

'FR' writer takes a dip for charity

Written by Marilyn Abalos
Friday, 09 January 2015 19:30



Marilyn Abalos after emerging from the frigid waters of Coney Island on New Year's Day.

Special to to the Filipino Reporter

This writer dipped for dollars in the frigid waters of Coney Island on New Year's Day in New York.

I faced the 34 degrees weather together with thousands of "polar bears" and dozens of "penguins" raising monies for my Philippine high school, St. Paul's University of Manila through

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St. Paul Manila Alumnae USA.

This special fundraising campaign runs through Jan. 25, St. Paul's Feast Day.

For more info, visit <https://www.crowdrise.com/paulinepolarplunge/fundraiser/marilynabalos>.

A New York tradition, New Yorkers and visitors from all over the world converge in Coney Island and take the plunge to raise funds for charity.

I joined the "Penguins" of You Gotta Believe, a foster parent-child service group, wading the winter ocean for St. Paul.

Originally from Guam, this island girl embraced the cold, surviving a freezing 1:45 minute raising a few hundred dollars for girls in the tropical Philippines.

I am the chair of St. Paul Manila Alumnae USA and recently joined the Philippine Alumni Associations at New York's Philippine Consulate General in NYC.

With almost dripping icicles on the beach, I challenge other Philippine alumni associations to participate in 2016.

While the city slowly awakes from Rockin New Year's Eve (at least my peeps) I am en route to Coney Island to take the plunge with Polar Bears and Penguins.

It was 27 degrees this morning, Jan. 1, 2015 when I got up at 7:30 a.m.

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By the time I arrived at Coney Island at 12 noon, it was 34 degrees — a wonderful consolation knowing that I would be exposed to the elements within the hour.

It was heartwarming to see with the folks of You Gotta Believe and president Susan Grundberg at the meet up place on Mermaid Avenue.

Susan, supporters, foster parents and foster kids make up the Penguins who plunge with the Coney Island Polar Bears to benefit You Gotta Believe.

I was the lucky “extra” wearing “Pauline” colors of St. Paul of Manila!

With a surfer’s wetsuit, fisherman’s tabby shoes and diver’s gloves, I needed to supplement my outfit with green and gold.

The green mix of my woolen winter hat and a gold yellow sarong wrapped up the ensemble.

(I did want to use a gold themed Philippine Muslim Malong, but that was too fancy for the beach!)

Hordes of Polar Bears hit the beach at 1 p.m.

You’d think you were at a “walrus beaching” what with all the people lined up and down the beach.

Waddling along Mermaid Avenue to the Boardwalk, the Penguins along with one Paulinian arrived on the sand at 1:10 p.m.

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Shedding penguin feathers, people emerged in swim suits, summer trunks and even bikinis!

I was one of the few in a wetsuit et al.

I suddenly learned the meaning of “ice needles” once I dipped into the freezing waters of Coney Island.

I had actually planned to pray the rosary whilst in the frigid Atlantic.

My thinking was that each decade of the rosary would take about one minute.

However in a little while, as soon as people started to return to shore — I joined them.

I did complete the rosary sloshing in my tabbies away from the glacial deep back to our warm location on Mermaid Avenue.

With icy fingers, I was able to slide and glide on the screen of my smartphone to learn that several friends and colleagues had donated online to this New Year's Day Pauline Polar Plunge.

I was indeed warmed by their support of my dedication, my effort and my freezing fun frolic!

