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**Diskubre Pilot Batch Completes Heritage Tour in the Philippines**



The students of Batad Elementary School give the Diskubre Tour group warm thanks after they distribute school supplies to the children. (PCGNY Photo)

NEW YORK, 24 July 2018 – The first batch of Diskubre Tour delegates wrapped up their immersion trip in the Philippines covering Manila, Baguio, Sagada, Banaue, and Ifugao last 7 to 17 July.

The Diskubre Tour was organized by the Philippine Consulate General in New York (PCGNY) in cooperation with the Philippine Department of Tourism New York (PDOTNY) to promote a deeper appreciation of the Filipino heritage to second-generation Filipino-Americans and put them in the forefront of the community by instilling a spirit of giving back to the Philippines and the Filipinos. The travelers are expected to be champions of Philippine tourism in their own networks.

For the pilot tour, PCGNY teamed up with ABS-CBN as the Diskubre media partner, to document and cover the adventure of the young travelers. The trip will be featured in the digital series *Discovering Routes Travels with Diskubre*, premiering in September.

During the 11-day tour, the young travelers went on historical and educational tours, food trips, farming and livelihood immersion, cultural exchanges, and nature excursions.

20-year old Calvin Santiago from New Hampshire recalls, “I really enjoyed exploring the Philippines. Every day we were traveling to a different city and learning about the lives and history of the locals. I am excited to share stories of our travels with my family and

For more information, visit [www.newyorkpcg.org](http://www.newyorkpcg.org) and [www.facebook.com/PHConsulateNY](https://www.facebook.com/PHConsulateNY)

friends, hoping they will take the same trip that changed my outlook of the Philippines forever.”

Filipino-British Alexandra Brown says, “It has brought me a new perspective to my own identity as a half-Filipino woman. Growing up in a different country, I felt like an outsider in the Philippines every time I visited family. After listening to the oral history of each town, witnessing people’s daily routines, and experiencing a sample of their traditions, I am more in touch with my Filipino side more than ever.”

PAFCOM Teen titlist from Philadelphia Elaine Ficarra muses, “I love meeting and relating with people. The trip has given me opportunities to connect with the local communities, interact with them, and even perform for them. One of my advocacies is youth empowerment, and I am happy to be given the chance to share my time and talent with school and village children during the trip.”

For Bronx high schooler Feona Hidalgo, the trip “made me realize how fortunate I am with the resources I have growing up. Seeing firsthand how the children in the mountains live their daily lives, I learned not take for granted the comfort and convenience I enjoy, as not everyone has the same privilege.”

Feona’s father, Derick, is thankful for his daughter’s experience, adding “I have seen her mature throughout the duration of the tour. Feih has gained lifelong friends and acquired valuable lessons about her Filipino identity. I recommend that parents and Filcom organizations have their children take the Diskubre Tour at least once in their lives for an eye-opening journey.”

FYLPRO alumni Michael Veal and Jhett Tolentino joined the Manila leg of the tour. According to Michael, “Diskubre is an amazing project that not only exposes the children of Filipinos born abroad to the beauty of the Philippines, but more importantly gives them insight on their own Filipino identity and help them understand their background. For his part, Jhett notes, “It is a privilege as much as a duty to visit your homeland. You can never feel a more fleeting and exhilarating experience than going back to your roots.”

NYPCCG plans to undertake Diskubre annually, with some Filcom organizations expressing their interest in sending their young members to the next tour. An exclusive preview event is planned for the premiere of Discovering Routes Travels with Diskubre in September. More information on this can be found on [www.discoveringroutes.com/travel](http://www.discoveringroutes.com/travel). END





DISKUBRE TOUR PILOT GROUP. From left: Calvin Santiago, Jhett Tolentino, Vice Consul Khrystina Corpuz Popov, Feona Hidalgo, Derick Hidalgo, Michael Vea, Elaine Ficarra, Alexandra Brown pose before they start their Intramuros Historical Bambike Tour. (PGCNY Photo)



Calvin, Elaine, Alex and Feona take a selfie with the grandmothers by the Banaue Rice Terraces. (PGCNY Photo)