



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES CHICAGO

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FIL-AM MILLENIALS FROM THE US MIDWEST DISCUSSED FILIPINO IDENTITY AND IMMERSION IN A DIALOGUE WITH DFA OFFICIALS

Twelve (12) Filipino-American youth aged 18-25 years from the different states in the US Midwest participated in a face-to-face interaction with Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) officials as part of the activities for the 2nd US Midwest Youth Leaders in Diaspora Immersion Program in the Philippines (Midwest You-Lead II) which took place on January 3-9, 2020 in Manila, Bulacan and Nueva Ecija. The program is a joint project of the Philippine Consulate General in Chicago and the Commission of Filipinos Overseas (CFO), now on its 2nd edition, which aimed at providing Filipino-American youths from the US to rediscover their Filipino roots and gained better understanding of their Filipino identity and their motherland. The twelve young participants were **Angelica Alday, Madeline Azcueta, Ralph Balita, Celia Benito, Christopher Garrick, Jasmine Natividad** and **Christiana Santiago**, all from Illinois; **Mary Nicole Cabaluna** from Indiana, **Makayla Leiting** from Nebraska; **Nicholle Nacionales** from Minnesota; and **Isabelle Rivera** and **Marcus Villareal** from Ohio.

On January 8, the Midwest delegates accompanied by Consul General Gina Jamoralin and CFO YouLead staff, Ms. Mayumi Peralta and Jovian Bulawan were received by Foreign Affairs Underscretary for Strategic Communications and Research, Ernesto C. Abella for courtesy call and briefing. OAA Assistant Secretary Isleta opened the program by welcoming the delegates. Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Abella talked about the Filipino identity and roots. He asked each one of their impressions and the reasons for joining the immersion trip. The participants were also briefed on assistance-to-nationals (ATN) and humanitarian activities of the Philippine foreign service posts by Principal Assistant Atty. Sandra C. Guiang, of the Office of Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (OUMWA). Later in the afternoon, the participants were welcomed at the US Embassy in Manila where US officials from the political, economic, cultural and public diplomacy sections briefed them of Embassy activities including programs for young people both in the Philippines and the United States.

All the Midwest You-Lead II participants individually spoke of their impressions and the impact of the immersion program in their lives. These experiences made them feel special and help them reconnect with the country. They promised to help promote the immersion program to their peers back in the US which is a unique and the first of its kind immersion program for the Filipino-American millennials in the Midwest initiated and supported by the Philippine government. **END.**





Delegates to the 2nd Midwest Youth Leaders in Diaspora Immersion Program (Midwest YouLead II) posed at the DFA lobby with Consul General Jamoralin (extreme right)



Midwest YouLead participants with Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Ernesto Abella (6th from left), Office of American Affairs (OAA) Assistant Secretary Honey Isleta (5th from left), Consul General Jamoralin (7th from left) and other DFA officers during the visit to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila



During the dialogue with Usec. Ernesto Abella at the Conference Room of the Office of American Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs



Midwest YouLead participants listening to a briefing on ATN matters from Principal Assistant Atty. Sandra C. Guiang, of the Office of Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (OUMWA), DFA



CFO officials (standing) led by Secretary Francisco Acosta (5th from left), Usec. Astravel Pimentel-Naik (4th from left) and Director Marie Appatad (1st from left), Consul General Jamoralin and Midwest YouLead participants after the opening ceremonies at the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO). Philippine Consulate General in Chicago and CFO partnered together to implement the 1st and 2nd Midwest Youth Leaders (YouLead) Immersion Program in the Philippines.