

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Students press for respect for human rights

Rey Rovil C. Pagtalunan made a strong pitch for the respect for human rights and won the top prize in the oratorical contest held recently as part of the Department of Education's observance of Human Rights Consciousness Week.

"We teach our students respect for human rights and it is refreshing to note that the message sinks in their consciousness," Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said.

A fourth year student of the Manila Science High School, Pagtalunan said that senseless killings like what happened in Mindanao can never happen in a society where respect for the rights of others exists. "If every person is concerned about the rights of others there would be no lawlessness in our society," Pagtalunan stressed.

Meanwhile, a student from the Manuel Luis Quezon High School in Caloocan City took the second place. Mark Justine Aguillon is of strong conviction that "genuine respect for human rights is the key where proper action springs from in order for men to experience democracy, peace, and progress which are the essence of decent living."

Matthew Rico Valencia from the Quezon City High School won the third prize. He shared his views on human rights, thus: "...when we formed society and created government, we had rights that we did not surrender or relinquished to government based on the philosophy of the social contract theory... they are constitutional rights laid down by man."

Out of the 15 divisions of the DepEd National Capital Region, nine participated with their piece anchoring on the celebration's theme "Respect for Human Rights: Key to Democracy, Peace and Development."

The annual celebration is mandated under Republic Act 9201 wherein DepEd is a member of the national committee, together with government agencies like the Commission on Human Rights, Civil Service Commission, Department of National Defense, Department of Justice, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Interior and Local Government, and Philippine National Police.

The committee is tasked to lead in the preparation and implementation of guidelines on how to celebrate the occasion through simple and appropriate activities. These activities are aimed at propagating, particularly among students, a human rights culture for a sustainable development in the country.

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