SAIPAN TRIBUNE FRIDAY, MAY 7, 2021

## Celebrating this Moment

# Being a MOM is life changing

eing a mother completely changes your life and always for the better as you will adore every single minute of it. There is no overload of kisses, tight hugs, sweet gestures, or even woes and cries because the love between mother and child is unconditional and will surpass any circumstance or challenge. We talked to four amazing mothers that does just that.

Doemiko Flores, a behavior analyst who specializes in therapy for children with autism and had just moved from Richmond, Virginia, to Saipan with her husband, Albert, and their three children, was faced with an different kind of challenge last year when her husband was unexpectedly deployed for an entire year for military duty in Afghanistan. Raising small children—Miriam, 5, Thomas, 4, and Scarlett, 2—on her own during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic had its own set of challenges but Flores made it work. She also never fails to see the special moments in their every day life.

"The thing I love the most about being a mother, besides the hugs that wrap around my neck so tight and squishy kisses, is watching my children experience amazing things for the first time. To see their excitement at something that might be so mundane to me since I am used to it brings a renewed excitement for me," she said.

Docomo Pacific executive Michelle Atalig keeps the right balance with her family life, career and sport, cycling. She recognizes the influence that she got from her own mom: "The greatest gift you can give your children is your presence and hold dearly the memories that come with it."

"The thing I love most about being a mom is experiencing unconditional love like no other. I feel this sense of purpose and responsibility to give my children safety, love, security, and support their growth and health in every way possible. While I feel so blessed to be a mommy to Aiden and Penelope, I thank my husband, Charlie, for being my partner in this journey of parenthood. My children remind me to stay present, to see things from a different perspective and to appreciate life's little

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Michelle Atalig and her husband, Charlie, and their children.



Olivia Fernandez with her mini-me daughters.

moments," she said.

Olivia Fernandez, housewife and mother to Fiona, 13, and Freja, 7, admits that she had a reputation in high school and college that she never liked being around children, leading her closest friends to think that she will probably not get married and have children.

"Yes, I used to find them so annoying and thought we might compete getting my husband's attention. I was immature like that and that has passed. As soon as my first daughter was born, I fell in love with her right away," she said. "Your children will complete you. You will become

selfless and, yes, a mother's instinct is very real. I gave up my job so I can focus on my girls as they give me so much joy. Now I think my children are the ones competing with my husband for my attention (laughs) but he's fine with it."

Lani Meyer, a professional photographer and fashion stylist from Austin, Texas, is a mom of two boys—a 26-month-old and an almost 6 monthold. She treats every day as a surprise rearing her boys.

"Being a mom is incredibly challenging and there are so many tears and frustrations but it's also very fulfilling



Tina Zamora with husband, Raffy, and their chil-CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Lani Meyer with her boys.

**CONTRIBUTED PHOTO** 

with lots of joys and laughter. It's fun to see my child, who's half me and half the person I love, grow into a tiny human being with his own personality and opinions. Every day is a treat as I have no idea what I'm getting for the day! One of the best things is having a role in shaping them and I am reminded of the verse in Proverbs 22:6, which says 'Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he grows older he will not abandon it," she said. "It's amazing but also scary to be part of that process, to have the opportunity to help them grow one day into strong, kind and godly men what a contribution it would be! That's more long term, but for now, the best thing about being a mom would be the

hugs, kisses, and snuggles and thinking you're the coolest and funniest person they know."

Real estate executive Tina

Zamora, a mother of three girls, loves being a mom and part of it is taking in every moment with her children. "I don't want to miss a thing. ...On my days off and when I come home after being consumed at work, these are the moments that I cannot wait to hug and kiss my children. I actually think it is not fair for them that I depend on them for

strength," she said, laughing. "But I love it the most when I spend time with them, may it be playtime, Netflix or chill time, church time, school time, park time and when I feed and give them a bath. I love watching them grow and taking care of them. It is a bliss being able to witness happy and sad times

and experiencing all of that with them."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Doemiko Flores spends quality time with her

children at Bird Island.



