



# THE UCMPFI NEWSLETTER

VOL. 14 ISSUE NO. 1 and 2  
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2026

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE UCM PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION, INC.

## Exciting start to a new year

As if to make up for missing one another over the Christmas holidays, the children and youth of UCMPFI began the year 2026 with activities that renewed and strengthened their bonds.

Classes at the Foundation's four Child Education and Nutrition Enhancement Program (CENEP) sites (Brgy. Highway Hills, Mandaluyong City; Brgy. Tumana, Marikina City; Brgy. Sto. Domingo, Cainta, Rizal; and Brgy. Kabulusan, Pakil, Laguna) resumed on January 5, 2026. Very soon after, the children were treated to their annual educational field trip.

## CENEP Mandaluyong, Marikina, and Cainta go to Playlab and Rainforest Park

On January 23, 2026, a total of 124 children from CENEP Mandaluyong, Marikina, and Cainta, most of whom were accompanied by their parents, went on a day-long field trip to two facilities catering to children in Pasig City. All the CENEP teachers were on hand to look after the children from their respective sites.



CENEP Mandaluyong children at PlayLab



CENEP Marikina children at PlayLab

## ***CENEP Mandaluyong, Marikina, and Cainta go to Playlab and Rainforest Park***

The tour started at PlayLab in Robinson's Galleria, the first digital playground in the country. Equipped with state-of-the-art digital tools, the facility offers a space for children to brainstorm, socialize, experience hands-on learning, and play. PlayLab was designed to provide children, and even adults, an inspiring atmosphere where ideas can grow into tangible experiences.



**CENEP Cainta children at PlayLab**



Some of the interesting activities the children enjoyed were:

- the Doodle Aquarium, where they were asked to draw anything they liked and write their names on a blank sheet of paper after which their artwork was scanned and uploaded to a giant digital aquarium, swimming alongside fish and other sea creatures;
- the Digital Painter, where the children painted digitally and their artwork was shown on a screen with the work of other children. This activity helped reinforce their lessons from the first quarter, especially color mixing and color creation;
- The Evolution of Stars where they explored the planets, identified their names, and observed how they move in space.

The clear favorites among the attractions were the infinity slide and wall climbing, which brought endless excitement and laughter.



## ***CENEP Mandaluyong, Marikina, and Cainta go to Playlab and Rainforest Park***

At 12:30 p.m., the group proceeded to the Pasig City Rainforest Adventure Experience and Pasig Central Park, a public park in eastern Metro Manila. This is where they ate the meal prepared by the CENEP cooks and their own packed lunches. After eating, some children, tired from the Playlab activities, enjoyed a short nap. Most children explored and roamed around to enjoy the park's amenities: the Butterfly Farm; the Playground; and the Boating Area.



The tour ended at 3:15 p.m., as scheduled, even if some children were still playing and were reluctant to leave. Parents expressed their appreciation for events like this, sharing how meaningful it was for their children to experience activities they do not usually get to enjoy.

# CENEP Pakil visits animal sanctuary

The children of CENEP Pakil, with their parents and teachers, went to the Lyger Animal Sanctuary in Pililla, Laguna, on February 6, 2026. Lyger Animal Sanctuary features a wide variety of animals, including tigers, pumas, and even ligers, the crossbreed of lions and tigers. Compact and well-maintained, the sanctuary offers close encounters with rare animals including camels, peacocks, a miniature horse, a crocodile, and others. It also gives children the hands-on experience of feeding animals.



Before the group started the tour, a guide gave general and safety instructions. Parents were advised to keep their children from getting too near or attempting to touch any animal. The path to be followed was laid out, starting with different kinds of small birds, then bigger ones, and finally a group of ostriches in their big cage. Next were the bigger animals: a camel, a puma, horses of different sizes and breeds, tigers, lions, deer, peacocks, parakeets, birds of prey, turtles, rabbits, snakes, an orangutang, and many more.

