



Republic of the Philippines
Province of Camarines Norte
DAET

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



M E S S A G E

Kudos to the Autism Recovery Network of the Philippines (ARNP), Inc. for coming up with this Virtual Autism Conference, another 'big' undertaking it accomplished amidst its significantly 'small' resources. Allow me to particularly thank its President, Ms. Marilou Lagdameo-Park, who selflessly and devotedly keep the ARNP going for almost ten (10) years now since its SEC registration in August 12, 2012.

What started as a mere autism advocacy in 2010 to help other parents cope with the challenges of raising children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), became Ms. Park's endless journey along with ARNP's supportive members and program partners from both the public and private sectors.

Little did I know about ASD but as a father and a grandfather and as the seating Governor of the Province of Camarines Norte, it is my wish that ARNP reach the finish line of triumphs and victories for the good and welfare of our beloved children with ASD.

Per data available, 1 out of every 500 Filipino children are estimated to have ASD, and 1 in every 54 children in the United States ok. This is very alarming and equally challenging not only for the affected families but the governments who must take the initiatives to protect the rights of and, expand and make the benefits available to the persons with autism and their families. Please be assured of my active support in your various initiatives through the Provincial Disability Affairs Office (PDAO) and the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO).

Like any ordinary citizens, individuals with ASD also deserve to live a normal life. Instead of avoiding them, let us lovingly embrace them; appreciate rather than neglect them. They need to be loved and their skills, knowledge and potentials developed to the fullest level possible as they too have a purpose in this lifetime. Let us always bear in mind that they too have extraordinary skills and potentials that only needs to be nurtured so as they come out of their own cocoons they can metamorphose into wonderful, great individuals spreading their wings fully and fly as far as they can go until they reach their own places at their own paces and get their respective spaces in the communities they live in, so to speak.

Allow me to name some famous personalities with ASD like TEMPLE GRANDIN, HEATHER KUZMICH, DARYL HANNAH, DAN AYKROYD, and ALBERT EINSTEIN. GRANDIN is a professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University and author of several books like 'Thinking in Pictures' and 'The Way I See It'. KUZMICH is America's Next Top Model Contestant who ended up in Top 5; HANNAH, a Hollywood actress, and AYKROYD a comedic actor whose obsession with ghosts and law enforcement resulted to Ghostbuster movie series.

Hence, let us work together to establish an ASD-friendly Camarines Norte where all persons with **AUTISM** live in a happy, loving, secured and safe environment as **A**ble-minded individuals with **U**nique intelligence, abilities and talents; **T**True persons with extreme temperament manageable with extreme acknowledgment of their needs and conditions; **I**ncomprehensively distinct individuals whose **S**imple wants and genuine innocence further **M**otivate and inspire us to lead a purpose-driven life as abled members of society best to promote the good and welfare of persons with ASD so they can be equally competent individuals and catalysts of societal change and development in the likes of Grandin, among others.

To the ARNP community, congratulations and may your tribe increase!

EDGARDO A. TALLADO
Governor