



THE GRAPEVINE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILIPPINE
NURSES ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA



MARCH 2026 ISSUE



PNACC Executive Board 2024-2026



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 About The Grapevine
- 2 Editorial
- 3 President's Message
- 5-8 Feature Articles
- 9-11 Spotlight
- 12-22 Community Service
- 23-27 Education
- 28-34 Community Events
- 35-40 Collaboration Corner
- 41-42 Membership Corner
- 43-46 From Our Members
- 47 Quantifiable Impact Statement
- 50 Officers & Board of Directors
- 51 Committee Chairs/Co-chairs
- 52 Editorial Staff

ABOUT US

Founded in 1989 by a dedicated group of Filipino nurses under the mentorship of the late Dr. Emperatriz Rabago, the organization was originally named the Filipino Nurses Association of Central California. In 1991, it became an official chapter of the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA) and adopted its current name, the Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC).

Since its founding, PNACC has grown into a respected professional organization committed to advancing the professional development of Filipino-American nurses in Central California. Through education, collaboration, leadership, and community service, PNACC promotes excellence in nursing and strengthens the role of Filipino nurses as valued members of the healthcare team. The organization maintains an active presence at the local, state, national, and international levels.

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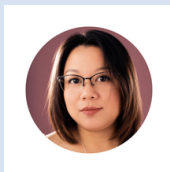
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Editorial

A VOICE OF NURSING: ADVOCACY IN ACTION



Written By: Jenniver Westfall, BSN, RN
Editor-in-chief
PNACC Secretary

As the first quarter of 2026 closes, one message is clear: when nurses speak with one voice, meaningful change follows. From labor actions to federal policy efforts, nurses continue to show that strengthening the profession strengthens patient care.

January opened with major labor activity, including the largest nurses' strike in New York City history, where thousands of nurses called for safer staffing, fair wages, and improved working conditions, reinforcing the link between a supported workforce and better patient outcomes. Soon after, more than 31,000 Kaiser Permanente nurses and healthcare professionals across California and Hawaii took part in one of the nation's largest healthcare labor actions. The resulting agreements highlighted the power of collective advocacy to improve conditions for both caregivers and patients.

Attention also turned to federal student aid classifications that exclude graduate nursing programs from "professional degree" status. Nursing organizations, including PNAA and PNACC, raised concerns about the impact on advanced practice education and workforce development. In response, 65 organizations urged the Department of Education to formally recognize MSN, DNP, and PhD nursing degrees as professional degrees, with important implications for funding and education. These events remind us that advocacy extends beyond policy arenas. It lives in every nurse who mentors a colleague, participates in shared governance, engages in professional organizations, or speaks up to improve care and practice environments. Nurses are caregivers, educators, innovators, leaders, and advocates. This quarter reflects the strength of our collective voice and our shared commitment to patients, the profession, and the communities we serve.

As we move forward, may we continue to lead with compassion, act with purpose, and remember that every effort to strengthen nursing strengthens healthcare for all.

Together, our voices shape the future of nursing.

President's MESSAGE



Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
2024-2026
PNACC President

As we move through the first quarter of 2026, my heart is filled with gratitude as I reflect on the incredible journey of the Philippine Nurses Association of Central California. This year continues to remind us that PNACC is more than an organization, it is a family united by our shared commitment to Compassion, Community, and Continuation.

Very early in January, PNACC delegates proudly traveled home to the Philippines to attend the PNAA Filipino Nurses Global Summit VI and the 15th International Nursing Conference in Manila- an inspiring gathering of more than 700 nurses, leaders, educators, and students from across the globe. Held at the Conrad Hilton Manila, the summit focused on "Beyond Borders: Filipino Nurses' Impact & Influence in Global Health Transformation," encouraging collaboration, leadership development, and global advocacy among Filipino nurses. Our delegates returned enriched with new insights, strengthened professional connections, and a renewed drive to elevate nursing practice in our community.

During this same trip, PNACC also carried out our 2026 Camiling, Tarlac, Philippine Medical Mission, which served approximately 200 patients. Our volunteers provided vital health screenings, education, medications, and compassionate care to families in underserved communities. Being able to deliver hands-on service while also participating in a global nursing summit made this journey deeply meaningful, reminding us of the true essence of our profession.

In addition, our delegates visited Gawad Kalinga, a transformative poverty-alleviation movement dedicated to building empowered and sustainable communities. Witnessing their programs firsthand- community leadership development, hope-centered initiatives, and the spirit of bayanihan- was absolutely astounding. The experience reaffirmed our belief in service beyond clinical care and inspired us to deepen our community partnerships and outreach efforts back home.

President's **MESSAGE**

From January through March, our monthly routines of membership engagement, education, fellowship, and community service have continued to strengthen our organization. Each gathering has provided opportunities to reconnect, learn from one another, and renew our commitment to making a difference beyond the walls of healthcare.

One of the highlights of the early year was Camp Aruga, a time dedicated to fellowship, wellness, laughter, and strengthening relationships among our members. It reminded us that caring for each other allows us to continue caring for our patients and communities with renewed energy and purpose.

This year, PNACC also continued advancing one of our meaningful goals: promoting Filipino artists and celebrating Filipino talent within our community. Earlier in the year, we proudly hosted a sold-out Father and Son Concert featuring Piolo Pascual and Inigo Pascual- an unforgettable night filled with music, culture, and connection. It was truly a blast, and a beautiful reminder of how art brings people together and strengthens our cultural pride.

As your President, I am inspired by every PNACC member who volunteers, participates, mentors, and leads. Together, we continue to show that leadership is not only a title, it is action, service, and impact.

Let us continue moving forward with Compassion, Community, and Continuance as our guide. Together, we will keep building a stronger PNACC and creating a legacy for generations of nurses to come.

Thank you for your continued support, dedication, and commitment. It is truly an honor and privilege to serve as your President.



Feature Article

A RETURN TO ROOTS: REAFFIRMING COMMITMENT AT GAWAD KALINGA



Written By: Cecilia Utleg MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026

Our recent visit to the Gawad Kalinga community was both a homecoming and a powerful reminder of what sustained partnerships can accomplish. We revisited the 40 homes built through the generosity and vision of the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA), homes that continue to shelter families, nurture hope, and stand as living symbols of compassion in action. Seeing these homes still vibrant and well cared for affirmed that service, when done with heart and continuity, truly lasts

Equally meaningful was our return to the livelihood center established by the Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC). What was once a structure built with promise is now a thriving space of creativity, dignity, and self-reliance. During this visit, we extended our support by donating a wall fan to improve comfort within the center-an intentionally simple but practical gesture rooted in listening to the community's needs.

In solidarity with their efforts, we also proudly purchased all the T-shirts created by the livelihood center -30 pieces in total. Each shirt represents more than fabric and print; it reflects skills learned, confidence gained, and income generated through meaningful work. Supporting these locally made products reinforces our belief that empowerment is most sustainable when communities are enabled to thrive through their own talents.

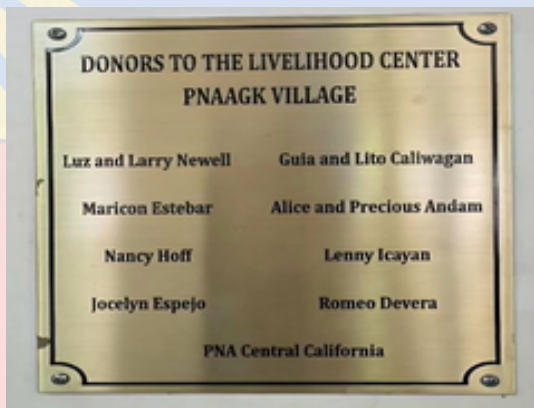


Feature Article



This visit was especially impactful for first-time participants PNACC President Elect Rizza Elep and Asst. Secretary Fatima Tayo-Estacio, who were visibly moved and inspired. Witnessing their awe and appreciation reminded us that service also transforms the hearts of those who give, often as profoundly as those who receive.

As we left Gawad Kalinga, we carried with us gratitude, renewed purpose, and a deeper commitment to continuity. This journey reaffirmed that when nurses come together-with compassion, community, and consistency-we help build not just houses or centers, but lasting hope.



