



PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL NEW YORK

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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### **Fashion Event Headlines World Autism Awareness Month at Philippine Center New York**

**New York, New York 10 March 2017** –In observance of World Autism Awareness Month, the Philippine Consulate General partnered with Autism Hearts Foundation (AHF) for a Fashion Arts Autism Benefit (FAAB) Fashion for Hope Show on 07 April 2017 at the Philippine Center in New York’s Kalayaan Hall.

The Filipino-American community, members of the fashion industry, and international media came out to support Fashion for Hope.

Fashion for Hope featured elegant piña fabric (pineapple fiber) creations by renowned fashion designer Anthony Cruz Legarda, featuring art work by young persons with autism. The Legards creations were modelled by Filipino-American community members and professional New York-based models in an hour-long program.

The Fashion for Hope marks the first-year anniversary of a collaboration between the Consulate General and Autism Hearts Foundation to promote an innovative art therapy program and fashion project for persons with autism.

In her remarks, Consul General Theresa De Vega thanked Ms. Linda Borromeo and the Board of AHF for their dedication and vision to raise awareness for autism among community members and recognized the partnership between AHF and the Consulate in the past year to bring FAAB Fashion for Hope. She noted that the project celebrates for a change the unique qualities and potential of persons with autism instead of their deficits and disabilities.

She also paid tribute to the 10 young artists with autism whose talents from singing, painting, and public speaking, were on full display during their visit to New York City. In their short trip, they participated in a two-day art work shop, fashion show, and an art exhibit at the United Nations last April 3 attended by Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York Ambassador Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr.

During the program, Ms. Borromeo said that autism awareness affects a significant segment of the world population. In the U.S., 1 out 68 births have the condition. She explained that AHF envisioned FAAB to empower persons with disabilities to

overcomes challenges by promoting healthy self-expression, building skills, and providing inclusive opportunities in the creative arts.

Mr. Andy Shi delivered a message from Autism Speaks, the global organization working for autism awareness.

Guests also learned more about the AHF and FAAB Creative Arts Therapy project with through a short video presentation.

The program also showcased a Sharing of the FAAB Experience by one of the young artists, Ms. Nina Bantoto as well as song numbers by Ms. Samantha Kasper and pop artists Meredith O'Connor. The other FAAB artists aside from Ms. Bantoto and Ms. Kasper include Nick Huang, Vico Cham, Jorel Alegre, Daniel Sanchez, Julyan Harrison, Karl Oliveros, JA Tran, and Julien Borromeo.**END**

Photos for Press Release Fashion Benefit for Autism Arts



Piña creations by Anthony Cruz Legarda featuring paintings by the young artists with autism (photos by NYPCG)



The young artists with their families pose with models wearing clothes featuring their designs



Erlinda Borromeo Founding President of Autism Hearts Foundation conveys her appreciation for the overwhelming support for the pioneering project.



Mr. Andy Shih of Autism Speaks delivers a message from the global organization





Ms. Roxanne Cajjal, a Filipino-American Teacher and community volunteer model shows off a piña shawl with art work by a young artist with autism



New York Autism Arts Benefits volunteer, artist, and financial Advisor Atty. Carol Tanjutco with one of the young artists Ms. Nina Bantoto





Mrs. Rachel Harrison, mother of young artist with autism Julyan Harrison talks to media about the challenges and joys of being a parent of a child with special needs



Dr. Emilio and Dra Felicisima Quines, 2014 Philippine independence Parade Grand Marshals, designer Anthony Cruz Legarda, Consul General Theresa Dizon-De Vega



Former US Ambassador to the Philippines Harry Thomas with Consul General De Vega