

Flaming Passion: Our Nation's Hope

By: Alexis M. Martinez

18 year old, Alexis Martinez dreams of becoming a doctor someday. She is currently taking up Biology at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

Alexis wants to share the blessings of her family's current status to those that need caring and healing. She believes that her father's sacrifices should be enough to make one child like her wanting to stay in this country and do what she can to help others. This early, Alexis saves part of her school allowance to support a child to school through The World Vision Foundation.

We all have a role in building our nation because we are a part of it. And just like in constructing different buildings, it takes a step by step process. As a child of an overseas Filipino workers, I believe that my primary role in building the nation is to study. As a daughter I should learn how to value my parent's sacrifices. I was just 3 years old when my father worked abroad. he worked there so that we could have the opportunity to reach our dreams. I remembered that every time he goes home, I would ask him "Tama na po ba ang naipon ninyo?Magsasama na po ba tayo?". My father would always tell me "Konting sakripisyo pa anak, pareang naman ito sa pag-aaral ninyo. Kaya pagbutihin ninyo ang inyong pag-aaral dahil ito lang ang maipapamana naming sa inyo". These are the words that I carried up to now. And as the eldest, I was taught to have the greatest responsibility because I would serve as an example for my brother and my sister. These words together with the dream that we could all be together serve as an inspiration for me to study harder.

As I mature, another thing added to my inspirations. And these happened in the fourth quarter of the year 2007. As I walk through the busy streets of Manila and into the Philippine General Hospital, I hear cries of little angels coming from Ward 11. A pediatric ward was ready to welcome me. I stopped at bed number 38 and lying on that bed is a child that was described to have a spinal injury. Moreover, I was stunned as I saw a child that has a tube connected to his throat in order to aid him in breathing. I approached him but I was never sure if I should welcome him with a smile or show great pity on him. But as I approached him, I felt a light spirit in his smile. And immediately welcomed an adorable boy into my life. I introduced myself and he replied with a sweet smile and said "Kenneth". My heart leaped in joy as I saw simplicity in him. I remember that he only wishes to be healed in the past Christmas celebration. This was a life-changing experience for me. "Others" existed and I believe that this is the greatest influence why I am now determined to become a doctor. I realized that there are lots of people who needed help. And meeting Kenneth made me realize the need of the people.

I was trained by my parents to be independent and responsible. They gave full support in every endeavor I take. And I'm grateful that they showed me this because it fueled me to do my best in school. I've been blessed and fortunate to be a government scholar ever since I was in high school. And as a government scholar the current thing I can do to express my gratitude to the government is to study

hard. As a scholar, I was always reminded that I should give my one hundred percent effort because the money they spent on us is the hard-earned money of the Filipino people.

I also believe that as a child of an OFW, one of my role in building the nation is to help and care for the people. As an OFW child, I consider myself as blessed and fortunate because I had enough in order for me to eat three meals a day as well as go to school without any problem in my allowance. And for this, it would be fulfilling to share my blessings. I would always ask myself how I could help without money. But then, I realized that there are other ways to help people. It may not be financial help, but I could help people through voluntary works. I once joined a medical mission and I would be glad to volunteer again. I also joined a feeding program that made me happy because the people were telling they were grateful to have us. I would visit Kenneth once a month in the hospital, and I'd be there to accompany him in drawing, making greeting cards and story-telling. I may not assist him financially, but he was thankful that I came to spend my time with him. These little things may not be appreciated but I am fulfilled to have done these. And I believe that these things, though it may be small, will always make a difference in our nation. And as I get involve in different voluntary works, I learn to love my country and my fellow countrymen. I learn to appreciate our country with its rich culture. And most of all I learn how to give selfless service. And with this, I learn how to save money not for the material things that could make me happy but I learn how to save money in order to help a child go to school through World Vision. And it also made me realize the real value of happiness that I could find by learning to love not only my family but also other people.

As a child of an expat pinoy, I believe that I should be a good citizen of the country. This is the role that everyone should pay. Throwing my trash in the proper place helps to build the nation. It builds the discipline of the people. If People's mindset would change to, "I'd throw my trash in the right place so that I could be a good example to others", I think our country would be a better place. When people see these things again and again, they get use to it and eventually they learn how to dispose trash correctly. Fake DVD-selling is another different issue. These are everywhere. And there are times that, you could already find the movies you wanted to watch before you could view it in cinemas. These things are hard to resist because they are cheap. In just a hundred pesos you could probably buy two 20-in-n movies. But these things are wrong, as much as we wanted to buy those fake DVDs, we should set our mind that it is a form of stealing. We should always be reminded that if we want a clean government, we should be honest citizens. Some people say "Palitan ang sistema", but these can't be possible if we don't begin with ourselves. We should stand for what is right and continue to aim for a corrupt-free environment.

As an OFW child, one of the lessons I've learned form my parents is to learn the value of money. They always tell me "Hindi napupulot ang pera, pinaghihirapan naming ito". And as a citizen of this country, I believe that I could help in nation building through acts of conservation. Small things such as using electricity efficiently could help our nation because these reduce the energy that the country needs. Moreover, by recycling papers, I know I could save our Mother Nature. These may be a small thing, but if everyone thinks that they could help by doing such simple things. There would be a big difference. Through this, not only do I help in building the nation but also in conserving our natural resources.

I also believe that in building our nation, one should believe that there will always be hope for our country. One should trust that everything can change. I always hear people saying “Wala ng pag-asa ang Pilipinas”, but I think as long as there are people who believe that our country still have hope to progress there will always be hope. Our country needs great minds to stay. And as an OFW child, I believe that my father’s work abroad is enough and that I am here to stay. Staying here is also my way to express how thankful I am to receive scholarships from the government.

I want to become a doctor and serve my *kababayan*. It is a great burden for me to see people especially children die due to untreated diseases. Yes, it is undeniable that the Philippines lack facilities in government hospitals. But the greatest problem of all is public service. Though our country has many brilliant doctors, it lacks the calling of “service to the Filipino people”. Many doctors go to different countries and work as doctors and some doctors even take up nursing just to be a nurse abroad. But I could never blame them because I believe that it is really difficult to stay when great opportunities are in the way. Staying means to sacrifice and give selfless service. There is a lack of passion to serve in our motherland. I want this to change and I know that it all starts within. Doctors are here to give hope, save life and render public service in our country and this is my flaming passion.

The progress of our nation is in our hands. It is in the people who lead the nation. It is in the old population and the working population. It is in the youth. It is in everyone. We are all part of the nation. We are the builders of our nation. And the hope for a better future lies in each and everyone.