Feature Article

“A LEADER, A SISTER, AN INSPIRATION: CECILIA UTLEG, HER LEADERSHIP THAT INSPIRES WOMEN”



Written By: Rizza Elep, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President Elect 2024–2026

International Women’s Day is a time to celebrate the courage, leadership, and compassion of women who uplift others and transform communities. This year, I proudly honor a remarkable woman who embodies all these qualities, Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN, President of the Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC) from 2024–2026. To many she is a visionary leader, but to me she is also my Ate in nursing, in heart and in blood.

Cecilia leads with a rare combination of strength, humility, and unwavering faith. Guided by her mantra, Compassion, Community, and Continuance. She has transformed PNACC into a thriving organization, growing membership, expanding educational programs, and strengthening community partnerships across Central California. Her leadership has advanced professional development for nurses through continuing education seminars on critical topics such as sepsis, Code Blue response, and Alzheimer’s disease awareness.

As President, Cecilia has also championed scholarship and mentorship, ensuring that the next generation of nurses has opportunities to learn, lead, and serve. Through her vision, PNACC has awarded scholarships to aspiring nurses and expanded collaborations with nursing schools and diverse professional organizations, creating pathways for future nurse leaders.

But beyond titles and accomplishments, Cecilia’s leadership is deeply personal. As President-Elect of PNACC and a fellow nurse, I have had the privilege of witnessing her dedication up close. She leads not for recognition but for service, encouraging others, empowering her team, and reminding us that leadership is about lifting others to their highest potential.

Feature Article



On this International Women's Day, I celebrate my Ate, Cecilia Utleg, not only as a leader but as a mentor and sister who inspires me daily. Her example reminds us that when women support one another, we create powerful movements for change.

Cecilia Utleg's legacy is one of compassion, courage, and commitment to the nursing profession. I am grateful to walk this leadership journey beside her and to continue the work she so passionately champions.



Spotlight



Written By: Rizza Elep, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President Elect 2024-2026



Certified Nurses' Day is a meaningful occasion to recognize the dedication, expertise, and commitment of nurses who pursue professional certification to elevate patient care and strengthen the nursing profession. As a PCCN (Progressive Care Certified Nurse) and an Ambassador for the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) at Kaiser Permanente Fresno Medical Center, this day holds a special place in my heart and professional journey.

Certification represents more than a credential. It is a commitment to lifelong learning, clinical excellence, and evidence-based practice. Nurses who achieve specialty certification demonstrate advanced knowledge and competence in their field, ensuring that patients receive the highest standard of care. In progressive care and telemetry settings, where patients often have complex and rapidly changing conditions, certification empowers nurses with the skills and confidence to respond effectively and deliver safe, high-quality care.

At Kaiser Permanente Fresno, certified nurses contribute significantly to improving patient outcomes, strengthening teamwork, and promoting a culture of accountability and professional growth. Certification aligns with national standards of nursing excellence and supports organizations striving toward professional development, leadership, and quality improvement.

Spotlight

As an AACN Ambassador, I am passionate about encouraging fellow nurses to pursue certification and professional advancement. Certification not only enhances clinical knowledge but also fosters confidence, leadership, and professional credibility. It allows nurses to advocate more effectively for their patients, contribute to evidence-based practice initiatives, and serve as mentors for the next generation of nurses.

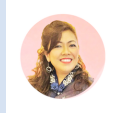
Certified Nurses' Day is also an opportunity to celebrate the resilience and dedication of nurses who continually challenge themselves to grow. Behind every certification exam is a nurse who studied after long shifts, balanced family responsibilities, and remained committed to improving their practice.

Today, we honor all certified nurses whose expertise strengthens healthcare systems and whose compassion touches countless lives. Your dedication inspires excellence, advances the profession, and ultimately improves the care we provide to our communities. Happy Certified Nurses' Day to all who proudly wear the badge of certification.



Spotlight

CAMP ARUGA 2026: PNACC DANCING DIVAS LEAD AWARD-WINNING BAYANIHAN PERFORMANCE



Written By:

**Cecilia Utleg MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026**



The PNACC Dancing Divas delivered the Bayanihan Presentation that won the prestigious Diwa ng Bayanihan Award at Camp Aruga 2026, instantly captivating the audience with a performance that was nothing short of extraordinary.

Held at the serene Irvine Ranch Outdoor Education Center in Orange, California, the event gathered leaders and members from 16 chapters across the Western Region. Surrounded by nature's calm beauty, the stage came alive as the PNACC Dancing Divas took command, showcasing a seamless blend of storytelling, rhythm, and cultural pride. From the very first beat to the final bow, every word, every movement, and every prop was executed with precision and passion. The performance embodied the true essence of bayanihan- unity, collaboration, and shared purpose- earning resounding applause and “wow” reactions from an energized and engaged audience.

Their dynamic presence, synchronization, and powerful delivery elevated the presentation beyond expectations. It was more than a performance; it was a heartfelt expression of identity and teamwork that resonated deeply with all in attendance.

This win marks the second consecutive year that PNACC has garnered top awards at Camp Aruga, a testament to their unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation.

The success of the event was further enhanced by the exceptional hosting of the Philippine Nurses Association of California – Orange County (PNACO), whose leadership ensured a meaningful and memorable experience for all participants.

Camp Aruga 2026 once again proved to be a celebration of culture, leadership, and unity—where the spirit of bayanihan continues to shine through the talents and dedication of its members.

Community Service

PNACC Supports Toys for Tots



Written By: Mila Nino, BSN, RN
PNACC Past President



The Christmas holiday is often described as the most wonderful time of the year—a season filled with joy, togetherness, and the spirit of giving. For many, this time of celebration brings thoughts of exchanging gifts and sharing happiness with loved ones. However, not every child experiences the same joy during the holidays. Recognizing this, PNACC proudly marks its second year of supporting Toys for Tots, continuing its commitment to spreading kindness and hope. Through this initiative, PNACC helps ensure that more children can experience the excitement of receiving a gift and the warmth of knowing their community.

PNACC proudly began this meaningful initiative in 2024 and continued the tradition in 2025 by encouraging executive board members to bring at least one toy to the Christmas party. Thanks to this shared generosity, we collected enough toys to fill two large garbage bags, which were joyfully delivered to Two Ravens Brewery, a Toys for Tots drop-off center—helping bring smiles to children in need.

Community Service



Toys for Tots is more than a holiday charity—it is a symbol of hope, kindness, and community. Founded by the U.S. Marine Corps, this program brings joy to millions of children each year by providing new toys to families in need. During a season meant for togetherness and generosity, Toys for Tots reminds us that even a small act of giving can create lasting smiles and unforgettable memories. Through the support of volunteers, donors, and local organizations, Toys for Tots continues to make the holidays brighter for children across the nation.

In conclusion, Toys for Tots plays a vital role in bringing happiness and hope to children who might otherwise go without during the holiday season. A single toy can remind a child that they are cared for and valued, and a simple act of giving can create a lasting impact. By supporting Toys for Tots through donations, volunteering, or spreading the word, we can come together as a community to make a real difference. Choosing to help means choosing kindness, compassion, and joy—because every child deserves a reason to smile.

Community Service

PNACC MEDICAL MISSION FOR BARANGAY BIRBIRA, CAMILING TARLAC PHILS



By Fatima Tayo-Estacio BSN , RN
Board of Director, PNACC(2024-2026)



My SBAR

S-Situation

I participated for the first time as a volunteer with the PNACC during the medical mission held on Jan .17, 2026 in Brgy. Birbira Camiling Tarlac . This mission aimed to provide free medical and dental services to underserved community members . As a first-time participant the experience was humbling and fulfilling serving patients in our home country alongside fellow Filipino nurses , and other rural health unit allowed me to witness the true heart of Pinoy nurses - rooted in compassion, commitment, service and sacrifice.

B-Background

Our medical mission was made possible through the dedication and collective efforts of PNACC members , our leader Pres. Cecilia Utleg , WVP Maricon Esteban , Pres . elect Rizza Elep . Prior to the mission we had caroling events and fundraising show “ PNACC Got Talent” to gather funds for medicines , medical supplies and logistic needs . These activities reflected the strong spirits of bayanihan and unity among Filipino nurses in Central Cal . The mission was conducted in coordination with local health unit and health workers. It was fully supported by the Municipality of Camiling under the leadership of Honorable Mayor Joyce Benitez Agustin , who publicly expressed her gratitude for PNACC commitment to serving her constituents.

