

## FILIPINO MIGRANTS IN THE U.S.

The Philippines is among the top three migrant sending countries worldwide, with an estimated 9 to 10 million Filipino migrants scattered around the world. Of this number, around 4 million live in North America today.

Filipino migrants contribute significantly to both the Philippine and U.S. economies. In 2004, Filipino migrants sent at least \$8.5 billion in remittances to the Philippines.<sup>1</sup> In the U.S., Filipinos take on jobs, such as nurses, teachers, caregivers as well as business and household service sector jobs, to fill the significant manpower shortage in these sectors.

As newcomers in a foreign land, Filipino migrants face the difficulty of adapting to their new environment. Many of them are economic migrants who come to the U.S. without their family members. They are caught in backlogs in family-sponsored immigration and cannot reunite with their families for years, causing them distress and isolation. In instances where spouses and children are allowed to join Filipino migrant workers to the U.S., these family members are not permitted to find employment. Filipino physicians and other professionals encounter obstacles to their professional mobility, and accept jobs that do not match their training and background.

Filipino migrants who have adopted the U.S. as their home continuously face the challenge to be economically, culturally and socially equipped to integrate. They need to empower themselves in order to become positive contributors to their host country and in their country of origin. Such has always been the character of the Filipino diaspora to the U.S.

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### LIVE A LIFE THAT MATTERS!

### HELP NOW AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

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# MIGRANT HERITAGE COMMISSION, INC. (MHC)

## HONORING AND SERVING THE MIGRANTS



## MHC: A RESPONSE TO FILIPINO MIGRANTS' NEEDS

The MIGRANT HERITAGE COMMISSION, INC. is a response to recognize and protect the cultural identity and rights of Filipino Migrants in the United States. The Migrant Heritage Commission was founded on 30 December 2005 to address the needs and issues confronting Filipino migrants, including Filipino-Americans in the U.S. It primarily serves as a resource center, and has the following objectives:

- To undertake activities and programs recognizing the more than 100 years of sustained Filipino migration to the U.S. and highlighting the many achievements and significant contributions of Filipinos in the cultural, social, political and economic fabric of the United States.



- To implement socio-economic integration programs that would help realize the potential of Filipino migrants and enable them to make more positive contributions to the Philippines and the U.S.

- To promote the Filipino migrants' knowledge and understanding about their human rights, and to encourage cultural diversity and respect for the dignity of migrants.

- To help enhance cooperation among organizations and institutions, local and international, in their work for the rights of migrants and that of their families.

- To promote the Filipino migrants' pride for their cultural heritage and identity.

- To advocate for the protection of the fundamental human rights of migrants and their families, as enunciated in the United Nations Migrant Workers Convention, and other related International Human Rights Instruments and UN Resolutions on Migrants' Rights, and to provide services to Filipino migrants towards this end.

Under the banner "Honoring and Serving the Migrants," MHC embarks on projects and activities for Filipino migrants, among which are: the People's Mass, Fiesta Asia, People's Ball, Cultural and Solidarity Nights, Immigration Seminars and Migrant Workers' Day Celebration. It initiated the Filipino Overseas Migrant Fund to assist migrants who are in dire need of financial assistance. It has collaborated

with local and international institutions working in the field of migration and development. Since its inception, MHC had held events with record breaking attendance reflecting overwhelming support from the Fil-Am communities.

## MHC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- **LEGAL RESOURCE PROGRAM** – MHC works with volunteer lawyers to provide free legal services to migrants, especially migrant women, who had been victims of abuse. It handles highly significant cases of migrants who are victims of illegal recruitment, discrimination, human trafficking and other forms of human rights violations. It also documents cases involving racial profiling and discrimination. MHC also works with government and non government institutions to pursue policy reforms that will promote the welfare of migrants.

- **THE FILIPINO OVERSEAS MIGRANT FUND** – is a special program designed to extend funeral assistance on the occasion of death of a Filipino migrant bereft of funds and without immediate relatives in the U.S.

- **CULTURAL RESOURCE & SUPPORT PROGRAM** – This program seeks to establish a Cultural Resource Library that can be utilized by any institution, group or individual engaged in the promotion and preservation of Filipino cultural and ethnic identity, and in promoting racial and ethnic diversity in the United States. Under this program, MHC provides free consultation/artistic support and guidance to schools, other institutions & organizations. Through this program, MHC mobilizes Fil-Am community participation at high profile and significant U.S. cultural events to recognize the Filipino community's affinity with the American people and showcase the Philippine's rich cultural heritage.



- **HEALTH CARE RESOURCE PROGRAM** – Under this program, MHC provides health care resources and refers underinsured or uninsured clients requiring health care services to licensed physicians. Under its project *Operation Kalusugan*, MHC helps provide free medical consultations and conduct health expos through the cooperation of health care providers and similar agencies.

- **SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION PROGRAM** – Through this program, MHC aims to build socio-economic infrastructures that would reinforce the development impact of migration in the U.S. and in the Philippines. MHC seeks not only to facilitate the process of

adaptation and integration of Filipino migrants in the U.S. via this program, but more importantly, to empower them socially and economically.

- **NON-FORMAL EDUCATION/ SKILLS PROGRAM** – This program intends to equip Filipino migrants with practical knowledge and skills that would enable them to achieve personal, social and professional growth. Through the program, MHC conducts various seminars and trainings, such as on the rights and obligations of migrants and current trends on immigration laws and policies. MHC currently undertakes a Computer Literacy Program to provide basic computer skills to clients.

- **NETWORKING AND OUTREACH PROGRAM** – MHC periodically undertakes projects in partnership with various local and international organizations. It supports charitable projects of partner organizations, as well as activities of Filipino associations in the U.S. and in other parts of the world. Under this program, the Migrant Workers' Day is celebrated annually to honor outstanding migrants in the U.S.

- **RESEARCH, PUBLICATION AND INFORMATION PROGRAM** – To broaden awareness about migrants' rights, MHC will produce primers and manuals. It will publish the Migrant Heritage Chronicle, a bi-monthly publication for Filipino migrants; organize public forums; provide resource speakers to ventilate migration issues; and conduct other public information activities. MHC will likewise undertake research to support its policy initiatives.

\_\_\_\_\_ YES. I wish to make a donation in the amount of US \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the MHC programs for the migrants.

\_\_\_\_\_ NO. I do not wish to make a donation but I would like to pledge a paid advertisement in any of MHC future events.

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to be a volunteer. \_\_\_\_\_ Pls include me in your mailing list.

Please cut this boxed portion and mail to the MHC address. For donations/pledges, please make checks payable to MHC, Inc.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel.No.: \_\_\_\_\_