the chance to interact with the community and witness their daily life, which inspired her as a teacher. She now understands that her profession serves to uphold not only the educational rights of indigenous peoples but also their cultural identity and heritage.

For Teacher Arlene, her profession entails constant learning, a rewarding journey towards a lifetime of success. ●



Teacher Arlene L. Timkang

By Does P. Claro

Education Program Supervisor
Cabadbaran City Division

ARSENIO T. CORNITES JR.: A GRAND SALUTE

BY ERMA S. DABALOS

Erstwhile DepEd Caraga OIC-Assistant Regional Director Arsenio T. Cornites Jr., CESO V formally bid farewell to the Department of Education on September 9, 2020, after 44 years of fruitful public service. Sir Bebet, as his colleagues fondly call him, has surely left an indelible mark in the hearts and minds of those he had served, and his contribution to education will be forever etched in DepEd's history.

Sir Bebet began his career in 1976 when he got his first provisional teaching job at Cabinet Elementary School, Cabadbaran District, Division of Agusan del Norte. He obtained his permanent teaching item in 1979 and served in the same Division for 15 years as Teacher I. He became Head Teacher III in 1991 and Principal at Tolosa Elementary School in 1993.

In 1997, he was promoted as Public Schools District Supervisor. Twelve years later, in 2009, he scaled the ranks as Assistant Schools Division Superintendent of Agusan del Norte Division. He held this position for five years until he was appointed as Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) of the newly-established Schools Division of Cabadbaran City in 2014.

In 2015, he took charge as SDS of Butuan City Division for three years. He transferred back to Agusan del Norte Division in 2017. He served as OIC-Assistant Regional Director of DepEd Caraga from September 2019 until his retirement.

Born on September 10, 1955, to Mr. Arsenio T. Cornites, Sr. and Ms. Rosela Torotoro in Loreto, Dinagat Islands,

Sir Bebet completed his primary education at Cabadbaran Pilot Elementary School in 1968 and secondary education at Northern Mindanao School of Arts and Trades in 1972.

At a very young age, he manifested a strong will to succeed in life by making a living as a shoeshine boy at local barbershops, as an ice drop vendor, pedal tricycle driver, and newspaper peddler during weekends. All these he did to support his education.

All his efforts paid off as he obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Education, Major in Industrial Arts from Cebu School of Arts and Trade, Cebu City in 1976. He passed the Philippine Board Examinations for Teacher (PBET) in 1979.

After finishing his MA in Educational Management at the same school in 1989, he completed his doctorate academic requirements at Father Saturnino Urios University, Butuan City in 1997. He also passed the Education Management Test (EMT) in 2008, MAT-B (CES Board) in 2009, and Assessment Center CES Board in 2011.

He and his spouse Camila D. Pedrano are blessed with three children namely, Armilyn, Mary Allen, and Amy Rouzela.

Sir Bebet is also known for his involvement in community works by his membership in different organizations such as Boy Scouts of the Philippines, Philippine National Red Cross, and United Church Men.

SPECIAL FEATURES

be okay with what's going on around the world nowadays.

So, come on. Go on. Express what you are feeling inside. Don't be afraid. Facebook asks you this every time you open it, "What's on your mind?"

Come on, go on. Tell us what's on your mind. You can either shout it out in the blank page of your work notebook or speak up to a trusted friend nearby while strictly keeping that one-meter required physical distance.

Hello! How are you today?

Self-care is self-love, and it should never be luxurious at all. All you need to start doing so is by asking the question and responding with all honesty and rawness of emotions.

Feel it. Breathe it out. Speak up.

Then, say this to yourself, "I am larger than the COVID virus. I can handle the new normal. I matter."

Yes, you are.
Of course, you do.



Self-care Soliloquy

By Lover Rose Joy R. Antigua, RN, Nurse II
Mental Health Program Coordinator, Agusan del Norte

Hello! How are you today?

At the moment while you are accidentally skimming this article, you might be stuck into another but parallel universe: a virtual life filled with video conferences, webinars, digital assignments, and more!

In between the many and varied 'ganap' in your day as a DepEd Caraga employee — whether you are a teacher or a non-teaching personnel, have you been able to ask yourself, "How am I doing? What am I feeling?" Or have you been crazily busy you feel it's a luxury to pause and ask yourself those exact questions?

Yes, it is beyond argument and pretty ironic how a single-strained microorganism has broadly changed our world to what it is today. The so-called new normal brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic seems not normal at all, is it? Don't worry, everyone feels the same. It's okay not to

