

(Chicago, IL)

On April 10, 2010, the first batch of 15 FilAms will undergo a six-weeks training as community health educators and outreach workers to engage and organize kababayans to follow healthy lifestyles.

Community HOPE (Health Outreach, Promotion, and Education) is a community based peer-to-peer and train-the-trainer health initiative for the Chicagoland Filipino American community. This project aims to improve the quality of life of Filipinos by facilitating access to basic community health education and disease prevention in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner and to empower community members become equal partners in their health and well-being. Community HOPE is committed to leadership training and community health education to develop lay health promoters among the members of the community.

Pan-Asian collaboration

Community HOPE is a joint collaboration of the Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment (AFIRE) and the Filipino American Community Health Initiative of Chicago (FACHIC) under the sponsorship of Coalition of African, Arab, Asian, European, and Latino Immigrants of Illinois (CAAAELII). Community HOPE is part the first Asian American partnership of AFIRE, Korean American Community Services and the Hanul Family Alliance working with the Promesa Coalition (Illinois Association of Community Health Promoters and Community Health Workers). Promesa has been doing community health education in the Latino community for more than 18 years.

Due to the rising cost of health care and increasing concern about preventable diseases, many health professionals and academic leaders are now looking for grassroots health education as an empowering way of taking care of one's health.

"FACHIC is pleased to be collaborating with AFIRE to implement a vital, relevant program to cultivate community health leaders to promote improved health and well being throughout the Filipino American community," remarked Dr. Jane Jih, executive director of FACHIC. The mission of FACHIC is to increase awareness of Filipino health disparities and to implement health interventions and educational programming to improve the health status of the Filipino community.

Health is a fundamental human right

Community HOPE's distinction as an educational tool of empowerment is its unique promotion of health as a fundamental human right. According to Jerry Clarito, executive director of AFIRE, Community HOPE is in line with AFIRE's mission to build the capacity of the community to effect social change through grassroots education, action, research, and services.

Clarito said, "Promoting health as a fundamental human right encourages people to become assertive of their right and duty to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care. In the final analysis, the saying that "health is wealth" will only resonate loud when inequality in the health status of the people is addressed from the perspective of human rights."

On the other hand, JP Jael, FACHIC's community collaborations director, asserted, "We believe that every person has the right to live a healthy and happy life."

"AFIRE is convinced that living a healthy lifestyle will promote the well being of all", concluded Clarito.

Enrollment is limited but is open to all

As a pilot project, Community HOPE can only accommodate 15 students on a first-come, first serve basis. The training starts on April 10 and ends on May 29. Trainings will be held at 5232 N. Western Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625.

There is a token tuition fee of \$45 which will cover the cost of food, educational materials, and registration fee for the statewide health promoters' conference. CPR and First Aid certification

worth \$135 is included in the training. Moreover, full scholarship is also available for unemployed and low-income students. The graduates of this training will join hundreds of community health promoters in a state-wide conference sometime in June.

To apply and register, please call **Kristina Tendilla** at **757-416-2522** or email ktendilla@afirechicago.org or communityHOPE@fachic.org

. Small businesses and philanthropic individuals who want to sustain this project or to sponsor scholars can send their donation to AFIRE at 5051 Main Street, Skokie, IL 60077.

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