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By BEA CABRERA

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Whether apart by merely a mile to thousands of miles away, the connection between a mother and child will always be strong and indivisible. But appreciating mom on Mother's Day is never not on their list. Saipan Tribune talks to Saipan born and raised individuals who are currently off island for school

or work and starting to build on their future.

Tania Tan, who graduated from Saipan International School in 2019 and is now based in New York where she is pursuing a degree at Fordham University, goes home whenever her schedule allows. She likes to think that her mom, Lydia, is also her

best friend and that bond is undeniable. When you see them together, one cannot tell that they are a motherdaughter team.

"Last time I was with mom was a few months ago. When apart, we keep in touch through weekly FaceTime calls and daily text messages. She's basically my

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

various tournaments abroad

and the first CNMI-born soc-

cer player to play at the U.S. National Collegiate Athletic

Association. He continues to pursue his passion for foot-

ball as he steps up to the

plate to be the new team

captain of the NMI Men's

National Team. He lives in

Northern Kentucky, recently



Tania Tan with her mom, Lydia.

best friend and is really good at cooking, so I miss her food (laughs). My favorite thing is going running or biking with her because we like a lot of the same things so we can do those things together," she said.

According to Tan, one life lesson that she will carry all her life is her mother's strength. "She never gives up and perseveres even through tough times. She's also good in doing things with confidence, which I lack. ... I miss and love her so much. I can't wait to see you mom and Happy Mother's Day!"

Mt. Carmel School graduate Enrico Del Rosario, who was a dominant football player during high school, represented the CNMI in

earned his bachelor's degree this year from Northern Kentucky University and, according to him, his mother, Beth, always taught him to work hard and persevere. "I've been away for about five years on and off but I keep in touch by messaging them online and by video chatting. I really don't like being away from my mom. Personally I did not have separation anxiety but I definitely miss her. My advice is to just talk to your mom as much as you can and call her when you have time," he said. "Something very important I learned from my mom was to always work hard and do

my best in everything that I

do. This is memorable for me because it has helped me

with different things in life

such as sports, my studies,

and in my job." Enrico and Beth enjoy deep conversations shared with each other. "Just spending time with her is always nice. ... My favorite thing to do with my mom is to just sit down and talk about different things. I love it when she shares her wisdom in life, especially when she was growing up because it See LOVE on Next Page



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Asia Hilario with her mother, Lucille. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### **LOVE**

From Page 12

is inspiring," he said. "I thank her for everything that she has done for me and my brother. Thank you for always supporting me and believing in me no matter what. Because of you, I have the vision to reach for my dreams and the grit to push through the challenges that are in my way. I love you, I will forever appreciate you!"

Born and raised on Saipan, Asia Camacho Hilario is currently in Silicon Valley, California. She is making waves and gaining popularity as a self-love coach, focuses on women empowerment, is a mental health and wellness podcaster (The Glow Up Season Podcast), philanthropist and crisis counselor for Crisis Textline Lucille, which named after her mother.

"My mom always taught me to give back to my community, no matter what you have and what point in life you are. We have to pay it forward and help those in need, whether it be volunteering, educating, raising awareness, fundraising, anything to give back to the less fortunate. I remember when I was a little girl, I tagged along with her everywhere she went and when she did things for her community," she said.

"Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I've only seen my parents once in the last year. I normally see them maybe two to four times a year but we keep in touch via Group Chat and Group FaceTime. My top love languages are physical touch and quality time, so not being able to

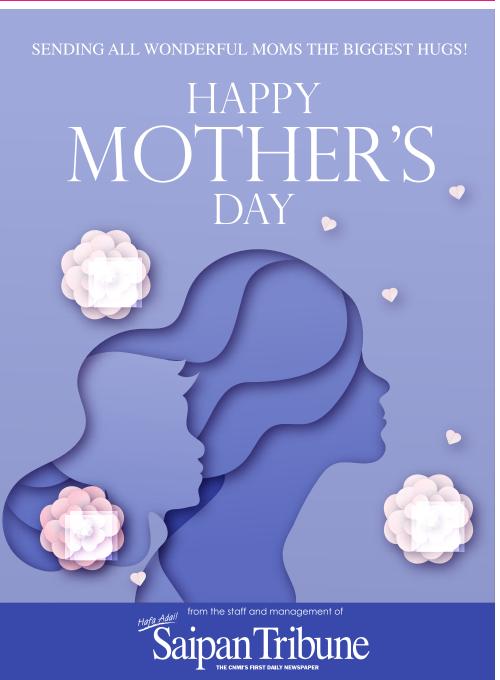
hug my mom and hang out with her is tough," she added.

