

“Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For indeed, that’s all who ever have.”

Margaret Mead

A TIME TO CARE, A TIME TO HOPE

Care is the first of Arlington’s four core values, imbibed by the Arlington family for nearly four decades. No less than its founder, Nestor Lopez Jose, role-modelled the behaviors of caring. His children, grandchildren and employees have carried on this legacy of caring in Arlington.

Caring has warmed the hearts of many sick, hungry, and disoriented people and gave them hope for a better tomorrow. The global covid-19 pandemic created health, economic, and social crises all over. But trying times were far more challenging in developing countries like the Philippines. To show its core value of caring, Arlington launched three projects in 2020 namely: (1) The Online Garage Sale, (2) the Yuletide Remembrance Tree Zoom Concert, and (3) The Care Pillow. These three projects pulled together the expertise and caring culture of its employees, the owners, the client families and the community at large.

PROJECT 1: THE ONLINE GARAGE SALE

The online garage sale was conceptualized by a Human Resource employee who wanted to help others during this pandemic. Working from home made her realize that she had new and old (pre-loved) items at home that could still be of use to others. She rallied her co-employees in HR to do the same. This gave her a sense of fulfillment and hope amid a disheartening situation.

The HR department then spearheaded the campaign by asking Arlington employees, consultants and contractors to donate items. After all the items were gathered and tagged, everyone in the company was invited to join the first online garage sale via zoom. The garage sale was held on December 15, 2020 at 4 in the afternoon. The proceeds of Twenty thousand pesos (US\$400) were donated to the Caring Circle program, a Facebook group that offers weekly group support sessions under the Reintegration for Care & Wholeness of RCW Foundation, Inc. in Quezon City.

RCW Foundation has been an advocate of inner wellness for the past 20 years. This organization is a safe haven for life - carers who are in need of healing, transformation, empowerment and support. The group answered the call for an individual’s inner wellness, growth and transformation. This is the same value of caring that Arlington Memorial Chapels has continued to nurture since its founding 39 years ago.

The online garage sale was a success. The Arlington family and its stakeholders believed that supporting a foundation that helped people care for their mental health is even more vital now in our world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. Arlington employees realized that caring for

others outside of its business goes a long way and gives much needed hope in a sea of despair. The culture of caring in Arlington was enriched by the proactive participation of its employees even if some of them have been badly hit by the pandemic.

PROJECT 2: YULETIDE REMEMBRANCE TREE CELEBRATION 2020

Better Together: A Fundraising Online Concert

In 2002, Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc. launched its first Yuletide Remembrance Tree. In loving memory of all those who have passed on, it was the company's hope to offer light and comfort through the annual gathering—bringing families together in the spirit of Christmas. This is a tradition that we have continued for 17 years. When the pandemic hit, and the circumstances seemed to get more dreadful with each passing day, we deemed it even more necessary to keep the tradition alive and to foster care and compassion within the community.

Although physical gatherings were impossible at the moment, we continued to believe that it is always better when we're together. Like many others who have had to shift to online platforms, it decided to bring this longstanding tradition online.

Better Together: A Yuletide Remembrance Celebration took place on December 16, 2020 at 6pm, via Zoom. In line with our the yuletide tradition, the event was a fundraising initiative, the proceeds of which were donated to displaced workers due to the pandemic as well as victims of Typhoon Ulysses (international name: Vamco) through "For The Future PH" and "Para Kay Kuya PH."

The online concert featured respected Filipino artists like Ms. Joey Albert, The Company, Gab Pangilinan from "El Bimbo: The Musical" and Jobim Javier from "Heto Na! Musikal Napo!" The powerhouse of talents encouraged audience members to attend the event via Zoom and to donate through the QR codes, which were flashed throughout the entirety of the event.

With multiple limitations due to the online nature of the event, we had to find ways to be creative in order to bring the feeling and excitement of attending a live performance to the Zoom gathering. We had a member of the 3rd generation of the Jose family host the event live to introduce the performers and have conversations with them about how the pandemic changed their lives and why this event's cause meant a lot to them as well. We also sent some audience members and sponsors grazing boxes and wine for them to enjoy the online concert from the comfort of their own homes.

The back-end preparations involved utilizing Zoom as the main platform, with the support of OBS (Open Broadcaster Software) – a free and open source software for live-streaming. This helped make the online concert a much more engaging experience for the audience members - allowing it to be more than just the usual video boxes we had grown accustomed to over the course of time that we had started using Zoom. The team also used Zoom's option to stream the concert to both our Facebook and YouTube pages. A member of the Arlington and Jose family directed the program to ensure the smooth flow of the show.

With the support and generosity of the our performers and donors, we were able to raise a total of Php180,000.00 (US\$3,700) for OUR hardest hit Filipino brothers and sisters who lost their livelihood due to the pandemic and those who were victims of the Typhoon Ulysses.

The project had given the technical team who worked on the show a feeling of pride and fulfillment as they realized that the founder's legacy of kindness and sympathy for other people lives on.

BETTER TOGETHER: Yuletide Remembrance Celebration 2020

<https://youtube/8o2jU4Suhna>

Better Together AVP:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09Xy7I-C2o>

PROJECT 3: THE CARE PILLOW

With the current situation where everyone has been battling with the hardships brought about by the pandemic, people always seek comfort, care and consolation. One of the comforts that they miss is giving and receiving hugs to and from loved ones.

The Arlington family thought that giving pillows was like sending hugs, love and support to people. Small pillows were made that people can easily carry with them and hug anytime they would want to. The pillows had a picture of a teddy bear with an "I Care" note on its chest to remind anyone who received it that the person who gave this pillow cares for him or her.

This is a yearlong project that was started on Valentine's Day. The pillow cost was two hundred fifty pesos (Php 250.00) or roughly \$5.00 each. This is given to anyone who needs that care and hug symbolized by the pillow.

The first batch of pillows were given to some medical healthcare workers who served as frontliners during the pandemic. This was Arlington's way of honoring and showing appreciation for their hard work, sacrifice and dedication. Others were given to nuns who could no longer go out of the convent. Some were given to family members who needed to feel the love and physical care that they missed through this challenging times.

Sending someone a Care Pillow conveys our emotional reassurance to people that we appreciate and cherish them. The past year had truly been a challenge for everyone all over the world, mental health took a front seat as unemployment soared. People were not ready to lose a loved one to a sickness that surprised not only our nation but the whole world. Being in the funeral industry does not exempt us from the events and chaos that happened.

These three projects have not only brought the company together. It has also given hope to people who are undergoing mental health problems, lost their jobs and houses or even lost a loved one during this pandemic. Arlington hopes that these projects can be replicated by other communities in order to pass on the love and care that people so desperately need during this pandemic.

“ In the same light, going back to our core values helped us realize the importance we have in our community. This helped us make sure we are doing our share in making our country and the world a better place to live in during these extraordinary times.”

Your Arlington family