

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **DepEd family unites to honor martyred principal**

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus led the whole DepEd family for a tribute to Gabriel “Bong” Canizares, a school principal in Patikul, Sulu who was kidnapped and killed by lawless elements.

Lapus gave Canizares a posthumous award for his outstanding performance as an educator. Canizares served as principal of Kan-ague Elementary School where his initiatives on harnessing community support dramatically improved the state of education in the area.

According to the DepEd chief, the DepEd family and the country as a whole mourns for his unfortunate demise. “For his supreme sacrifice, we honor his memory by renewing our commitment to the cause of education,” Lapus said.

A crystal plaque with Canizares’ photo was presented to his family. Testimonies from various teacher groups were shared including from SAGIP-GURO coalition, which was instrumental in providing an open line of communication with DepEd ARMM and the Canizares family. Songs were also rendered in his honor.

Lapus lauded the DepEd family for the spontaneous outpouring of support to the Canizares family. “This is a show of solidarity and generosity of the DepEd family that has been established through the years,” he said.

The event was held at the DepEd Central office in Pasig City with audience comprised of selected principals, superintendents, regional directors and representatives from some teacher groups. Also in attendance was Tom Crehan from USAID.

Canizares served as key catalyst in teacher trainings with Synergeia, which aims to improve the quality of education in Sulu. He served as educator for 12 years. In 2006, he was appointed Teacher-in-Charge at Kan-ague Elementary School. He died at 37.

Though he was the third from the youngest, he served as a breadwinner in the family. He provided for his nephews. From his own pocket, he provided for his teachers’ teaching supplement and instructional needs.

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