

Filipinos Stand in Solidarity of the Black Lives Matter Movement

BY JOANN FIELDS

SAN DIEGO, CA -- Filipinos and Asian Pacific Islander leaders and organizations convened a solidarity rally on 54th St. and College Grove Drive in the Oak Park neighborhood to take a stand in unison for the Black Lives Matter movement.

This location is also the same place Toby Diller a 31 year old Filipino was shot and killed by San Diego Police officers in January 2020. Street smart cameras and body cams worn by Officers Johnson and Downing captured their chase that ended with Officer Johnson shooting Toby.

"On behalf of the family of Toby Diller and his estate, 3 local attorneys filed a lawsuit against the two police officers and the City of San Diego for the excessive and unnecessary force used that caused the death of Toby. The family wants justice for Toby and calls for an end to police brutality. Further, they want the city and the police department to be transparent and accountable," states Ian M. Seruelo, one of the attorneys representing the Diller family.

Toby's untimely death is what has become a repeated story in the Black community throughout the Nation. The Black Lives Matter movement is not about their lives exclusively being important rather that their lives are equally important as all lives.

The whole world witnessed the excessive police force used on George Floyd that caused his death by asphyxiation. A 200 lbs. police officer's knee on George's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds caused

an international outrage that has thousands in the streets protesting police brutality and their support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

"It is not enough to just say black lives matter. We have to do the work to fight anti-blackness in our communities; in all of our Asian Pacific Islander communities," states Johanna Hester, President, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance - San Diego Chapter.

Following the rally members of the Asian Solidarity Collective,

Borderlands for Equity and the Asian Pacific Islander Initiative among others joined the caravan for social justice that spanned all over San Diego County for more than 7 hours in 14 locations where police brutality incidences and injustices occurred affecting the black community. The route and caravan was produced by the leadership of Black Lives Matter San Diego and the Black Womens March. This protest has been dubbed the largest protest in San Diego's history.



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Continued from page 4

"Those who have no access to electronic payments will still be done manually. But this time, it will be disbursed with the assistance of the Armed Forces of the Philippines," he added.

The Bayanihan Law mandates the provision of P5,000 to P8,000, in April and May, to each of around 23 million families in the country who are affected by restrictions imposed to curb the spread of COVID-19.

"Realistically, we are hoping that at least a majority of the P105 billion would already have been disbursed electronically (next week) because included also in the data is about 1.5 (million) more or less beneficiaries under the 4P's," he said.

Senator Risa Hontiveros has called for an audit on how the executive branch spent public funds and cited the questionable purchase of alleged overpriced PPEs, testing kits and other equipment by the DOH.

"it's very easy to account for it because a big bulk of it is for social amelioration. The rest were spent to buy PPEs, medical equipment and the benefits to frontliners. So, we're really going to account for about a hundred billion more or less. And given the number of PPEs and other equipment that we have bought, that's very easy to account," said Roque.

Stricter quarantine rules possible if Covid-19 cases rise -- Palace

The government might be compelled to impose stricter quarantine restrictions if the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) infections continue to rise, Malacañang said on Tuesday.

In a virtual presser aired on state-run PTV-4, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque raised the possibility that the community quarantine might be tighter anew, depending on the case doubling rate and critical healthcare capacity.

Roque said the classification of community quarantine after June 15

would either be retained to general community quarantine (GCQ) or raised to modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ).

"Kapag ganiyan pong tumataas, syempre po, may posibilidad na hindi po tayo mag-graduate to the next phase (Well, if the cases continue to rise, of course, there is a possibility that we might not graduate to the next phase)," Roque said. "If the trend continues, either magpapatuloy po siguro ang GCQ or baka babalik sa modified ECQ (it will stay as GCQ or go back to MECQ)."

The quarantine restrictions in the country were relaxed on June 1 despite the government's continuing battle against Covid-19.