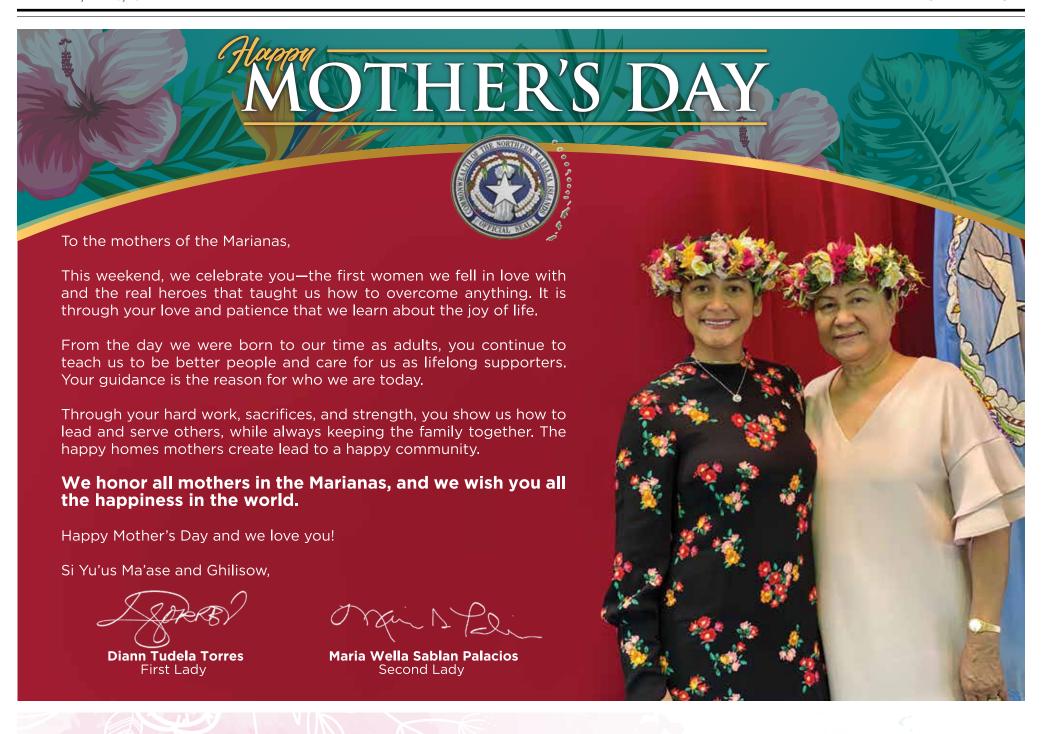
One thing that Hilario shares with her mom is a loves of dance. "I always film her dancing and everyone on my Instagram and Facebook always laugh. We love to make people laugh and I definitely get my sense of humor from her. ... To keep the connection, the advice I can give to mothers and daughters who are separated is to never underestimate the power of a simple phone call or FaceTime. Schedule those often and even add them to vour calendar.

"Mom, thank you so much for instilling hard work and passion in me. You always taught me that beauty is on the inside and my big heart is a reflection of yours. I'm changing the world every day because of it. Love and miss you, Queen!"



