

Good News

A blossoming prospect awaits a former seaman courtesy of ECC's KaGabay Program



Wilredo Valencia, Jr. with his garden of plants located in San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan.

An accident in the ship left Wilfredo Valencia, Jr., a former seaman, with an injury on his left wrist. Because of this injury, he was unable to work and was sent home. His manning agency, Inter-Orient Maritime Enterprises, Inc., provided him with a financial assistance. However, the amount was not enough to cover the cost of several therapy sessions he needs to undergo in order for his left wrist to completely heal. Then, a coworker advised him to file a claim for an Employee Compensation benefit.

He considered the advice of his coworker and was granted with a Temporary Total Disability (TTD) benefit under EC worth P24,000. Aside from this, he also qualified as a beneficiary of the Employees' Compensation Commission's Katulong at Gabay ng Manggagawang May Kapansanan (KaGabay).

The ECC KaGabay Program is a special economic assistance pro-

gram for persons with work-related disabilities (PWRDs) who lost employment by reason of work-related sickness or injury. It aims to facilitate integration of PWRDs into the economy through physical restoration, training for re-employment, or entrepreneurship.

As a KaGabay beneficiary, Valencia was able to take up Computer Hardware Servicing Course at Microlink Institute of Science and Technology in Bulacan.

After his training, he received a livelihood assistance grant from the Department of Labor and Employment-National Capital Region amounting to P5,000 which he used to put up a sari-sari store in front of their house in Bulacan.

A few months passed. Valencia and his wife noticed that their sari store business is not faring well. "Puro utang," he said.

Without any other source of income, Valencia and his wife has to

look for another way to augment their finances. One day after attending a mass in Quiapo, his wife bought home 10 pots of Welcome plants and displayed it in front of their house.

"The plants are nice to look at and if there's someone who wants to buy it, then, I will sell it," Fe Valencia, the wife, said.

This is when their blessings started pouring in. The first 10 pots of plants were sold out and buyers kept asking for them. They bought another batch of plants and these, too, were sold out.

"We bought more plants of different kinds. Aside from Quiapo, we went to other places such as Tagaytay and Rizal to buy more kinds of plants. Then, we asked a local gas station if we could display our plants in vacant space in their establishment. Fortunately, the manager agreed to let us use their space since it also beautifies their gas station," Valencia narrated.

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With a bigger and more exposed place, customers began to flock their store and also demanded additional services like landscaping.

"I told them that I am not familiar with landscaping but I can supply them with the materials they need and hook them with landscape artist," Valencia explained.

Recognizing another income source, he studied landscaping by tagging along with the landscape artist and volunteering to help them setup. "After a while, I learned the craft and soon enough, I began accepting land-

scaping services," he said.

By this time, he was able to transfer his store in a bigger place and was already growing his own plants with the help of two gardeners he employed.

"During peak season, the minimum amount I can earn from selling plants is around P2,000. On the other hand, a single landscaping project would cost around P20,000, at the least," he added.

By this time, his landscaping customers were not limited to individual home owners. He is already catering to big customers such as hos-

pitals and government institutions.

"Malaking bagay ang naitulong sa akin ng ECC. Nakapag-umpisa kami ulit dahil sa tulong na naibigay ng ECC" he said.

"It always inspires us to do our work better when we hear stories of success of our PWRDs. We are happy that we are able to help them jumpstart a new beginning for them through the benefits and services of the ECP and its KaGabay Program", ECC Executive Director Stella Zipagan-Banawis said.

End

ECC KaGabay Program creates new beginning for seven PWRDs from GenSan

Seven persons with work-related disabilities (PWRDs) from General Santos City are geared up to start their new business venture, thanks to the livelihood starter kit grant from the Employees' Compensation Commission's (ECC) Katulong at Gabay sa Manggagawang May Kapansanan (KaGabay) Program.

The beneficiaries namely, Delmar Madulay, Joey Ymas, Remuel de Luna, Jephone Villarmino, Francisco Gocela, Anarlys Gubat, and Richard Flores each received a livelihood grant amounting to P4,500 worth of tools necessary to operate

a food processing business. Prior to the livelihood grant, each PWRD was also given the chance to participate in the skills training on Food Processing at South Point College of Arts in Gen. Santos City.

Their attendance to the skills training workshop, which was held from 19 April to 24 May 2015, is also among the benefits they received from the KaGabay Program.

The ECC KaGabay Program is a special economic assistance program for PWRDs who lost employment by reason of work-related sickness or injury. It aims to facilitate integration

of PWRDs into the economy through physical restoration, training for re-employment, or self-entrepreneurship.

The program also provides PWRDs equal access to livelihood opportunities and assist them in setting-up their own self-managed micro-enterprises or home-based business.

Under the program, beneficiaries can avail of physical restoration which refers to the provision of physical or occupational therapy services, skills training for re-employment, and entrepreneurship training.

"Malaking tulong po talaga ito sa amin at aming pamilya. Maraming salamat po talaga sa ECC," beams an excited and happy Jephone Villarmino.

End

After 7 years, PWRD still remembers how ECC became the saving grace of his family

In September 2006, Engineer Beltranico Balcena, Jr. was at the point of giving up when he met a vehicular accident which completely fractured the bone of his right arm. He underwent surgery wherein a metal implant was placed on his arm. He immediately lost his job as a management trainee in an automobile company after the said incident.

That was the lowest point of his life. As a breadwinner, he had no idea where to get money for his family's sustenance. His children were all still studying. He needed to pick up the pieces of his life after the

accident but had no idea how. He was about to give up when ECC suddenly came to his life.

Balcena received a lump sum pension of P21,010.50 or P3001.50 monthly pension for 7 months as his EC partial permanent disability benefit and P575 carer's allowance for 7 months. His wife was granted an entrepreneurial skills seminar and his 3 kids were also included in the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) of the ECC during the summer of 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Balcena recalled that the lump sum pension he received from

ECC was his saving grace. He used it to put up a sari-sari store for him to have income while he was still recuperating from the surgery. It was the only store in their neighborhood at that time. His store generated daily gross sales of P10,000 at that time.

Two years after the accident, he was able to get a new job in a construction company, and then got an overseas employment contract. Just recently, he took the board examinations for Civil Engineering and passed it. He is now a Civil Engineer in a company based in Papua New Guinea. Though he now earns a 6-digit monthly salary, he still visits the ECC from time to time whenever he is here in the Philippines.

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