Community Service

A-Assessment

As a pediatric nurse I find more joy in helping at the dental station . Assisting one of the three local dentists Dr. Sabina Subiate with fellow PNACC volunteer Luz Newell , we guided children through checkups , holding their tiny little hands , giving them encouragement, and their parents education . Each interaction reminded me that healthcare is not just technical - it's human , it's emotional , it's joyful . With other PNACC volunteers assigned and helping with other checkup stations were Cecilia Utleg PNACC Pres , Maricon Esteban WVP , Pres . Elect Rizza Elep , Mila Nino , Raumelia Bautista, Dante Bautista Athena Oliquiano , Jennifer Martizano, Maria Calabio, Deo Calabio, from PNAA Pres. Marlon Saria from PNAA Executive Director Dino Doliente, PNAA COC Chair Nini Jurado, PNAA COC Co-chair Catherine Rubio and PNA Bay Area Marife Sevilla. With break in between we provided entertainment and games , the atmosphere of fun and teamwork were evident . Mayor Agustin's acknowledgment and presence reminded me that our work was truly making a difference. Mission accomplished.

R-Recommendation

I strongly recommend continuing PNACC's mission that blends service , creativity and camaraderie supported by strong teamwork . Follow up with local health units will sustain impact but the mission's true reward is shared joy , laughter , and human connection. This adventure reminded me why Filipino nurses are admired worldwide- we serve with heart , humor , resilience and spirit of BAYANIHAN . Every smile , every giggle, every “ Agyamanak , Salamat po , thank you “ transforms the challenges into stories that I put in my memory book , I will cherish forever.



Community Service

FEAST OF STO. NINO CELEBRATION SUPPORTED BY PNACC



Written By: Rizza Elep, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President Elect 2024-2026



The Feast of the Sto. Nino, a symbol of FAITH of Filipinos that has been celebrated for over 500 years is also observed here in Central Valley. PNACC is an active supporter of our Filipino traditions and of this event as PNACC promotes the Filipino culture and traditions by supporting what is happening in the Philippines.

The Feast of Sto. Nino was celebrated last January 11, 2026 where all the devotees of Sto. Nino brought their statues and observed the celebration. It started with a procession inside the church of Saint Paul Newman Center at 1:15 pm. It was celebrated by Father Carlo Balaguer.

Immediately after the mass, the devotees proceeded to the reception in the hall. PNACC provided the dessert for the celebration. PNACC is also the first aid responder of the said event. PNACC's commitment to the health of our community is in the forefront of what it is all about.



Community Service

PNACC CONTINUES MONTHLY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH



Written By: Rizza Elep, MSN, RN, PCCN

PNACC President Elect 2024-2026

The Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC) continued its commitment to community service, health promotion, and member engagement through three meaningful events held in February.

On February 7, PNACC members volunteered at the Holy Ground Family Fellowship Assembly monthly food distribution. Nurses joined other community volunteers early in the morning to help set up tents, organize food supplies, and distribute groceries and essential items to nearly 1,000 individuals and families in need. During the event, PNACC members also promoted Alzheimer's awareness by distributing educational handouts and engaging community members in conversations about brain health, early signs of Alzheimer's disease, and available support resources.



On February 8, PNACC nurses served as first aid responders during the Filipino Mass at St. Paul Newman Center. The Filipino Mass typically gathers around 100 parishioners, providing a meaningful opportunity for PNACC nurses to support the community. In addition to offering first aid assistance when needed, PNACC members distributed Alzheimer's awareness materials and shared information about PNACC's health initiatives and community programs.

Community Service



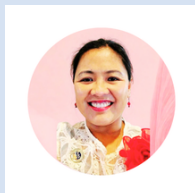
Fr L to R Rizza Elep, Maria Victoria De Castro, Luz Newell, Cecilia Utleg

Continuing the month's activities, PNACC held its membership drive on February 14 at Philippine Kitchen. The event coincided with Valentine's Day, creating a festive atmosphere as PNACC members greeted guests who stopped by the restaurant with chocolate flowers and Valentine's greetings. The gathering was also livestreamed on Facebook, allowing PNACC leaders to acknowledge current members, encourage membership renewal, and invite new nurses to join the organization. While the livestream typically has 40–60 viewers during the live broadcast, the recording remains on PNACC's Facebook page and usually reaches 300–500 views over time.

Across these three February engagements, PNACC consistently promoted Alzheimer's awareness by distributing educational materials while also sharing updates about PNACC programs and community events. These regular monthly touchpoints continue to strengthen PNACC's presence in the community and reflect the organization's mission of service, compassion, and professional unity.

Community Service

SERVING WITH HEART: PNACC IN HOLY GROUND FAMILY FELLOWSHIP FOOD DRIVE IN CLOVIS



Written By: Rizza Elep, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President Elect 2024-2026

On Saturday, March 7, 2026, the Holy Ground Family Fellowship hosted its monthly Food Drive Distribution in Clovis, California, bringing together dedicated volunteers and community members for a day of service and compassion. The event reflected a shared commitment to addressing food insecurity while fostering unity and support within the community.

PNACC Executive Board (EB) and its members with the volunteers proudly did their part, actively participating in the distribution efforts and demonstrating their ongoing commitment to community service beyond healthcare settings. Their presence highlighted the organization's mission of service, leadership, and advocacy within the Central Valley.

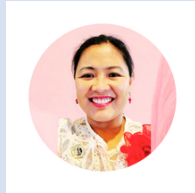
Volunteers worked tirelessly to organize and distribute essential food items to families in need, ensuring that each individual was welcomed with dignity and care. The atmosphere was filled with positivity, teamwork, and a genuine spirit of giving.

Through continued outreach and collaboration, both Holy Ground Family Fellowship and PNACC exemplify how service-driven partnerships can uplift communities and create meaningful, lasting impact.



Community Service

SERVING THROUGH FAITH AND CARE: PNACC SUPPORTS SECOND SUNDAY MASS



Written By: Rizza Elep, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President Elect 2024-2026

On Sunday, March 8, 2026, the Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC) continued its mission of service by providing first aid support during the Second Sunday Mass, presided over by Father Bringas. This meaningful collaboration highlighted the integration of faith, community, and healthcare service.

PNACC Executive Board members and volunteers were present to ensure the safety and well-being of parishioners, offering first aid assistance and health support as needed throughout the celebration. Their presence provided reassurance and demonstrated the vital role of nurses beyond traditional clinical settings.

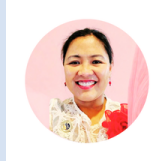
The Mass, led by Father Bringas, was a spiritually uplifting gathering that brought together the community in prayer and reflection. PNACC's involvement reflected its commitment to compassionate care, service, and advocacy in all settings.

Through initiatives like this, PNACC continues to embody its dedication to holistic care and supporting not only physical health but also the spiritual and emotional well-being of the community it serves.



Community Service

Compassion, Collaboration, and Community: PNACC Shines at Fresno Consular Outreach 2026



Written By: Rizza Elep, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President Elect 2024-2026



The Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC) demonstrated its continued commitment to community service and health promotion during the Consular Outreach event held on March 14, 2026, in Fresno, California. In collaboration with community partners, including the Alzheimer's Central Valley Association, Express Care Medical Group Family Medicine Clinics, Filipino Farmers' Cooperative of OrosiCalifornia, PNACC Executive Board members and volunteers actively engaged in a meaningful outreach initiative that integrated public service with health education.

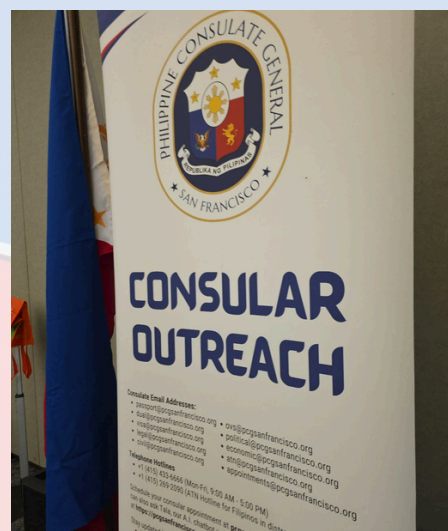
A key highlight of the event was the PNACC membership drive, where nurses connected with community members, shared the organization's mission, and encouraged professional engagement and leadership within the nursing community. This effort strengthened visibility and fostered unity among Filipino nurses and allied healthcare professionals in the Central Valley.

