

A shared dream in the Philippines: Indigenous Peoples Lasallian Volunteers

The Lasallian Volunteer Program (LSVP) share a milestone. The volunteers of LSVP Batch 26 have successfully passed the 2026 Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT). This achievement marks the culmination of years of dedicated scholarship, accompaniment, and shared dreams among the volunteers, their Indigenous People communities, and the many people who walked alongside them on this journey.

These newly licensed educators represent a historic first for both their respective Indigenous Peoples communities and to the Lasallian family. Brixster Bacao, a Tinguian from Abra; Matilde Suklob, a Mangyan Hanunuo from Oriental Mindoro; Me-an Antao, a Mangyan Buhid from Oriental Mindoro; and Zyra No-oy, a Mangyan Buhid from Oriental Mindoro, make up this inspiring group.

Together, they comprise the pioneer batch of Indigenous Peoples Education Scholarship and Mentoring Program at De La Salle Lipa (DLSL), as well as the very first batch of Indigenous Peoples volunteers in the LSVP.

The path to this success was paved by collaboration, deep trust, and an unwavering commitment to education. Their journey began when they were endorsed by the Holy Spirit Sisters (SSpS) to De La Salle Philippines, securing their college scholarships at De La Salle Lipa. In July 2025, they graduated, carrying with them the hopes and dreams of their communities. Rather than focusing solely on preparing for the March 2026 licensure exam, these graduates chose a path of service, returning to their Lupaing Ninuno (ancestral land) as full-time volunteers under the LSVP.

During their ten-month long-term engagement, the volunteers were deployed to Paaralang Mangyan na Angkop sa Kulturang Aalagaan (PAMANA KA) in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. At the heart of the LSVP's mission is the commitment to a mutually transformative experience. For these communities, seeing their scholars return home to serve after four years of college education was the fulfillment of a

long-held dream. On the ground, the volunteers actively addressed the immediate needs of the school by strengthening English and Filipino literacy.

Yet, beyond academic lessons, their mere presence in the classroom and community was their greatest contribution, standing before the young Mangyan learners as living role models of what is possible and achievable for their own future.

This milestone would not have been possible without the collective effort of a supportive community. Heartfelt gratitude is extended to the Holy Spirit Sisters (SSpS), who believed in their potential and guided them from the very start; to De La Salle Lipa, for providing a nurturing college scholarship and serving as their animating ground as Lasallians; to Paaralang Mangyan na Angkop sa Kulturang Aalagaan (PAMANA KA), for providing a space for renewed and rekindled sense of the Indigenous Peoples dreams and aspirations; to the DLSP IP Education Team — Tr. Banny, Tr. Junette, and Sir Butch, for journeying with them every step of the way; and to the various units and programs of De La Salle Philippines, for their continuous support of these individuals.

As St. John Baptist De La Salle once wrote, “to be entrusted with the teaching of the young is a great gift and grace of God”. One Life. Live it. Volunteer!

** Article published by: Lasallian East Asia District.*