On her first-ever visit to the Philippines, BK Judy pulls off service-packed two weeks

TWO newspaper announcements and daily memes drawn from her books and posted in the Facebook page of the Philippines’ main center in Makati City, Metro Manila helped generate positive vibrations for Sister Judy Johnson’s recent two-week service visit.

From her arrival on Feb. 8 up till her last full “working” day, Feb. 20, BK Judy from Halifax, Canada was met by audiences and workshop participants with as much enthusiasm and energy as she had brought to her packed schedule.

She conducted two weekend workshops in Tagaytay City, 56 km. south of Manila in between the public programs reported below. For two of these programs, she flew to Davao City, more than 900 km. southeast of the capital, and drove another hour to nearby Tagum City to meet with a smaller group of medical professionals.

RESILIENCE: Thriving in Chaos
Thursday, Feb. 9, Center for Spiritual Learning, Tagaytay City

Local leaders from the religious, business, academic and government sectors, including a representative from the City Mayor’s office, agreed that they felt affirmative energy through beneficial insights from a two-hour experiential learning session facilitated by BK Judy.

A total of 58 guests journeyed towards a discovery of the deep aspects of resilience and learned how core energy could be accessed and put to good use in relationships.

Judy explained that beyond resilience—or one’s ability to bounce back from increasing chaos and complexities—lies the skill of thriving, or moving forward and creating new possibilities for the future. Using nature as metaphor, she engaged the participants in an activity that made them reflect on their own qualities as inner source of resilience. Through a visualization exercise, they tapped into the energy of the soul, which is ultimately the foundation of resilience.

“Tranquil,” “peaceful,” “cool,” “refreshed” and “inspired” were some of the words that emerged from the guests’ lips after a meditation experience. Judy concluded the session with thoughts on change which, she pointed out, should be about managing predicaments and focusing one’s energies on beneficial outcomes.

She left the group with an acronym to remember the theme of the gathering by: AIM—1) Always face forward; 2) Use Imagination, the power to see a better future; and, 3) Manage distractions through the practice of mastery over the mind.

More insights and good feelings were shared around the dining table while guests were treated to a hearty vegetarian lunch after receiving blessings and toll. Some of them left with extra take-away tips on spiritual literacy, as outlined in Sister Judy’s book, “From A to Z,” copies of which were made available for sale.
“Imagineering Change”  
**Tuesday, Feb. 14, Davao City Hall**

It was an auspicious Valentine’s Day celebration for the Davao family and the city government. City Administrator Zuleika Lopez and Human Resource Management Officer Erwin Alpareque welcomed the BKs, and thanked them for co-hosting the program that would tackle values-based leadership.

Judy facilitated a two-and-a-half hour program with 120 city department and office heads, and leaders from the academe, NGOs, civic, advocacy and inter-faith groups. A viewing of audiovisual presentations introducing the Brahma Kumaris was followed by the City Mayor’s welcome message, read by his official representative. The message noted the timeliness of the program in line with the Philippine President’s call for “Pagbabago” (change).

In the program proper, Judy defined “Imagineering Change” as literally “the process of using imagination in engineering change.” Through a simple thumb-and-forefinger exercise, she illustrated that change is not an easy process. She then emphasized the need for coordination between the left and right brains to effect change. The world is not lacking in knowledge or ideas to solve problems and create positive changes, Judy pointed out. What is more urgently needed today is knowing how and where to draw the energy from, to make those changes, and then sustain that energy. “This is why we meditate,” she said, “to tap into the inner potential of the soul, to transform ourselves and transform the world.”

Judy guided the participants through simple exercises using pipe cleaners, cut-out stars and drawings, followed by reflections on self-awareness and insights into the link between the practice of virtues and the creation of positive energy for change. She creatively introduced *drishti*, without using the term, by making participants gaze at the eyes of eight portraits projected onscreen and then identify the qualities they gleaned in the process. She reinforced this learning through another activity, in which she asked groups of three members each to look into one another’s eyes and then write down and share three qualities they “saw.”

An atmosphere of lightness was felt throughout the training room as participants affirmed themselves and others during the exercises. The facilitator encouraged them to continue to see virtues in people, using the A to Z alphabet list distributed as handouts.

At the end of the program, the local government, through City and Planning Officer Marilou Bermudo, expressed its gratitude by presenting the visiting BK speaker with a certificate of appreciation. The participants then received *toli* and Valentine-theme blessing cards from Judy, assisted by BK Arlene.

“Deciding Your Future: The Power to Decide”  
**Wednesday, Feb. 15, Davao Regional Medical Center**

An afternoon of fun, enjoyment and relaxation was a rare treat for 87 employees of the Davao Regional Medical Center. A respite from their routines, the workshop entitled “Deciding Your Future, The Power To Decide” was hosted by the hospital management, in cooperation with the BK Peace Villa in Tagum City.