Community Service

In addition, PNACC volunteers provided complimentary blood pressure monitoring, promoting early detection and awareness of cardiovascular health risks. Participants also benefited from valuable healthcare teachings focused on Alzheimer's disease, emphasizing early recognition, prevention strategies, and caregiver support. Educational materials and interactive discussions enhanced community understanding of this growing public health concern.

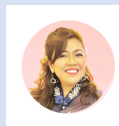
To recognize the dedication and service of volunteers and participants, certificates of appreciation were formally awarded by the consular office, highlighting the importance of community partnership and civic engagement.

Overall, the outreach event exemplified PNACC's dedication to advancing health equity, empowering communities through education, and fostering professional collaboration. Through service, advocacy, and leadership, PNACC continues to make a lasting impact on the health and well-being of the populations it serves.



Education

GEORGE'S PASS: TRANSFORMING AUTISM CARE THROUGH COMPASSION AND INNOVATION PNACC EDUCATION – MARCH 27, 2026



Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026



“When we understand the brain, we transform the experience—and when we lead with compassion, everyone benefits.”

In today's evolving healthcare landscape, providing equitable and compassionate care for individuals with autism is no longer optional, it is essential. During the Philippine Nurses Association of Central California's (PNACC) March 27, 2026 educational session, *Neuro-informed Care Across the Life Span*, one concept stood out as both practical and powerful: George's Pass—an innovative tool transforming healthcare experiences for neurodivergent patients. A highlight of the evening was the expertise shared by our very own PNACC Board Member, Shelly A. Reyes, BSN, RN, CPN, whose passion and clinical insight brought this topic to life. As a nurse in the Surgery Department at Valley Children's Healthcare, she shared firsthand experience in advancing neuro-inclusive care. Notably, the Valley Children's Surgery Department was the first to initiate George's Pass, setting the stage for a model now gaining wider recognition.

Adding a meaningful and child-friendly touch, George, the giraffe mascot of Valley Children's, represents comfort, gentleness, and approachability, beautifully reflecting the heart of this initiative.

Education



What is George's Pass?

George's Pass is a patient-centered communication tool designed to support individuals with autism and other neurodivergent conditions during healthcare encounters. It serves as a quick-reference profile outlining a patient's unique needs, triggers, and calming strategies.

"Small adjustments create extraordinary outcomes for our patients."

What does it include?

- Communication preferences
- Sensory sensitivities
- Known triggers
- Calming techniques
- Behavioral cues
- Caregiver instructions

These elements align with best practices in patient-centered and trauma-informed care (The Joint Commission, 2022).

How is it used in practice?

Upon arrival, the patient or caregiver presents the pass, allowing staff to immediately tailor care. Interventions may include adjusting lighting, minimizing noise, clustering care, and encouraging caregiver presence.

As emphasized by Ms. Reyes, these simple yet intentional strategies significantly reduce anxiety and prevent escalation, improving both patient and provider experiences.

Education

Which hospitals are using it?

Autism-friendly initiatives like George's Pass are gaining traction nationwide. Pediatric hospitals have led the way, with adult facilities now adopting similar approaches. Organizations such as Autism Speaks and National Institute of Mental Health continue to advocate for inclusive, neuro-sensitive care models.

What are the benefits?

- Improved patient experience
- Reduced anxiety and distress
- Enhanced safety
- Increased efficiency in care
- Stronger family partnership
- Better clinical outcomes

Why it matters now

With autism affecting a growing population, healthcare systems must evolve. George's Pass reflects a shift toward proactive, personalized, and compassionate care—aligned with Filipino values of family, respect, and malasakit.

Moving forward

George's Pass is more than a tool, it is a call to action. PNACC continues to lead through education and engagement, including creating and facilitating dynamic team-building activities that strengthen collaboration and unity among members.

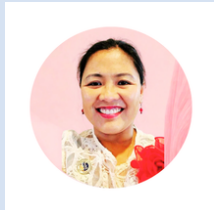
Inspired by leaders like Shelly A. Reyes, we move forward with purpose, championing innovation, inclusion, and compassionate care for all.

References

CDC (2024); ANA (2021); The Joint Commission (2022); Autism Speaks (2023); NIMH (2023); Nicolaidis et al. (2016); Koller & Goldman (2012).

Education

Advancing Public Health in Fresno: Addressing Community Needs in Central California



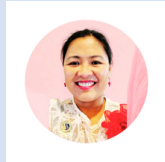
Written By: Rizza Elep, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President Elect 2024-2026



Public health in Fresno continues to evolve as healthcare leaders, community organizations, and public agencies work collaboratively to address the unique needs of Central California's diverse population. As one of the largest cities in the region, Fresno faces ongoing public health challenges, including chronic disease prevalence, limited access to care in underserved areas, air quality concerns, and health disparities among vulnerable populations. Efforts to improve community health focus on prevention, education, and access. Local healthcare systems such as Kaiser Permanente, community clinics, and public health departments play a vital role in promoting early screening, vaccination programs, and chronic disease management. Initiatives targeting hypertension, diabetes, and obesity are particularly important, given their high prevalence in the Central Valley. Community-based outreach remains essential in bridging gaps in care. Health fairs, mobile clinics, and partnerships with organizations like the Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC) support culturally responsive education and services. Programs addressing Alzheimer's disease, mental health, and preventive care help empower families and caregivers. Ultimately, advancing public health in Fresno requires sustained collaboration, culturally competent care, and continued investment in education and prevention to improve outcomes and promote health equity across the region.

Education

BRIDGING CARE AND COMMUNITY: PNACC AND ALZHEIMER'S CENTRAL VALLEY UNITE AT THE 2026 KAISER FRESNO GERIATRIC SYMPOSIUM



Written By: Rizza Elep, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President Elect 2024-2026



The 3rd Annual Kaiser Permanente Fresno Geriatric Symposium 2026 brought together healthcare professionals dedicated to advancing the care of older adults through evidence-based practice, collaboration, and education. This dynamic event highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary teamwork in addressing the complex and evolving needs of the geriatric population specifically with Alzheimer's and its new treatments to decrease progression.

A notable highlight of the symposium was the strong presence of the Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC) Executive Board and members, who attended in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Central Valley Association. Their participation underscored a shared commitment to raising awareness, promoting early recognition, and improving care strategies for patients living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. This partnership reflected the power of community engagement and culturally responsive care in improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations.

Attendees engaged in insightful presentations led by clinical experts across multiple specialties, emphasizing patient-centered approaches and best practices in geriatric care. The symposium also provided valuable continuing education opportunities, reinforcing a commitment to lifelong learning and professional excellence.

Overall, the event served as a meaningful platform to strengthen partnerships, enhance clinical knowledge, and inspire innovation in caring for the aging population while fostering unity among healthcare professionals and community organizations.

Community EVENTS

JINGLE BELL RUN- A TRADITION WITH FRIENDS FOR A CAUSE



Written By: Lorna Romero, BSN, RN, CFCS, DWC, WCC
PNACC ASSISTANT TREASURER (2024-2026)

The Jingle Bell Run-Fresno is a Christmas-themed event that includes a 5K run, a 2-mile walk, and a virtual run, all in support of providing toys to children in need (Toys for Tots). The course winds through Christmas Tree Lane, featuring holiday music and decorations, and all participants receive festive swag. We started participating in this event nine years ago with a small group of friends, initially intending it to be a single occasion that ultimately became an annual tradition. Each year, my close friends Macon, Fattie, Jen, and I participate and invite other friends and colleagues to join in the fun. The event allows participants to showcase their holiday spirit through their attire and enjoy the festive atmosphere. This year's event was particularly notable, as we were joined by our PNACC executive board members. We are committed to continuing this tradition and inviting others to join us in the years to come.



Community EVENTS

PNACC SUPPORTS HGFFA'S HIMIG NG PASKO FILIPINO CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL



Written By: Rizza Elep, BSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President Elect (2024-2026)

The Holy Ground Family Fellowship of America held their annual Christmas celebration of Himig ng Pasko last December 19, 2025, Friday, that started at 0500 pm in Clovis, California. "Holy Ground Family Fellowship of America is a "Big Family" of local believers in Jesus Christ in Fresno and Clovis, California" as stated on their website. PNACC supports all Filipino organizations to promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. PNACC attended the occasion and participated in their annual event.

