

Filipino entrepreneur, professional awarded at YEPA

by By Aida E. D'Orazio; Filipiniana News, page36, March 2008

The following are the two winners for the Outstanding Young Filipino Entrepreneur and the Outstanding Young Professional Awards (YEPA), which was organized by Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT). The awards "recognize young members of the Filipino-Canadian Community who have demonstrated outstanding, innovative and consistent excellent performance in their chosen vocation or profession, while helping to promote and contribute to the advancement of Filipino-Canadians in the Canadian multi-ethnic society," according to the FCT Website.

Melchor A. Galeon

Entrepreneur, owner of FV Foods

Within a span of ten years in Toronto, Melchor A. Galeon's business acumen is nothing short of phenomenal. At 38, he owns and manages the successful FV Foods, in partnership with Flor Vendiola, for whom the acronym of the business is named.

Galeon came to Toronto as an exhibitor in the CNE in 1998. He had brought with him native sweets from his hometown, Sariaya, Quezon, and sold them successfully in the Trade Show. From then on, he decided to remain in the city, to find a place to stay and take the risk in Canada without a valid permit. It was then he met partner Vendiola, who helped him find a place to stay and later helped him with his dream of starting a business.

Although Galeon, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from the Philippines, passed the licensure exam, running a business was his passion. With a meager capital of \$500, he started making yema, ube and espasol in his apartment using Vendiola's small car to deliver the orders. From his humble beginning, the little business grew into what FV Foods has now become – a flourishing business with three wholesale and retail stores on Warden Avenue in Scarborough, on Dundas Street in Mississauga and on Bathurst Street in North York; their Filipino delicacies are also being supplied to 50 retail store all over Ontario and other provinces. His Filipino staff has grown to over 30, with some bakers were hired directly from the Philippines.

In spite of his busy schedule with the business, Galeon finds time to support various Filipino community associations and participates in their activities. He has also donated a house to an indigent family in the Philippines through Gawad Kalinga. At present, he is affiliated with the Baking Association of Canada, Sariaya Association of Ontario, Quezon Provincial Association of Canada and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce.

In one of the testimonials, Galeon's success was attributed to "dedication and love for work while keeping both feet on the ground", and as a result "he has raised the Filipino name to the level of the world's best in sweets and delicacy making."