Filipino Spirit Displayed in Youthful Energy At Battle of the Barrios XIV

Clockwise from top: St. John’s University Philippine Americans Reaching to Everyone (PARE) wins big during Battle; Host organization Rutgers Association of Philippine Students (RAPS) performs a stylized Tinikling; New York University’s International Filipino Association recreated the Philippine flag at the end of their modern dance routine. (Photos by Dondee Santos)

NEW YORK, 3 March 2015 – Jollibee, Tinikling, turon, Arnis, aswangs and dinuguan all collide with Harry Potter, Chipotle, hip hop dance and Twitter hashtags in merry mash-ups as Filipino-American student organizations competed at the Battle of the Barrios held in Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey last 28 February.
Twelve schools participated in the Battle, each performing a 10-minute skit incorporating Filipino traditional art and music, historical tidbits, current socio-civic issues along with Western modern dance and pop culture.

St John’s University’s PARE was the big winner that evening, bagging the Best in Cultural Performance, and Best in Overall Performance, injecting Maglalatik, Tinikling, Sayaw sa Bulaklak in their Kapwa-themed skit. Stony Brook University’s PUSO performed a hilarious Harry Potter adaptation to win Best Skit. Newcomer to Battle, the College of Mount Saint Vincent’s SAMAHAN went home with the Best in Modern Dance trophy, after their street dance-inspired routine.

Other school organizations who performed were New York University’s IFA, Bergen Community College’s PASALUBONG, Hunter College’s POH, and the host Rutgers University RAPS. Students from Montclair State University MUFASA, Kean University FUNK and Ramapo College FASA collaborated for a single skit, while members of Union County College TROPA and William Patterson University FACE worked for the second time together for their entry this year.
During the intermission, volunteers from Legacy NY and UniPro presented a Consulate-sponsored exhibition skit featuring the programs of the Philippine Consulate General New York (PCGNY) available to the second-generation Filipino-Americans. Immersion programs such as FYLPro and Teach for the Philippines were mentioned during the “Alamat ng Lumpia” performance.

In her remarks, Vice Consul Khrystina Corpuz, whose portfolio in the Consulate includes Community Relations with the Second-Gens expressed her pride in the students’ recognition of their identity and their desire to connect with the Philippines and anything Filipino. She further encouraged the almost 500 attendees to increase their involvement in the community and invited them to partner with the Consulate to explore opportunities for collaboration on their interests and help raise the profile of Filipinos in the mainstream American society. An invitation was announced for the 3rd Philippine Graduation (P-Grad) organized by the PCGNY, Legacy NY and UniPro. VC Corpuz hinted that the winning skit will get the opportunity to reprise their performance during the P-Grad, which eventually went to St. John’s PARE.

Filipino-American YouTube pop star Megan Batoon gathered cheers at the end of the night for her dance number, and entertained some questions from the audience during the Meet and Greet session. She said that she is happy to connect with her fellow Filipinos through her dance. She added that everywhere she went, from her native Los Angeles, to the East Coast, the Filipino community is always warm and welcoming and encouraged the young participants to pursue their passion in life, whether in music, dance, or other forms of art. END