HGFFA is headed by Rev. Gunder Balista and Pastor Merci Balista. Their community creates this annual Christmas celebration that features Christmas Carols, Filipino Folk Dances, games, food and a celebration of the Christian faith to celebrate Christmas with our Filipino culture. PNACC participated by dancing the Pandanggo Oasiwas, a Spanish Fandango dance that originated from Lingayen, Pangasinan. The highlights of the affair are the celebration of Christmas the Filipino way as a lot of our cultural traditions with food are incorporated. Indeed, it is a night to remember and share as we are immersed in our Filipino Culture in celebrating this season of hope. PNACC rendered two Filipino Folk Dances of Malong and La Jota Moncadena.



Community EVENTS

FIVE IN SERVICE: PNACC AS SOLE USHERS TO A GLOBAL NURSING COMMUNITY



Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC PRESIDENT (2024-2026)



As part of the PNACC delegation of five, serving as the sole ushers for the Filipino Nurses Global Summit VI and the 15th International Nursing Conference was both an honor and a profound responsibility. Among nearly 700 participants across two full conference days and the gala night, our small group stood at the forefront—not in numbers, but in service.

From the moment attendees arrived, we welcomed nurses from across the globe—leaders, educators, clinicians, and advocates—each carrying their own story and passion for the profession. As ushers, our role went far beyond directing seats or guiding movement. We became the first point of contact, setting the tone of warmth, professionalism, and Filipino hospitality that defined the entire event.

Serving together as a team of five required coordination, grace, and quiet leadership. We supported one another seamlessly, ensuring the flow of the program, assisting guests with care, and responding to needs with calm confidence. In many ways, this mirrored the essence of nursing itself—anticipating needs, serving selflessly, and leading without needing recognition. Throughout the conference and gala, we witnessed unity in action. Despite being one of the smallest delegations present, PNACC's presence was strongly felt through our service. We represented not only our organization, but the values we stand for: compassion, collaboration, and commitment to excellence.

The gala night was especially meaningful—a celebration of culture, achievement, and global Filipino nursing pride. Standing there, having served nearly 700 participants alongside my fellow PNACC members, I felt immense gratitude and pride.

This experience reaffirmed that leadership is often quiet and service-driven. As PNACC, we may have been five—but together, we carried the responsibility, honor, and spirit of many.

Community EVENTS

“FAITH, FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP: ITALIAN DINNER FUNDRAISER”



By Fatima Tayo-Estacio BSN , RN
Board of Director, PNACC(2024-2026)

Parishioners and community members gathered annually for Italian - style Dinner last March 1, 2026 hosted by Men's Club of Holy Spirit Church in Fresno, California. It is a long-running tradition that has been around for many years. This event serves two purposes, community fellowship-bringing parish families together for a social evening, and fundraising to support charitable activities, and outreach projects that the Men's club participates in.

With many Fil-Am Catholics we are active in parish life in the Diocese of Fresno-attending mass, volunteer events and social like this kind of dinner.

With our PNACC commitment to community we support this event and we had a wonderful time, the atmosphere was very friendly and family oriented, seniors and parishioners of all ages smiling, greetings, chatting with friends and neighbors. We shared the traditional Italian-style meal that includes pasta with red sauce, meatballs, bread and butter, green salad and various desserts, mostly homemade. We had different drinks served by my husband Joe Estacio, who's also is an active volunteer and member of the Men's Club. We had a live jazz band that we enjoyed as well, our Bishop Joseph Brennan even sang few songs, watching and socializing with the rest of the parishioners were our parish priests Rev. John Schmoll, and Rev William Lucido .

With the costs dinner - 10 \$ per adult ticket, 5 \$ for 5-12 years old and under 5 free. This fundraiser builds community and fellowship. It's fostering friendship outside of Sunday Mass.



Community EVENTS

FRESNO COMMUNITY CELEBRATES SOLDOUT WEEKEND WITH PIOLO AND IÑIGO PASCUAL



Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026

The Central Valley's Filipino community witnessed a rare and memorable entertainment weekend as acclaimed actor/singer Piolo Pascual and his son, international recording artist Iñigo Pascual, headlined a sold-out, two-night event that brought excitement, pride, and unity to Fresno. The father and son duo drew capacity crowds on March 5 and 6, marking one of the most anticipated Filipino cultural events in the region this year.



The festivities opened on March 5 with an exclusive Meet & Greet hosted in partnership with the Philippine National Association of Central California (PNACC). The organization, led by President Cecilia Utleg and President Elect Rizza Elep, welcomed fans for an evening of personal interaction with the Pascuals. Attendees described the gathering as warm and engaging, with both artists taking time to speak with guests, posing for photos, and expressing their appreciation for the community's support. PNACC's leadership was widely praised for helping create an intimate and well-organized experience that set the tone for the weekend.

The excitement reached its peak on March 6 as the main concert unfolded before a packed audience. Fans filled the venue early, eager to witness the rare joint performance of two of the Philippines' most recognizable entertainers. The show opened to thunderous applause, and the energy remained high throughout the night.

Community EVENTS



Piolo Pascual delivered a polished set that highlighted his signature, vocal style and emotional depth. His performances of beloved classics resonated strongly with longtime fans, many of whom have followed his career for decades. Between songs, he spoke about the warmth of the Fresno community and the joy of performing alongside his son.

Iñigo Pascual brought a modern, youthful dynamic to the stage with his contemporary hits and highenergy presence. His international success was evident in his confident delivery and strong connection with younger audience members. The highlight of the evening came during the duo's fatherandson numbers, where their harmonies and natural chemistry drew some of the loudest cheers of the night.

Audience members described the show as “fantastic,” “uplifting,” and “one of the best Filipino concerts Fresno has hosted.” Many noted that the event felt like a celebration not only of music, but of culture, family, and community pride.

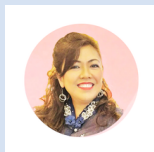
The success of the twonight engagement also underscored the vital role of PNACC as a community partner. Their involvement helped ensure that the event was accessible, wellcoordinated, and reflective of the strong cultural ties that bind Filipino Americans in the Central Valley.

As the final applause faded, it was clear that the Fresno stop left a lasting impression on both performers and attendees. For Piolo and Iñigo Pascual, the weekend marked another milestone in their artistic journey. For Fresno, it was a celebration that will be remembered as a standout cultural moment.



Community EVENTS

FROM FRESNO TO FIRELIGHT: PNACC SHINES AT CAMP ARUGA 2026



Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026

The Philippine Nurses Association of Central California made a vibrant and powerful presence at Camp Aruga 2026, bringing a team of eight passionate leaders, including PNAA WR RVP Maricon Esteban, all the way from Fresno to Irvine in a lively 15-seater van filled with energy, laughter, and purpose.

From the very start, PNACC showed up not just to attend, but to engage, lead, and shine. Every leadership session became an opportunity to contribute, collaborate, and grow. Our newest members, Mary Grace Reyes and Susan Ariola, immediately rose to the occasion, actively participating, confidently sharing insights, and truly embodying the next generation of PNACC leadership.

What made the experience even more impactful was the intentional networking. Several of us were placed in different groups, allowing PNACC's influence to ripple across the camp. And ripple it did, our members stood out, connected deeply, and brought home wins from multiple group competitions.

One of the most electrifying highlights of the camp was the Bonfire Jingle Competition focused on strategic planning and governance. In that unforgettable moment, PNACC took center stage. I, as PNACC President, together with our very own Mary Grace Reyes and three outstanding leaders, proudly emerged as one of the top two teams, a reflection of our creativity, teamwork, and strong leadership foundation.

Camp Aruga 2026 was not just an event, it was a celebration of leadership in action. PNACC didn't just participate, we made an impact, inspired others, and proved once again that our organization continues to lead with excellence, heart, and purpose.