As facilitator, Judy masterfully tackled the objective: To empower the participants—top-level personnel in the administrative, medical and nursing services departments—in daily decision-making relevant to their respective roles.

By workshop’s end, the feedback was enthusiastic and appreciative: “It was a new and refreshing concept.” “The element of positivity was strengthened in me.” “I felt renewed and energized.” “It was fun and relaxing.”

Realizations ran deep: “If we decide to, we can activate the energies needed to achieve what we want to achieve through commitment to implement that decision.” “Before making a decision, peace of mind is needed.” “We need time to meditate each day to give us power to decide on matters important to us, and to our family and community.”
Imagineering a Better Future: 
A Loveful Birthday Gathering 
Wednesday, Feb. 15, D’veranda, An Events Place, 
Domingo Village, Tagum City

A love-full birthday gathering of BK Cha’s family and friends was held last February 15, 2017, Wednesday at 6:30-10:00 in the evening at D’Veranda, An Events Place, Domingo Village, Tagum City, Davao del Norte. The gathering was very significant and meaningful to those who attended. BK Judy Johnson as a special guest from Halifax, Canada, shared her entertaining and enjoyable experiences being a facilitator and coach through her light and uplifting activities to about 100 guests who were relatives, friends and colleagues from the medical profession. Her talk specified the beautiful qualities and specialities of everyone in us. A very subtle exchange of vision from the celebrant on stage captured a very powerful atmosphere. The celebration ended joyfully with BK Cha giving tokens on the booklet entitled “Contemplation” and BK Judy giving blessings to all those who attended.

It’s Time to Love: A Hearts’ Day Celebration 
Thursday, Feb. 16, BK Makati Center

The post-Valentine public program was attended by some 70 like-minded individuals attracted by the prospect of reclaiming true love in their lives.

Judy discussed how the pure love that everyone deserves and is capable of giving has been “diluted, stolen and shrunk.” She reminded her listeners how they wasted precious energy on activities and people that failed to nourish them in return. “We filled our emptiness with meaningless pursuits,” she said, like shopping and internet “friendships.” And then, she added, “We diluted love with the additive of attachment, which created dependencies.”

So now, our hearts have shrunk, Judy pressed on, because we were hurt. “No one can get in because we’re afraid of getting hurt again.” She prescribed an antidote: “A cup of self-love everyday. The world needs us to be move loving.”

The guests were asked to reflect on one point: “Look back and identify three moments in your life when you felt your heart grew one size.” Thus, Judy demonstrated that, as food sustains the body, so does love sustain the soul.

Live-streaming of the proceedings generated close to a thousand views, which translated to more than 3,000 with repostings. Rich insights and feelings of gratitude were shared by both the physical and virtual audiences.

Love for Learning: BK Facilitator’s Training 
Feb 10-12 and Feb 17-19, 
Center for Spiritual Learning, Brahma Kumaris Retreat Center, Tagaytay City

Two batches of facilitator’s trainings were conducted in the retreat center. More than a hundred attended the training.
A few days into her schedule, BK Judy made time for a short interview about her own journey as a Raja Yoga practitioner. “Meditation,” she said, “is reclaiming your mind. Anyone can do this.” This much, it can be said, she succeeded in imparting to souls that she met on her first-ever trip to Asia.

Rehab center gets spiritual shot in the arm
Monday, Feb. 20, Talisay, Batangas

On her last Philippine service day, Judy administered a “spiritual shot in the arm” to 70 participants in an addiction rehabilitation center. It was a day of AHA! moments.

Self Enhancement for Life Foundation, Inc. (SELF) is a high-end facility in Talisay, near Taal Lake. It adheres to a program designed for treatment of and recovery from substance abuse or personality disorders.

Judy’s topic, mental resilience, complemented SELF’s values formation approach. Residents in various stages of treatment, as well as counsellors and office staff, were enlightened about how the mind works and how thoughts translate into action and, ultimately, behavior patterns.

Through imagery, physical activities and props, Judy introduced profound concepts in accessible and fun ways. She likened the undisciplined state of the mind to a basketball game whose players are unwieldy because the referee has no whistle to call their attention.

“The intellect is like the gatekeeper or referee,” she said, “and meditation is the way to strengthen the intellect.”

She compared controlling the mind to taking something away from a toddler: The child holds on to the object until it receives something in exchange. “Instead of playing a tug-of-war with your thoughts, replace them with something positive.”

Then she gave her listeners an easy method to discover hidden positive energies: Stop, Observe, Steer (SOS)—identify and control negative and unnecessary thoughts and transform them into something constructive.

The participants were asked to draw scenes of nature to reflect their qualities. They did exercises on moving specific body parts to make them aware of being the souls that give the orders.

Finally, they practiced sending a positive thought out to the world to see how it comes back to the sender: They wrote good wishes for themselves and placed them inside balloons that were then inflated and released. Then they each picked up one at random. Popping the balloons, they received affirmations and blessings. That it lifted their spirits was almost visible.