

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DepEd promotes rights of children with special needs in Camp Pag-ibig

Camp Pag-ibig, an annual camp for children with special needs, recently marked its 32nd year focused on its goal to create more awareness and more opportunities for people with disabilities.

The camping provides an avenue for children with disabilities to socialize and integrate in the community. Among the activities were swimming, painting, nature study, cook-out, outdoor games, sports, music, dance, arts and crafts and survival skills challenges.

The two-day camp was held at the Balara Filter Plant, Quezon City and drew 3,045 participants including campers, parents, teachers, and volunteers from 55 schools in the National Capital Region and selected divisions in Region IV–A.

The Department of Education's (DepEd) Bureau of Elementary Education - Special Education Division (BEE-SPED) in coordination with the Philippine Association for the Retarded, Inc., the Quezon City Government, JCI Philippines, Quezon City Jaycees, MWSS, and Manila Water organized the event.

Thereat, Dr. Yolanda Quijano, Director of BEE launched the Organization of Self-Advocates highlighted by the election of officers who were all children with special needs.

The year's theme, "Promoting Children's Rights Through Meaningful Collaboration", lends support to the Education For All (EFA) advocacy making education accessible to all Filipinos, according to DepEd Assistant Secretary Dr. Teresita Inciong.

"The camp aims to enable children and youth with special needs to participate in wholesome and rewarding community projects. It also hopes to facilitate inclusion in meaningful social processes," Inciong added.

The term Camp Pag-ibig is used to signify the importance of love and commitment to special children in consonance with the "Love can do Wonders" principle of the Asian Federation for the Mentally Retarded.

Established in 1978, the event is conducted in observance of the National Mental Retardation Week every third week of February as part of the Philippine Decade for the Disabled and the centennial celebration of special education in the country. It strives to actively involve families in educational and social activities for children with disabilities.

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Simultaneous with the kids' activities was a parents' forum on the topics, "Rights of a Child with Disability" and "Adolescent sexuality for special learner." Fast-learning students also participated in the camp as junior camp counselors.

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For more information on Camp Pag-ibig, please contact Mirla Olores, Chief of Special Education Division, Bureau of Elementary Education of the Department of Education at 631-9993 or 631-1361 to 71 loc 2054.

Photos show children with special needs focused in camp activities.

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