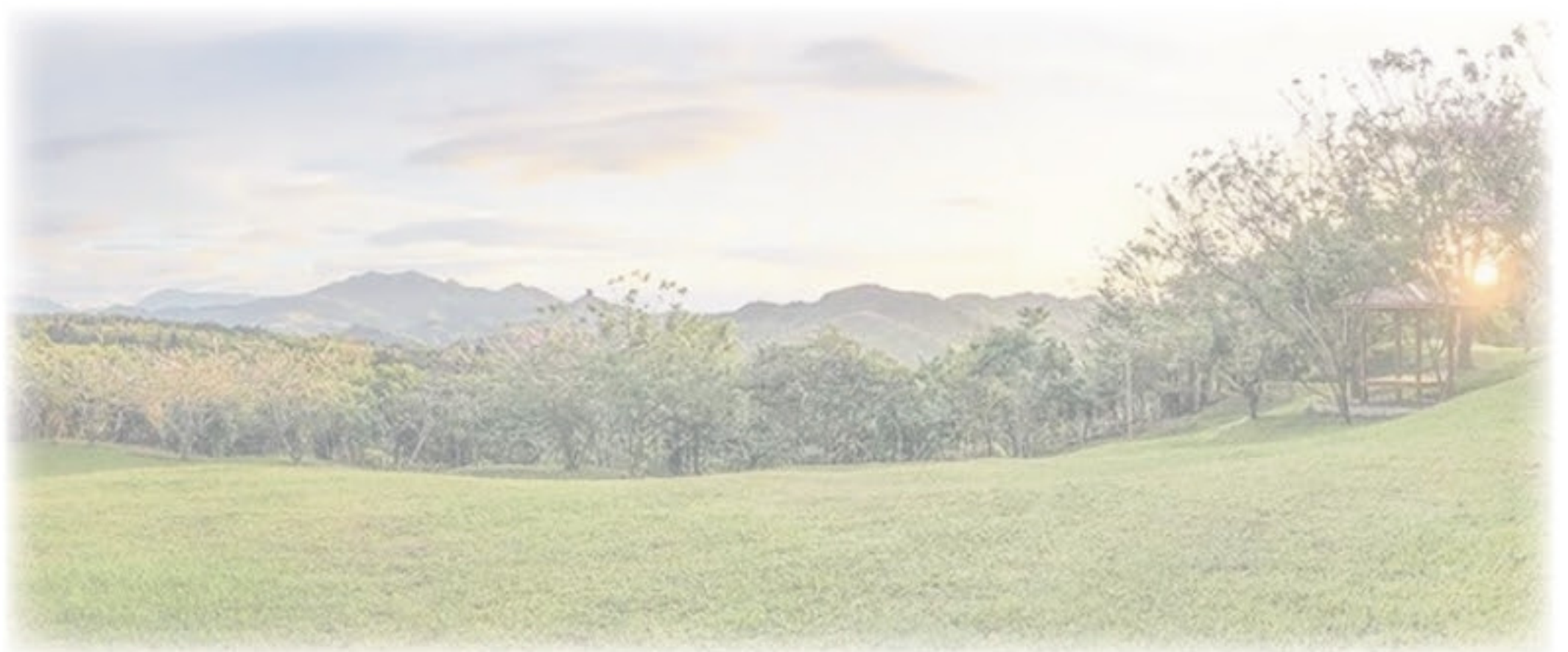


## CENEP Pakil visits animal sanctuary



At the end of the tour, the group was met by a zookeeper holding a Burmese python. Visitors were invited to have their photos taken holding the python or putting it over their shoulder.

After two and a half hours, the group moved to Tanay Park, a plaza with a playground and plenty of space for people to settle down and have their lunch.



# GEESE and TRACE scholars enter Pintô Art Museum

For their educational trip, the Foundation's high school and college scholars went to Pintô Art Museum in Antipolo, Rizal on February 7, 2026. "Pintô Art Museum is a private museum dedicated to the exhibition and study of Philippine contemporary art. Its name, Pintô, comes from the Filipino vernacular word for door or doorway and signifies the role of the institution as a threshold of the mind to aesthetic consciousness and cultural awareness. The museum's philosophy is defined by its founder and patron, renowned Filipino neurologist and medical educator, Joven Cuanang, who began collecting the pieces in the early 1990s. His extensive collection was formally presented to the public with the opening of the museum in 2010." (<https://pintoart.org/museum>)



## ***GEESE and TRACE scholars enter Pintô Art Museum***



The tour started at the auditorium with a lecture and video presentation on the history and background of the museum. The museum is a compound where the variety of artwork is housed in separate structures with Mediterranean-style architecture that themselves are a sight to see.



The guide had total command of the details of the art items on display, and was able to answer all the questions the scholars posed. It took more than three hours to complete the exploration of the entire museum.



# Scholars hold first fellowship and monitoring and evaluation for 2026

The Grace Enough to Ensure Secondary Education (GEESE) and Teodoro Regala Assistance for Continuing Education (TRACE) scholars had their monthly fellowship on January 10, 2026. Present were 26 scholars who joyfully took part in the familiar activities of singing, sharing accomplishments, lessons learned, and noteworthy experiences, expressing joys and frustrations, and wrapping up in prayer before starting the Bible study part of the meeting.



UCMPFI Program Coordinator, Rangel Alexes Dilfenado, facilitated the scheduled lesson—Jesus, the Teacher—highlighting Luke 17:3-4 where Jesus says, “Be on your guard; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times a day and returns to you seven times a day saying I repent, forgive him.”

In these fellowship meetings, scholars take the lessons discussed to heart. The Foundation is hopeful that the scholars’ takeaway from these lessons guides them to be wise in decision-making in their daily life.

As always, the fellowship ended with lunch, something the scholars look forward to as they enjoy a stress-free day among fellow scholars with whom they can loosen up and have fun.

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) interview of scholars followed after lunch. Volunteers who carried out the M&E were: Union Church of Manila (UCM) members Len Aritao, Cely Hafalla, Sheila Marie Rogador, Mila Salvador, UCM staff Richard Santiago, and TRACE alumna Sunshine Quillao. The second quarter report cards submitted by the scholars showed satisfactory grades and performance.

## ***Scholars hold first fellowship and monitoring and evaluation for 2026***



The M&E interview provides the scholars a channel through which they can share not only their academic and extra-curricular accomplishments but also their personal concerns or challenges for which they may need just a listening ear or, in some cases, the assistance or intervention of their school's teacher-foster parent.

## **Alternative Learning Systems students prepare for equivalency tests**

ALS learners (SY 2025-2026) are now reviewing for the Academic & Equivalency (A&E) Test to be held on March 29, 2026.

In LACE Makati, 18 learners (junior high level – 13 male, 5 female) will take the A&E test. In LACE Parañaque, 15 learners (11 junior high – 4 male, 7 female and 4 elementary – 2 male, 1 female) have registered to take the test.

A&E test passers will earn the equivalency diploma for their individual levels.

Do visit our website [www.ucmphifoundation.org](http://www.ucmphifoundation.org) to know more about the Foundation's activities and to participate in continuing to provide a better life to these children and young people. For your inquiries, please call (63 2) 8812-6062 or 8812-5609 or email us at [ucmpfi@gmail.com](mailto:ucmpfi@gmail.com).