The New Filipino Youth Movement: Shirts for Change

What do Ateneo De Manila University’s student council President, an international karate medallist from the De La Salle University, a musician from the University of the Philippines, a UAAP basketball bet from the Universidad de Santo Tomas, and a radio DJ from San Beda College have in common? Right now, they are all wearing the same thing—for a good cause.

This year, the University of the Philippines Industrial Engineering Club (UP IE Club), the Ateneo De Manila University’s Environmental Science Society (Ateneo ESS), the University of Asia & the Pacific’s ER+GO, and the Universidad de Santo Tomas’ Junior Pharmacists’ Association – Gamma Chapter (JPAGC) joined forces to produce “Good Karma Shirts”: a youth movement anchored on four shirts of different colors.

Each shirt represents a particular mission towards change in the Philippines. Profits from the purchase of a blue shirt will go to the social initiatives of youth movement Save Philippine Seas. Profits from the purchase of a green shirt will help reforest the Philippines through Haribon Foundation. Profits from the purchase of a white shirt will help send indigent children to school through education organization KRIS Library, while profits from the purchase of a red shirt will help pay for the medical expenses of children with cancer and other diseases in the Philippine Children’s Medical Center.

Wearing the shirts for “Good Karma” are inspiring students from the various universities in Metro Manila who are leaders, movers, and builders in their own fields.

Ateneo’s talented Sanggunian President, Gio Alejo, calls himself “an agent of change”. He wears white in favour of education, saying, “I’m very lucky to have been able to study well – have a good opportunity to hone my skills and my talents. But, sadly, a lot of people ... do not have that same chance.”

Jenica Dizon, the President of the Ateneo Environmental Science Society, dons a blue Good Karma shirt in support of Save Philippine Seas—where she also shares her time as the Creative Director of. She states, “The Philippines is the center of marine biodiversity in the world. Knowing that we have very rich marine biodiversity and natural resources should already push us to protect it. It’s not just a question of being a tourist destination of how it’s ‘more fun in the Philippines’, but it’s also because these natural resources sustain many Filipinos.”

Raissa Waga, of the University of Asia & the Pacific, chimes in to support the cause of environment by wearing a green shirt. She is currently Vice President in ER+GO, a youth organization dedicated to “educate, engage, and evolve” to make people realize how important the environment is to us. Raissa adds, “[My most notable achievement] is ... that I get to serve people and promote the cause of my organization.”

Sarah Carlos, of the College of San Beda, wears red on the other hand, in support of poor children with cancer and other diseases who are unable to pay their medical expenses. She is a charismatic student jock of the airwaves at RX 93.1, and she remarks, “Good Karma’s about supporting charities. It just shows how there’s more than one problem to face in the Philippines. ... They’re trying to make the world a better place. Even though [their movement] is not that big, they’re just starting. That’s what matters: that you’re taking the initiative to start.”

Along with them come Paulo Pe (from the Universidad de Santo Tomas) who plays UAAP basketball for the UST Growling Tigers who dreams of becoming a successful civil engineer, Jules Herrera-Lim (from the University of the Philippines) who leads in the Junior Marketing Association and is aiming to be a social entrepreneur, Anton Tiongson (from the University of Asia & the Pacific) who is a licensed scuba diver out to rebuild our coral reefs, Abbygayle Placido (from De La Salle) who is a member and leader of various Catholic youth groups, Joseph Miranda (also from De La Salle) who is an international gold medallist for karate, and Tonio Arellano (from the University of the Philippines) who is a passionate musician and business major.

“Good Karma Shirts” wants to send the message that if so many college students could go beyond their schools to dream and achieve extraordinary things, then what more could be done if the youth as a collective act together?

The first batch of shirts released had been sold out. The second batch of shirts will be made available in July. Students are already anticipating new designs and new products from “Good Karma” in the future. With so many clothing options available to the youth, why not choose one that resonated with a theme of change for the country?

As Abbygayle Placido concludes, “I want to be [someone] who can change the world – but little by little.”

These young students are out to disprove the image of the cynic youth by giving everyone the chance to change, rebuild, and improve the country one shirt at a time. Whether you cared about health, the environment, or education, this youth movement is set: let the cycle of “Good Karma” start.

For more information, please visit <http://goodkarmashirts.weebly.com/> or text 09995609435.

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