Collaboration CORNER

JANUARY 9, 2026 (PNACC'S FIRST MEMBERSHIP FORUM & FIRST ZOOM EB MEETING)



Written By: RIZZA ELEP, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC PRESIDENT ELECT (2024-2026)

The PNACC(Philippine Nurses Association of Central California) Conducted the first Membership Forum for 2026 last January 9, Friday, from 300 to 600 pm in Jowli's Filipino Restaurant in Fresno, California. PNACC's President Cecilia Utleg continues this forum to increase membership of PNACC.

The event was attended by Secretary Jenniver Westfall with President-Elect Rizza Elep. PNACC also was giving hand-outs and education on Alzheimer's Awareness as they educate about care for Alzheimers. It also promoted the concert of Filipino artists Piolo and Inigo Pascual.

The forum is a venue to recruit members to promote our organization to the community and also to promote our Filipino food by having the event in Jowli's.

That same day January 9, 2026 at 800 pm PNACC EB met during Zoom to discuss the affairs of PNACC as it revs up to going to its first Medical Mission in Camiling, Tarlac, Philippines. They also discussed upcoming events: Father and Son Concert on March 6, Alzheimer's Education on March, PNACC Got Beauty on May 2 and other PNACC initiatives. Quorum was met and the EB is pumped up for 2026.



Collaboration CORNER

PNACC EXPANDS ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS EFFORTS THROUGH STRATEGIC COLLABORATION



**Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026**

The Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC) continues to strengthen its commitment to community health by advancing Alzheimer's awareness initiatives through strategic collaboration with the Alzheimer's Association.

To begin this effort, PNACC leadership participated in a productive Zoom meeting followed by a collaborative planning discussion with key representatives from the Alzheimer's Association. The meeting brought together Mario Peña- CA, Nevada Regional Director; Patricia Montion, Community Outreach Specialist; and Laura Martin, Walk to End Alzheimer's Manager. Representing PNACC were President Utleg, President-Elect Rizza, and Maricon Esteban, Vice President of the PNAA Western Region.



The discussion focused on building meaningful partnerships and identifying opportunities to expand outreach to diverse communities across the Central Valley, particularly within the Filipino American community. Participants engaged in thoughtful brainstorming to develop a strategic plan for Alzheimer's awareness initiatives over the next 12 months.

Collaboration CORNER

Proposed activities include educational seminars, community outreach events, and collaborative programs designed to increase awareness about Alzheimer's disease, promote brain health, encourage early detection, and provide support for caregivers and families affected by the condition. As nurses and community leaders, PNACC members recognize the critical role healthcare professionals play in educating the public and helping reduce stigma surrounding cognitive decline.

A key part of the collaboration will be PNACC's participation in the Walk to End Alzheimer's, a national movement that raises awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support, and research. PNACC members look forward to mobilizing nurses and community partners to participate and support this meaningful cause.

Through this partnership, PNACC continues to demonstrate its dedication to advancing health education and strengthening community engagement—reflecting the leadership and impact of PNAA nurses in promoting health and wellness across the communities they serve.



Collaboration CORNER

SUSTAINING MOMENTUM: PNACC AWARDED SECOND CONSECUTIVE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION GRANT

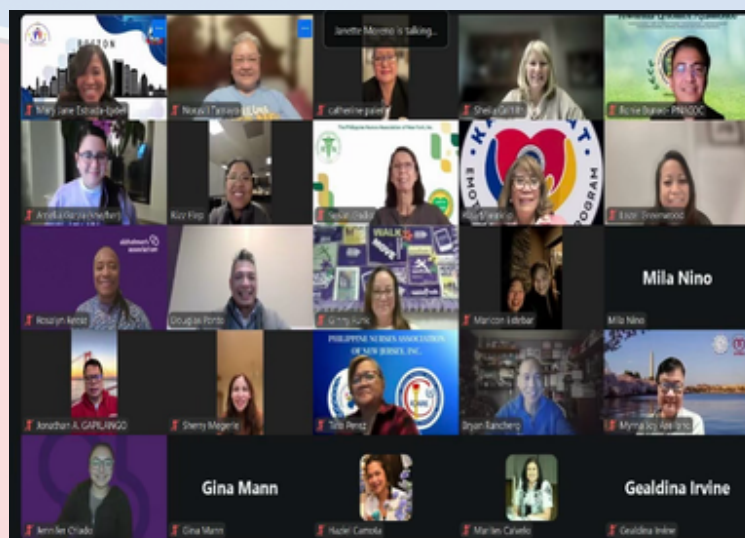


Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026

The Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC), in collaboration with the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA) and the Alzheimer's Association, is honored to receive a \$1,000 Alzheimer's Association grant for the second consecutive year. This marks the second year of funding support since the grant's inception in 2025, underscoring continued trust in PNACC's commitment to Alzheimer's education and community outreach.

This grant reinforces PNACC's mission to increase awareness, education, and early recognition of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, particularly within the diverse and growing communities of the Central Valley. As the prevalence of Alzheimer's continues to rise, culturally sensitive and community-based education remains essential in addressing gaps in knowledge, access, and caregiver support.

This year also marks the first time Mario Peña serves as PNACC's Alzheimer's Liaison. In this new role, he will help guide and support Alzheimer's-focused initiatives, strengthen partnerships, and assist in aligning PNACC's educational efforts with the goals of the Alzheimer's Association. His involvement brings renewed energy and collaboration to the program as PNACC expands its outreach strategies.



Collaboration CORNER



The \$1,000 grant will support educational activities focused on Alzheimer's awareness, brain health, early detection, caregiver resources, and risk reduction strategies. Planned efforts include community education sessions, informational forums, and engagement opportunities designed to empower individuals and families with practical tools and trusted information.

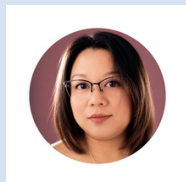
Building on the success of last year's initiatives, PNACC is committed to broadening its impact throughout the Central Valley. This second year of funding represents both continuity and growth, laying the foundation for expanded outreach and deeper community engagement.

More initiatives are forthcoming as PNACC continues to work closely with PNAALZ, the Alzheimer's Association, and local partners to spread awareness, reduce stigma, and promote compassionate care for those affected by Alzheimer's disease. Together, we remain steadfast in advancing education, advocacy, and hope—one community at a time.

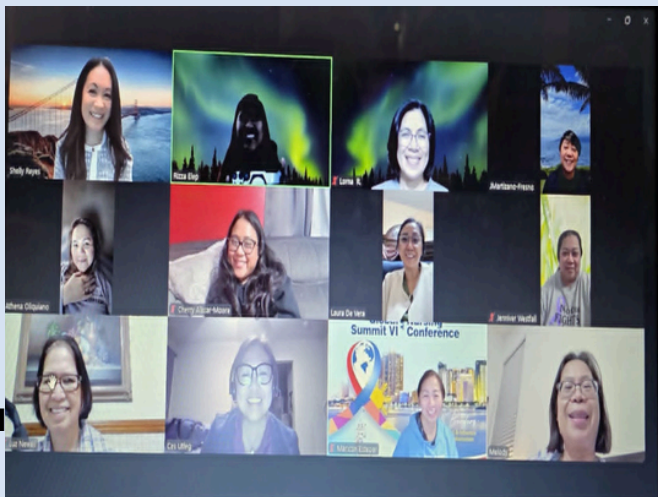


Collaboration CORNER

PNACC EXECUTIVE BOARD BEGINS A BUSY YEAR FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL GLOBAL SUMMIT



**Written By: Jenniver Westfall, BSN, RN
PNACC Secretary 2024-2026**



Fresh from a successful participation in the International Global Summit in the Philippines in January 2026, the PNACC Executive Board (EB) quickly returned to work during their monthly Zoom meeting on February 11, 2026. Delegates who attended the summit enthusiastically shared their experiences, highlighting the meaningful medical mission conducted in Camiling, Tarlac, which received very positive feedback from the local community.

With several exciting events ahead, the board immediately moved forward with planning and preparations. The Awards Committee, fresh from the recently concluded Nurse Excellence Awards, is already hard at work preparing nominations ahead of the deadline for the NLC RN of the Year recognition. PNACC has consistently demonstrated excellence in this category, with several members receiving awards over the years.

Meanwhile, the Education Committee is in the final stages of organizing the Spring Education Event scheduled for March 28. The program will offer free Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for both students and PNACC members.