GCQ was implemented in Pangasinan, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Metro Manila, Central Visayas, Zamboanga City, Davao City, Albay, Cebu City, and Mandaue City until June 15.

Modified GCQ (MGCQ), on the other hand, was imposed in the rest of the country.

Roque said members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) would hold a meeting on Wednesday to tackle the imposition of eased quarantine rules nationwide that would lapse on June

15. He said the IATF-EID is also expected to come up with recommendations that will be presented during a meeting with President Rodrigo Duterte in Davao City on Thursday.

"Bukas din po, pag-agreehan ng IATF kung ano ang mangyayari sa June 16 (Tomorrow, the IATF will come up with an agreement as to what would happen on June 16)," Roque said.

As of June 8, the Philippines has reported 22,474 confirmed Covid-19 cases.

Roque said the possible relaxation or tightening of quarantine protocols in Metro Manila and Cebu City would be assessed "very carefully."

"We have to look at the data of Metro Manila and Cebu City very carefully," he said. "Tinitignan po natin ang case doubling rate. Tinitignan po natin ang critical care capacity (We are assessing the case doubling rate. We are assessing the critical care capacity)."

Metro Manila, the epicenter of the Covid-19 outbreak in the country, recorded a total of 12,243 Covid-19 infections.

Cebu City, on the other hand, reported a total of 2,883 Covid-19 confirmed cases. (MNS)

Over 250K San Diego Children Eligible for \$365 through federal hunger relief

SAN DIEGO, CA -- In May 2020, the State of California launched the Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) program to address increased food insecurity due to COVID-19 amongst San Diego children. Students who are enrolled in free or reduced-price school breakfasts and lunches are eligible to receive a one-time payment of \$365 for groceries in addition to grab-n-go meals currently served by schools and community-based organizations while schools are closed.

According to the San Diego Hunger Coalition, an estimated 250,000 children and youth are eligible to receive the benefit. The Hunger Coalition's Executive Director, Anahid Brakke, said, "If we can successfully enroll all kids who are eligible for the program, that would bring about \$90M to San Diego County for hunger relief. Spreading the word about P-EBT and helping families apply should be an immediate and urgent priority for everyone working on hunger relief right now."

California is currently halfway through its enrollment period. Families have until June 30, 2020 to apply for P-EBT benefits online at ca.p-ebt.org.

"Children because of this pandemic are missing out on many enriching benefits that schools provide, but this program ensures students and their families have access to the money for nutritious meals," said Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, Co-chair of the County's COVID-19 Subcommittee. "Let's prevent kids from going hungry and join the San Diego Hunger Coalition in educating families about the Pandemic-EBT benefits."

COVID-19 has increased food insecurity throughout San Diego County due to heightened unemployment and reduced incomes associated with reduced hours and closed businesses. Many families that rely on school meals to make ends meet have limited access to the current grab-n-go meals provided by 33 of San Diego County's 42 school districts. P-EBT will help to fill that gap.

"Since COVID-19 forced the closure of schools some three months ago, we have distributed more than 2 million meals to our most vulnerable students but we know many of our families need additional help as they cope with loss of income, food insecurity and homelessness," said

Richard Barrera, vice president of the San Diego Unified Board of Education. "It is important that our families get the information they need to receive this important benefit."

"As we close out this school year, San Diego Unified will continue to serve meals to students at our food distribution centers all summer long," said San Diego Unified Superintendent Cindy Marten. "Schools may close for the summer, but hunger does not take a vacation. I would like to thank Supervisor Fletcher and the San Diego Hunger Coalition for their commitment to fighting food insecurity in San Diego County, and for helping us reach families who are eligible for the Pandemic-EBT cards."

P-EBT and school meals are not a Public Charge benefit and will not affect an individual's legal status. Additionally, P-EBT may be used in combination with other forms of federal food assistance including school meals, WIC, and CalFresh. Hunger Relief advocates encourage families to make use of all available resources during the pandemic to avoid experiencing food insecurity or hunger.

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