

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **OSY work opportunities make parents, LGUs happy**

An employment project which taps out-of-school youth (OSY) in Tarlac and Pampanga has made local government units and parents happy for making an otherwise idle youth productive.

Tarlac City Mayor Genaro Mendoza has expressed his appreciation to the emergency employment project which gave his poor constituents a chance to cope with the economic crisis.

"We thank President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the Department of Education for the employment opportunity which this project has opened in our community," said Mendoza.

The Out-of-School Youth Servicing Towards Economic Recovery or OYSTER emergency employment program deployed OSYs to schools for maintenance and cleanliness projects. It is being implemented by the Department of Education based on the directive of President Arroyo.

Education Secretary Jesli Lopus was assigned steward of Tarlac and Pampanga and given instruction by President Arroyo to implement pro-poor programs in all regions to mitigate the effects of the global economic crisis.

Beginning November, DepEd has sent some 1,500 OSYs as utility workers in public schools while more than 12,300 OSYs will soon start the production of health soaps for school children. They come from the districts or barangays where the schools are located.

Mother of seven Lilia Escoto is from Tarlac. Her seventeen year old son, Sandy, has been included as one of the utility workers in 1,200 elementary and high school under the Divisions of Angeles City, Pampanga, San Fernando City, Tarlac and Tarlac City.

Sandy stopped schooling because his parents cannot afford to send him to school. "Thanks to this project, my son has something productive to do and we will have something to spend for the holidays," Escoto shared.

DepEd Assistant Secretary Thelma Santos added that the OSYs help prevent dengue in the schools as they clean the surroundings and destroy the breeding grounds of mosquitoes.

Meanwhile, under the cash-for-health-care livelihood project, some 12,300 OSYs are expected to start producing bars of Citronella, Acapulco/Guava, and Calamansi soap in January 2009. They have already been trained on how to

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prepare the medicinal soap as formulated by the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care (PITAHC).

Lapus has also called for an intensified partnership between DepEd and local government units as the department increases its efforts at OSY mapping. He sounded the call to LGU partners to assist DepEd in promoting alternative education especially at the barangay level. "Help us identify out --of -- school youth in your area so that we can bring them back to school," he stressed.

The education chief has urged the out-of-school youth to find a role model in People's Champ Manny Pacquiao who is DepEd's poster boy for its Bureau of Alternative Learning System. "Despite his success, he chose to continue and finish school. *Tularan ninyo si Manny*," Lapus added.

Lapus also stressed that OYSTER not only help the students but the entire community as well. I must thank the parents for supporting this project, and their children for joining this employment program."

Mayor Mendoza added that "this is the first time an employment program under DepEd has been launched. We thank President Arroyo and DepEd Secretary Lapus for prioritizing our OSYs."

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