

'Binhi Para sa Pamayanan' Enlists Extension Partners

DILIMAN, Quezon City—Four agricultural organizations from Quezon City and CALABARZON have signed up to help the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) boost the promotion of urban agriculture through the “Binhi Para sa Pamayanan” Program.

These organizations, which are certified learning sites and extension partners of the ATI, are first to join the program which aims to produce and distribute ready-to-plant vegetable seedlings to ensure healthy and nutritious food in the local communities.

To kick off this initiative, representatives from the Institute and the four extension partners, namely, “Gulayan at Bulaklakan” Integrated Natural Urban Farm and LiveGreen International Incorporated in Quezon City; Flor’s Garden and Nature Haven, Inc. in Rizal; and Terra Verde Ecofarm Inc. in Cavite signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) on December 3, 2020.

Under the agreement, the Institute will provide Php6,000 worth of agricultural inputs to each extension partner. These inputs include seeds, seedling trays, and organic fertilizer which will be provided for a maximum of four cycles per year.

For their part, the extension partners are expected to produce ready-to-plant vegetable seedlings in their farm nurseries. The seedlings will then be distributed to households and individuals within their respective communities.

During the MOA signing, ATI Director Alfredo Aton thanked the four extension partners for accepting the challenge to bring the urban agriculture program to their own communities. Likewise, Engr. Renato Dela Cruz, chief of the ATI-Partnerships and Accreditation Division, stressed that this new partnership will only strengthen the Institute’s commitment to food security.

“Without your support, we cannot achieve our goal for food sustainability and sufficiency; we need partners from the community and the private sector as well,” Dela Cruz remarked.

Meanwhile, officials from the four farming organizations also expressed gratitude to the ATI for this new joint undertaking.

Felicito Valmocina, chairperson of Barangay Holy Spirit in Quezon City which hosts “Gulayan at Bulaklakan”, said that the partnership and the ATI’s support in urban agriculture “is truly a great help for our barangay as we now have a partner in our farming endeavors.”

Similarly, Paris Uy, president and CEO of LiveGreen International Incorporated, shared that they are very happy to be chosen as part of the program and noted that sustainability, training, and community support will help drive its success ahead.

“There is really money in agriculture, we just have to provide the inputs, tools, as well as the market,” he said.

Terra Verde Ecofarm Inc. chairman Emerson Atanacio vowed to support the Institute in its goal for food security and to further improve their services as an ATI-accredited Extension Service Provider (ESP). Fely

Sadio of Flor's Garden and Nature Haven, Inc. also pledged continued support to the urban agriculture initiative.

As it aims to build stronger partnerships and linkages with its various extension partners, the ATI aims to encourage other Learning Sites for Agriculture, Schools for Practical Agriculture, ESPs, and rural-based organizations to be part of the program. This is in support of the Department of Agriculture's "Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat (ALPAS) Laban sa COVID-19" or "Plant, Plant, Plant" Program.

The MOA signing ceremony for the "Binhi Para sa Pamayanan" Program was held at the ATI Mess Hall in Diliman, Quezon City.