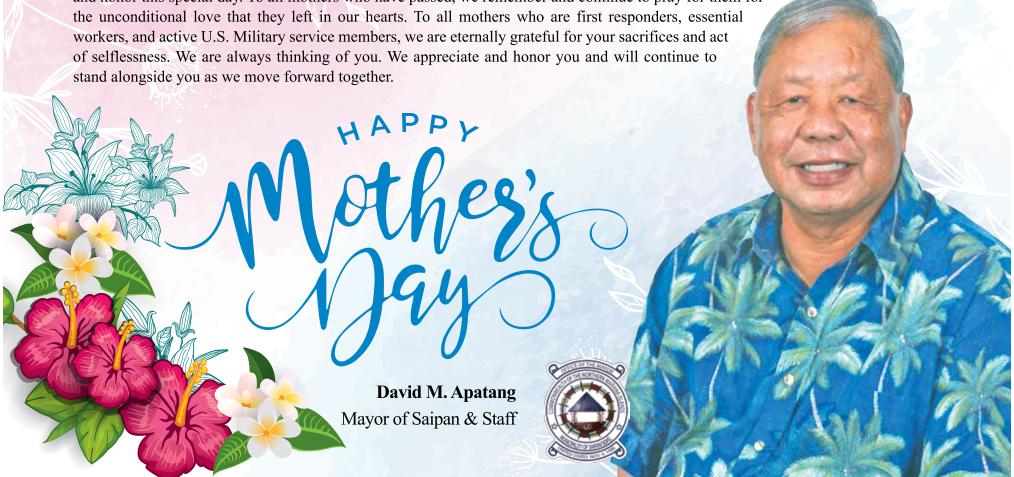






The love of a mother is immeasurable. The comfort inside the home she cares for and watches over ensures a healthy and loving family. Every person that comes into her home comes back time and again, never venturing far away or staying away for long periods of time. Our moms symbolize strength, knowledge, resilience, love, and authority. They are the pillars that represents all that we are today.

To our mothers, thank you for all that you do to help keep us together as a family. Today and every day, we thank and appreciate you all. Because of the guidelines on the pandemic, Mother's Day may be a little different for many of us this year. But because our mothers taught us great things, we must stay strong and find alternative ways to stay connected with our mothers to mark and honor this special day. To all mothers who have passed, we remember and continue to pray for them for the unconditional love that they left in our hearts. To all mothers who are first responders, essential



or bring in food because it is a

way to celebrate and represent the different cultures at our

By BEA CABRERA beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com CORRESPONDENT

While the whole world celebrates Mother's Day on Sunday, Brilliant Stars School on Navy Hill celebrated their annual "International Day" last week.

According to principal Steven Beyer, it was an opportunity for teachers and students to talk about how diverse the CNMI community is and a good way to get more information about one's and other's traditional or cultural background.

"It sparks conversations. ... It gives the students a neat view of the different cultures in the school and the conversation extends when the students go home too. ... Because of the pandemic, we couldn't have a big celebration that the school has had in the past...but we will do it again next year like we always do every year and I think it is a great tradition. It's good for the school and kind of let the children show off where they come from," he said.

Lindsay Davis, who has been a teacher at Brilliant Star for 16 years, said that International Day is a staple tradition at their school. "We have done different things with it in the past. Sometimes we turn it into a whole week, play different games from around the world,

## The world celebrates Mother's Day







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#### **Monika's Furniture Saipan**

Complete mom's special wardrobe with unique accessories. Carefully crafted pearls and jewelry are available at Monika's Furniture Saipan on Beach Road. Avail of their Mother's Day and storewide sale starting today until tomorrow from 10am to 6pm. For more information, call (670) 233-4402 or email monikasgallery@hotmail.com



Monika's Furniture Saipan

#### **Mariana Nails**

Pamper mom from head to toe at Mariana Nails along Middle Road. Gift certificates are available for services that include manicure service—express mani for only \$12 and gel mani for only \$16. They also have acrylic French tip, gel polish, acrylic refill and gel extension. They also offer eyelash extensions and body waxing. They are open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 8pm. For more information, call (670) 234-8088 or email cnminails@outlook.com.



Mariana Nails

#### All Star/Boarderline

For the outgoing and adventurous mothers out there, All Star/ Boarderline Store in Garapan have what you are looking for to get ready for that next hike, race, or run. Enjoy 20% discount on May 8 -9 on all YETI items, including their 20 oz. tumbler, 46 oz bottle, 14 oz mug and Yeti Can Insular. For the great outdoors, enjoy Neso products, Quay sunglasses and Under Armour rubber shoes. All Star/Boarderline is open Monday to Sunday from 10am to 8pm. For more information, call (670) 233-7588 or (670) 233-4653. Look them up on Instagram: Boarderline 670 and FaceBook: All Star Sporting Goods.



