

press release

DepEd graduates 1st batch of Petron scholars

The first batch of Petron elementary scholars – all 1,137 of them from poor families - recently graduated many with top honors. It was a dream translated to reality with the partnership of Petron and the Department of Education (DepEd) through its Adopt A School Program and specially dubbed as *Tulong Aral* scholars.

The Tulong–Aral program is currently supporting some 6,000 scholars in 81 public elementary schools across Metro Manila and Mindanao. Of this number, 1,520 were recognized as outstanding scholars and 198 with first honor recognition since grade one.

The program ensures that these children learn and acquire the necessary competencies. Now on its sixth year, Petron sends an additional 1,000 children to school every year.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said, “Investing on the education of our children is a great business venture. As an enterprise, it likewise needs a huge amount of capital where contribution from the private sector is essential.”

The assistance provided by *Tulong Aral* includes children’s uniforms, books, school supplies, school projects and daily meal allowance. Remediation classes, teacher training programs and capability-building and livelihood programs for parents are also provided.

Tulong Aral is part of Petron’s umbrella program called Fuel H.O.P.E. – Helping Filipino Children Overcome Poverty through Education.

“When we started Tulong Aral six years ago, we hoped to give underprivileged children the lasting gift of education and a strong chance at a better life,” Petron Chairman and CEO Nicasio Alcantara said. “An educated child has more opportunities to find work or to start a business,” he added.

During the commencement ceremony, Petron committed an estimated P139 million for the next two years in implementing Fuel H.O.P.E. together with Landbank of the Philippines which promised P4 million to continue the scholarships for 100 selected Tulong Aral elementary graduates.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Lapus expressed his gratitude to Petron for being a major partner of DepEd. “Through this effort, we see how the coming together of stakeholders in education has indeed fueled the lives of these children...your involvement and interventions truly pave the way in realizing our vision for quality education for all”.

He added, “Children must be given all the support they need to realize their full potential as a key component in our country’s march towards progress. The Department of Education is committed towards the vision of empowering Filipinos through education.”

The Petron *Tulong Aral* Program is a major initiative under DepEd’s Adopt-A-School Program (ASP) which facilitates private-public partnerships for education. It was re-launched in September 2006 by Secretary Lapus to help generate more resources and interventions from the private sector.

In 2007, ASP generated about P4 billion worth of Memorandum of Agreement signed, commitments, pledges and actual contributions, surpassing the P2.1 billion generated by the program from the year 2000 to 2006.

For more information, interested donors and partners, contact:

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