Adding to the excitement, PNACC is supporting a highly anticipated concert featuring renowned Filipino artist Piolo Pascual alongside his son Inigo Pascual. The concert, set for March 6 in Fresno, will kick off the father-and-son tandem's U.S. tour. As part of the sponsorship, PNACC Executive Board members will enjoy an intimate meet-and-greet with the artists prior to the show.

Collaboration CORNER

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Another highly anticipated event is Camp Aruga in Southern California, taking place from March 20–23. PNACC will take charge of organizing the camp games. The delegation is eager to build on last year's success, when the team brought home awards and recognition—not only for their spirited participation but also for their creative and coordinated outfits.

Community service remains at the heart of PNACC's mission. The organization continues its regular outreach efforts, including the monthly food distribution at Holy Ground Church and support for the Filipino Mass at St. Paul Newman Center. In addition, PNACC will participate in the Consular Outreach event on March 14, where members will provide free health check-ups for seniors.

Looking ahead, PNACC will also support the annual Run with Heroes fundraiser at Valley Children's Hospital on April 18—an event that has become a meaningful tradition for the organization.

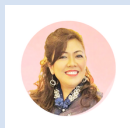
Beyond local initiatives, PNACC leaders are actively involved in national activities within Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNA), including the upcoming national elections and preparations for the PNA National Convention in Colorado this July.

The months ahead promise to be busy for the Executive Board, but under the steadfast leadership of President Cecile Utleg, supported by an enthusiastic and dedicated team, PNACC continues to move forward with purpose and commitment.

As the season of love unfolds, the PNACC community reflects with gratitude on the achievements already accomplished in the first quarter of the year, while looking ahead with excitement to the many initiatives that will further strengthen the organization and its mission.

Collaboration CORNER

PNACC EXPLORES EXPANSION WITH POTENTIAL BAKERSFIELD SUBCHAPTER



**Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026**



The Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC) recently held an engaging and productive Zoom meeting to discuss the exciting possibility of establishing a PNACC subchapter in Bakersfield, California, 100 miles from Fresno, CA. The meeting highlighted the organization's continued commitment to expanding its reach and strengthening the presence of Filipino American nurses across the Central Valley.

The virtual meeting brought together national and regional leaders of the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA), including PNAA President Marlon Saria and PNAA Western Region Vice President Maricon Esteban. Representing PNACC were President Cecilia Utleg and President-Elect Rizza Elep. Joining the discussion from Bakersfield was Roland Talag, a DaVita dialysis nurse who has expressed strong interest in organizing and connecting Filipino nurses in the Bakersfield area.

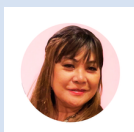
The meeting focused on exploring the steps and structure needed to establish Bakersfield as a potential PNACC subchapter. Discussions included the process of organizing local nurses, developing leadership within the area, and creating programs that would support professional growth, community engagement, and health advocacy. Leaders also shared guidance on PNAA's mission and the importance of building strong, sustainable chapters that align with the organization's goals.

The conversation was highly collaborative, with participants exchanging ideas on how to best support Filipino American nurses in Bakersfield while fostering mentorship, leadership development, and networking opportunities. The initiative reflects the growing interest among nurses in the region in connecting with PNAA and contribute to its mission of advancing the nursing profession and improving community health.

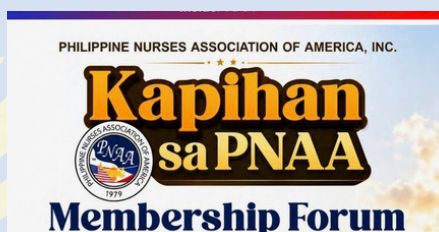
The meeting concluded with enthusiasm and optimism as leaders discussed next steps toward making the Bakersfield subchapter a reality. This initiative represents another meaningful step in PNACC's ongoing efforts to expand its impact, empower nurses, and strengthen the PNAA network throughout the Western Region.

Membership CORNER

MY PNAA MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE POINT OF VIEW



By: Mila Nino, BSN, RN
PNACC Past President

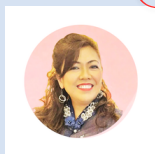


Almost two years have passed, and it continues to be both an honor and a privilege to serve as a member of the PNAA Membership Committee. The committee meets monthly, every first Thursday via Zoom, to discuss membership-related matters, address organizational concerns, and develop initiatives that strengthen members engagement and support the mission of PNAA.

One of the committee's most significant accomplishments during this term 2024-2026 led by Dr Manny Ramos was launched on September 24, 2024, Kapihan sa PNAA has successfully conducted 71 sessions, demonstrating the committee's commitment to maintaining open communication with the membership. The program has evolved into a trusted national forum where members can share ideas, voice concerns, and engage in discussions on advocacy, leadership, professional development, wellness, member benefits, website enhancements, and other emerging issues affecting the membership. Through these regular conversations, Kapihan sa PNAA has strengthened connections among members across the country, promoted transparency, encouraged collaboration, and reinforced PNAA's commitment to listening and responding to the needs of its members.

Serving on the Membership Committee has been a rewarding experience, and I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to initiatives that foster engagement, strengthen our organization, and advance the mission and vision of PNAA. I look forward to continuing to support our members and helping build an even stronger and more connected nursing community.

Membership CORNER



Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026

On March 6, 2026, Jowli's transformed into more than just a gathering place, it became a vibrant hub of purpose, passion, and connection as the Philippine Nurses Association of Central California (PNACC) hosted a truly inspiring Membership Drive intertwined with a powerful advocacy on Alzheimer's awareness.

From the moment attendees arrived, there was an undeniable energy in the room. PNACC leaders and members came together with one mission: to educate, reconnect, and grow. Beautifully prepared handouts on Alzheimer's disease were thoughtfully distributed, sparking meaningful conversations about early detection, prevention, and compassionate caregiving. Stories were shared, hearts were touched, and awareness deepened, reminding everyone why nursing is not just a profession, but a calling.

The impact of the event extended beyond the walls of Jowli's through a live stream that connected current members near and far. Through this platform, PNACC reignited the flame of engagement- inviting inactive members to return, renew, and once again be part of something greater than themselves. The message was clear and heartfelt: you belong here.

One of the most touching highlights was the presence of PNACC founder Ms. Nancy Hoff, whose legacy continues to inspire excellence and unity. Alongside her were cherished members Elsie Baruela and Elnora Bugay, with Kuya Sam Bugay, whose presence added warmth, laughter, and a deep sense of family.

And then came the moment that took everyone's breath away, anew members joined PNACC on the spot. No hesitation, just pure inspiration in action. It was a powerful reminder that when passion meets purpose, growth happens instantly. This was not just a membership drive. It was a movement. A rekindling. A celebration of who we are and what we stand for. PNACC continues to rise, stronger than ever.



FROM OUR *Members*

INSIGHTS ON CAMP ARUGA LEADERSHIP BOOT CAMP

Written By: Susan P. Ariola, BSN, RN
PNACC Member

Attending for the first time to the Camp Aruga Leadership Bootcamp of the PNA of America, Inc Western Region in Orange County on March 22–26, was a deeply meaningful and enriching experience for me as a Registered Nurse. With 32 years in the nursing field, 20 years spent in the Philippines as a member of the Nurse Corps and migrated to America, currently nearing my 13th year working as a Head Nurse in one of the acute care hospitals in Fresno, California, thus, I am delighted and humbled to give my insights.

The three-day bootcamp was thoughtfully designed, integrating lectures, activities, and opportunities for collaboration that empowered Filipino-American nurses. Each session was delivered by excellent and engaging speakers who shared their expertise on vital topics such as Caring Science, Health Equity, Emotional Intelligence, Resiliency, Climate Change, Informed Decision and Governance. These discussions not only reinforced my existing knowledge but also broadened my perspective on how nurses can lead and advocate for global health in an ever-changing healthcare landscape.