All Star/Boarderline Store

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#### **Maganda Utang** (Home Fashion)

Redecorate mom's bedroom or living room with lovely and quality items from Maganda Utang in Garapan. Known for giving discounts to new and long time customers, owner Moon Haeng Lee is offering 20% discount on select items on May 8. They are open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 7pm. For more information, call (670) 233-1525.



Maganda Utang fitted bed sheets and pillow covers

BEA CABRERA

"To all mothers, stay strong, focused and continue to be positive. If you fall off the wagon, do not deteriorate and get back on it. With the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and stimulus checks that have come in, save up because our economy faces uncertainty and

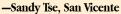


it is always good that we have savings. Practice, preach to others and do not be complacent doing the 3 W's (wear a mask, wash your hands, watch your distance). I am actually glad that, since mothers are always home with the children, they have taken up school again or are pursuing higher learning. Keep it up, pursue your goals in spite of what is going on and never stop learning. I believe that when there is

a strong woman in the household, the house will always stand, is clean, and the children are obedient and kind."

-Janice Tenorio, Customer Service manager and Government Relations manager, IT&E

"Mothers are superwomen. They work double time to take care of the children, help with home schooling and juggle work and their careers. I know they are doing the best that they can so keep it up, moms!"







"When my daughter was growing up I had to juggle my time with taking care of her and working. After work I had to hurry home to help her with homework. But things are different now and I'm glad my daughter is now an adult. I've seen mothers struggle with the same things I did but more so because of the pandemic. I give props, support and admiration to the mothers today."

—Lou Camacho, Koblerville

"My mom passed away a year ago and this is our first Mother's Day without her. ... I miss her but we are going to honor her by remembering her. I can share with other mothers what my own mom taught me, [like] life lesson at home—'Always be kind' and 'Do not talk about anyone behind their back.' At work, she always said to just do the right thing and do your best all the time."



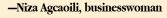
-Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente



"As a mom, we want to keep the family safe and for sure this is the priority of every mother. So I say to them, 'Stay strong [and] think of your health. You need to be strong and healthy for your family.' Resiliency of families is key especially during this pandemic and we want to be able to fight it. I continue to encourage not only the mothers but parents to get vaccinated. Soon, even children 12- 15 years old hopefully will be able to get the Pfizer vaccine, which is good news."

-Esther Muña, CEO, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

"Two of my children are young adults... and one is still in grade 12. My heart smiles every time I hear them call my name...because it makes me feel needed and loved. This pandemic, we all need supermom power and what better way to get this but from the loving gestures that our children shows us."





