



RC METRO VALENZUELA

School upon a mountain

by Dave Santos

The maxim that Rotary Connects the World was exemplified by the construction of standard two-classroom school building in a remote community of Sitio Matagbak, Barangay Masulog, Canlaon City, Negros Oriental.

This was a joint project of the Rotary Club of Metro Valenzuela (D3800, Philippines) and the Rotary Club of Lloydminster (D 5370; Alberta, Canada) under the Global Grant program of The Rotary Foundation (TRF).

Aptly called the Rotary Canlaon Mountain School, the project was funded through Rotary Global Grant, GG No. 2093681, released on May 31, 2020. Due to several lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic, and incessant inclement weather conditions, its implementation was interrupted several times, before its final completion in mid-October this year.

Construction was done at a grinding phase due to the inaccessibility of the project site to large trucks for the mobilization of workers and the required materials. The materials had to be hauled on motorcycles called habal-habal by the locals, piece-by-piece, on rugged terrain.

The school edifice was turned-over to the beneficiary-organization, Matagbak Elementary School, in a simple

ceremony held on October 20, 2022. The event was attended by some members of RC Metro Valenzuela led by President Marie Shiela Gamuyod; Project Director Johnson Sanhi, Jr.; New Generation Chair, Past President Don Santos; Public Image Chair, and Past President Joey Sy.

Past President Sydney Palmer secured the invaluable support and cooperation of RC Lloydminster as international sponsor of this project. The donation was accepted by Mercedes M. Painandos, Cluster Head, Canlaon City Schools and John Billy S. Atendan, School Head, on behalf of the school-beneficiary, Matagbak Elementary School, together with the project endorser and construction coordinator Atty. Dax Malony E. Montealegre. The local education community vowed to plant at least 34 saplings of narra trees around the school campus, representing the membership of the club, as their simple equity in the project to preserve planet Earth for the next generations to come.

In a video message during the school inauguration, Vice President Sara Duterte expressed her gratitude to The Rotary Foundation and the participating Rotary clubs for their "compassion and commitment to serving individuals and communities in need." She underscored the joy



▲ Clockwise from top left: At long last, the finished structure upon the greenery; elated project sponsors cut the ribbon at the school's inauguration; work-in-progress through pandemic; VP Sara Duterte sent a video-taped inspirational message.



of learning that the project may bring to communities across the country.

The school is furnished with gender-separated toilet amenities, water and hand-washing stations, electricity, blackboards and hundredths of plastic monobloc chairs.

This school project is the eleventh of its kind to the credit of RC Metro Valenzuela. Each school is adorned with paraphernalia that depict Rotary's enduring adherence to ethical standards in human relations, and bust of the national hero Dr. Jose Rizal, who himself put up a school-on-the-hill during his exile in Dapitan from 1892 until 1896.

The author is a Past President of the Rotary Club of Metro Valenzuela. He is now serving his 30th term as Club Secretary.