What stood out most was how the bootcamp fostered both professional growth and personal connection. Being an “on and off” member of the PNACCC since 2013 but through the invitation and outstanding leadership of Cecile Utleg, current President of PNACC, I was able to reconnect with other members and started to bond with them again. This started with our last-minute practice for our “Bayanihan” dance presentation. It amazed me to see a well-planned choreography with amazing outfits and paraphernalias, able to put up a Nipa Hut depicting the theme of Bayanihan. But this created an even more pressure on me and one other nurse colleague, both first timers joining this bootcamp when we were informed that PNACC was the defending champion of the latest bootcamp dance presentation. The pressure weaned off spontaneously because of their warm welcome and all gave the feeling of me being part of the family. Our bonding with 7 other PNACC members continued during a long road trip with lots of laughter and “Maritesan” on our way to Camp Aruga and back to Fresno. And with the team building activities included in the Bootcamp such as morning Zumba, relay games such as egg/walking relay, I was able to bond with other nurses from different regions. These moments created a sense of unity, camaraderie, and shared purpose reminding me of the strength we have when we come together as a community.

FROM OUR *Members*

INSIGHTS ON CAMP ARUGA LEADERSHIP BOOT CAMP

Written By: Susan P. Ariola, BSN, RN
PNACC Member



As a mother of two new RNs who are also both working in an acute care facility here in Fresno, this experience has inspired me even more to lead by example. Empowerment begins within me. I am motivated to encourage my two children to become actively involved in organizations like PNA of America as a whole and to our local chapter the PNACC, where they can grow professionally, advocate for global health and meaningful connections. Camp Aruga was more than just a leadership bootcamp, it was a celebration of our identity as Filipino-American nurses, our passion for nursing and our commitment to making a difference. It renewed my sense of purpose and strengthened my dedication to continued learning, leading and rising with my fellow Filipino nurses here in America.



FROM OUR *Members*

TEAM BUILDING GAMES IN CAMP ARUGA

Written By: Jennifer S. Martizano, BSN, RN
PNACC Auditor 2024-2026



Team building games during Camp Aruga brought energy, connection, and purpose to every participant, creating an environment where collaboration and trust could truly flourish. Set in an outdoor location, the natural surroundings added a refreshing and dynamic element that encouraged participants to be fully present, engaged, and open to connection. Organized and facilitated by PNACC, these activities were thoughtfully designed to strengthen relationships within and across chapters while developing essential leadership and interpersonal skills. Participants engaged in interactive games such as Lead Me Roll, Half-Pipe to the Goal, and Pass the Egg: each requiring strategy, coordination, and trust. These activities encouraged members to step outside of their comfort zones and work together in meaningful ways. Whether navigating blind guidance in Lead Me Roll, coordinating precise movements in Half-Pipe to the Goal, or carefully passing fragile objects in Pass the Egg, teams relied on communication, adaptability, and mutual support. Notably, Group 2 stood out with their strong performance, winning twice and demonstrating consistency, teamwork, and determination. I'm especially proud to share that my team was among the winners, making the experience even more memorable and rewarding.

FROM OUR *Members*

TEAM BUILDING GAMES IN CAMP ARUGA

Written By: Jennifer S. Martizano, BSN, RN
PNACC Auditor 2024-2026



At the same time, the games highlighted the natural competitiveness of Filipinos and nurses alike: driven, passionate, and eager to excel. This competitive spirit added excitement and intensity, yet remained grounded in respect, camaraderie, and shared purpose.

What made these games especially impactful was how they reflected real-life leadership dynamics. Participants practiced active listening, conflict resolution, and decision-making under pressure. These experiences mirrored the responsibilities they hold within their chapters and future professional roles, making the lessons both practical and memorable.

PNACC's role in organizing and facilitating the games was evident in the seamless flow and inclusivity of each activity. Their leadership ensured that every participant felt seen, heard, and valued. The games were not only fun but also intentional, reinforcing the Camp Aruga goals of unity, engagement, and emotional intelligence.

Ultimately, the team building activities at Camp Aruga were more than just game, they were a foundation for building stronger, more connected leaders, guided by the thoughtful efforts of PNACC.

Quantifiable Impact Statement

January 17, 2026

PNACC & PNAA Community Outreach Committee

Camiling Medical Mission – Barrio Birbira, Camiling, Tarlac, Philippines



Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026

The January 17, 2026 PNACC & PNAA Community Outreach Committee Camiling Medical Mission is recognized for exemplary humanitarian service and measurable population health impact in an underserved rural community. Through a coordinated multidisciplinary outreach effort, the mission delivered comprehensive, no-cost medical, dental, and preventive health services to 200 patients, significantly advancing access to care, disease prevention, and health education in a resource-limited setting.

Quantifiable Clinical & Financial Impact

Based on conservative global and U.S. cost benchmarks from the World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the International Dental Federation (FDI), the mission generated an estimated:

\$128,500 – \$178,750 USD in Total Community Economic Value

This estimate reflects avoided direct healthcare expenditures, early intervention savings, and prevention-related cost avoidance.

Service Breakdown & Monetary Coverage

Service Category	Volume	Avg. Benchmark Cost	Estimated Value
Primary Medical Consultations	200	\$75–\$125	\$15,000–\$25,000
Medication Distribution (acute & chronic)	200	\$50–\$100	\$10,000–\$20,000
Dental Screenings	150	\$40–\$75	\$6,000–\$11,250
Dental Extractions	25	\$150–\$300	\$3,750–\$7,500
Preventive Stroke & Chronic Disease Education	100	\$100–\$250 (cost avoidance per patient)	\$10,000–\$50,000
Alzheimer's Disease & Caregiver Education	100	\$150–\$300 (early intervention savings)	\$30,000–\$60,000
Infection & Complication Avoidance (untreated dental/medical cases)	40 high-risk cases	\$500–\$1,000	\$20,000–\$40,000
Community Support & Basic Needs (footwear, engagement activities)	100+	\$25–\$50	\$2,500–\$5,000

Quantifiable Impact Statement

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Written By: Cecilia Utleg, MSN, RN, PCCN
PNACC President 2024-2026

Total Estimated Community Economic Impact:

\$128,500 – \$178,750 USD

These figures represent conservative projections of avoided emergency visits, untreated infection progression, unmanaged chronic disease complications (stroke, hypertensive crisis), and delayed dementia identification.

Clinical Service Volume

The mission delivered approximately 650–825 total service encounters, including:

Primary medical assessments

Chronic disease management counseling

Medication therapy initiation

Dental evaluations and urgent extractions

Preventive stroke education

Alzheimer's disease and caregiver awareness sessions

This level of service delivery aligns with WHO community health outreach benchmarks and FDI dental mission productivity standards for rural health interventions.

Health Outcomes & Community Advancement

The mission addressed critical healthcare gaps by:

- Relieving acute dental pain and infection
- Preventing progression of untreated hypertension and diabetes
- Increasing stroke symptom recognition and early response awareness
- Improving Alzheimer's disease literacy and caregiver preparedness
- Enhancing medication access for underserved residents

Early education and treatment in rural populations are associated with significant reductions in preventable hospitalizations, disability, and caregiver burden—yielding long-term economic and public health benefits beyond the immediate mission day.

Quantifiable Impact Statement

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PNACC President 2024-2026

Community Engagement & Psychosocial Impact

In addition to clinical care, the mission strengthened social cohesion and community trust through:

Footwear distribution to children and vulnerable residents

Organized games and cultural dance activities

Small participation incentives to encourage engagement

These initiatives supported psychosocial well-being, dignity, and community connection—recognized determinants of overall health outcomes.

Organizational Excellence

All services were provided at no cost through collaboration among:

PNACC

PNAA Community Outreach Committee

Volunteer healthcare professionals

Local community partners

The Camiling Medical Mission demonstrates the power of compassionate, data-informed outreach to:

- ✓ Reduce preventable suffering
- ✓ Improve health literacy
- ✓ Expand access to essential care
- ✓ Generate substantial economic value
- ✓ Strengthen global nursing leadership and service impact

This initiative reflects great credit upon the organizations and professionals who served and represents a model for scalable, high-value international community health outreach.

PNACC OFFICERS *and* BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024 - 2026



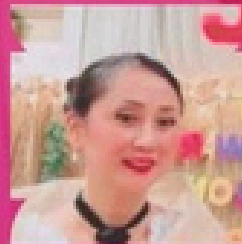
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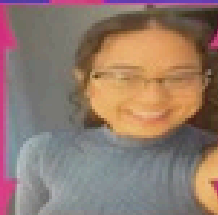
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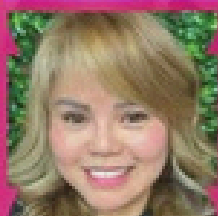
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The Grapevine

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