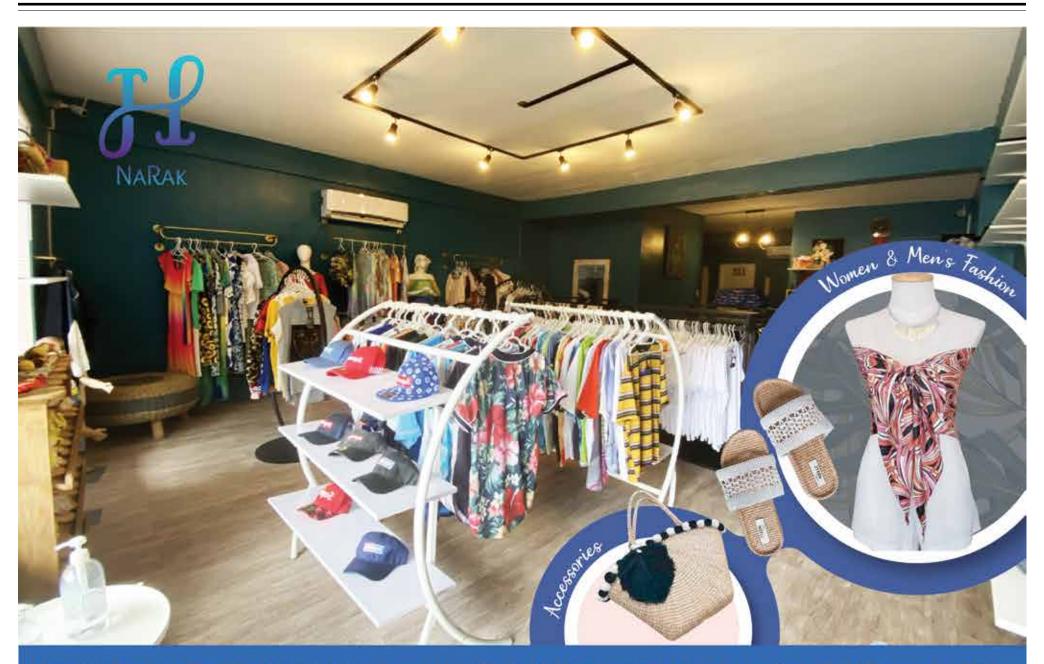
# Mons encourage other mons

By BEA CABRERA beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com

We rise by lifting others. That truism is especially important amid the COVID-19 pandemic, for mothers to encourage and empower other mothers at a time when social interaction is limited. Hearing positive words from people who understands what you are going through can joy and hopefully lessen any burden.







Location: San Jose, Oleai (Next to Atkins Kroll, Across Mobil Station) | Store Hours: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. (Mon - Sat) | Contact: 488-0617



Design Flower and Gift Shop gears up for



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Design Flower and Gift Shop's Mother's Day gift baskets.

#### By MARK RABAGO

mark\_rahago@saipantribune.com ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Design Flower and Gift Shop is gearing up for literally the mother of all occasions by offering discounts and free delivery on Mother's Day this Sunday, May 9.

Operations manager Fhe Gamab said the flower shop at the Cabrera Center along Beach Road has slashed 10% off its very popular Mother's Day gift baskets and free delivery for purchases in excess of \$100.

"Mother's Day means so much to our business because Mother's Day is an occasion that is celebrated in various parts of the world, not only to sell flowers but to express respect, honor, and love to our mothers. It's a day that makes each one of us remember the importance and significance of the mothers in our lives and is observed as a day to give special emphasis to the motherly figures around the world," she told Saipan Tribune.

Gamab said their Mother's Day gift baskets have been a hit these past few Mother's Day celebrations since they include everything a mother would love. It also helps that it's quite practical. "Our gift basket consists of mostly motherly selections like crackers, spreads, different kinds of aroma tea, coffee, juices, cooking stuff, bath stuff, and the likes."

Design Flower and Gift

Shop's Mother's Day gift baskets hover around the \$75 price range, but Gamab said she and her staff can always customize them to their customers' liking.

The flower shop is also having a sale on their singing giant balloons, assorted kinds of Mylar XL balloons, Ferrero Rocher chocolates, red wine, and fruit baskets.

"We also do packages like balloons with flower bouquets and mixed flowers in a banig box (Filipino native mat)," said Gamab.

some 30 years ago, Design Flower and Gift Shop primarily sells fresh flowers like lilies, carnation, mums, orchids, and roses (price range from \$20 above) but has also filled its inventory with gift items over the years.

Aside from Mother's Day, Founded by Francisco C. it also counts Valentine's Day Cabrera as Design Florist and Easter as its busiest days.

Design Flower and Gift Shop primarily sells fresh flowers like lilies, carnation, mums, orchids, and roses.

Their items are also bought by customers for birthdays, graduations, grand openings, and anniversaries.

Design Flower and Gift Shop is open from Monday to Saturday, 9am-5pm. But, due to clients' request, they also accommodate emergency needs like after-office hours orders and deliveries.

For more information or orders, call 234-5593/235-8572/235-1414. You may also reach Design Flower and Gift Shop through following numbers: 287-5810 (Frank), 287-4449 (Bong), 285-4936 (Fhe), and 285-5458 (Garijo). They can also be reached through their Facebook page: Design Florist and Gift Shop.

