MATCHMAKING PROJECT

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: WELFARE RESPONSE FOR THE STRANDED SEAFARERS IN MANILA
Our highly mobile and interconnected everyday lives have been drastically altered by the COVID 19 pandemic. Escalating numbers of infected cases and deaths and the need for social distancing prompted the closure of national borders and ports. Countless of migrant workers are struggling to keep safe and survive while protecting the well-being of their families back home. For Filipino seafarers, the precarity of work and life at sea has extended to shore. Since the outbreak of COVID 19 cases in February, more than 21,000 Filipino seafarers have been repatriated. Hundreds more are expected to arrive each day. With the implementation of the country’s Enhanced Community Quarantine, over 6,000 Filipino sea-based migrants are marooned in various dormitories and transient facilities located in Manila and its neighboring cities. With little to no money left in their pockets, these bagong bayani have been relying on the kindness of private individuals and assistance of a few organizations for their everyday needs including their meals.

In response to the needs of our stranded kabaro, the Gregorio Oca Leadership & Development (GOLD) Foundation Inc. initiated the crisis welfare services by providing meals to these seafarers. The “Adopt A Dorm” project intends to ensure the physical and mental well-being of the marooned sea-based migrants by providing the most basic need: hot meals. Beginning with two (2) dormitories, GOLD’s “Adopt A Dorm” scheme has served over 2,500 hot meals since April 2020. The GOLD Foundation, with its tracking and monitoring initiative, offers welfare assistance to other seafarer dormitories through its partners. Through its facility tracker, the project also assists partners and organizations maximize their resources in extending food relief to socially isolated seafarers.

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