

Special Olympics Asia-Pacific: Rudy Ungson



Rudy and daughter, Sara, Special Olympics Philippines

Having a special child entails a lot of sacrifice and faith that God will take care of His greatest blessing. I was blessed by God to have a 26 years old daughter Sara Angeli who was born with Down syndrome. When Sara was born we don't have any idea of how we can raise her just like her older brother Byron. My wife, Cenya had a hard time accepting our little angel Sara. She has fears in her heart on how we can provide Sara her medical needs and proper schooling. But God has been so good; we were able to make Sara a lovely and responsible lady she is right now.

Sara during her school days was introduced to Special Olympics when she was 12 years old. As a father, the only thing I can give her was to give my time by accompanying her whenever she has sports competition in school. I didn't know yet that it was Special Olympics since nobody from the organization approach me. What I know that this is a sports events for disabled children. It happen that on the summer of 1995 her teacher told me that Sara was nominated by the school to join in the 1995 summer Olympics games in Connecticut. That was only time that I became aware that Special Olympics is an organization providing sports training and competition. Since that time, I became involved in the training of Sara for the summer games and got in contact with the officials of Special Olympics Philippines. Sara participated in the athletic events and went home very proud when she won a silver medal in standing long jump. This encouraged me to become active Special Olympics. I volunteered my services when there are games sometimes as line keepers, referee or coach.

For the past 16 years of my involvement in SOP, it gave me the opportunity to sit in the Board and 4 years ago I took the helm of the Metro Manila National Capital Region –North as the Chapter President. Late last year, I was also elected as vice president of the Down Syndrome

Association of the Philippines. The special kids had inspired to devote my time to them by being active not only in SO but also with other organizations whose concern are special children. I was able to realized that this kids need the support of parents so that they will be given opportunity have the same dignity of a normal person through sports. During the past years when I was with the board, it provided me the chance to think of what else I can help these kids besides my time.

In the next succeeding years, I would like to give my time in opening up new chapters of Special Olympics in the provinces so that they will be given opportunities of experiencing the joys of competing, winning and losing and meeting new friends.

I hope and pray that my experiences in the global family summit will help me to pursue this great dream of mine of making the poor intellectually disabled kids have the chance to participate in sporting events and that economic conditions should not be a hindrance in the pursuit of happiness through sports.