



## ***Paraiso***, The Making Of The Gawad Kalinga Movie

A Labor of Love

by Fredy Guevara, GKOM USA

### **The Beginning**

A year ago this month, the movie was just an idea that came about out of a brainstorming session, while sitting in a café in Makati City. Rose Cabrera was consulting with Bobby Barreiro for different avenues and possibilities in how we could further share, make more people aware and involved with Gawad Kalinga (GK). Bobby suggested the potential of an independent-type film project.

### **The Evolution**

A year later, what started as an idea is now a big screen movie trilogy that will be premiering here in various cities of the US and worldwide starting in March of this year. [Bobby Barreiro](#), managing director for News and Entertainment, ABC 5 and formerly of GMA broadcast stations, ran with the idea and started the process. Bobby is the brother of our very own *Gawad Komunikasyon* (GKOM) team member Maricel Villanueva. Maricel has consulted brother Bobby many times before, relative to GKOM, but nothing of this magnitude. Though seasoned in the broadcast community Bobby was without movie making experience. He tapped into his wealth of friends in the media and showbiz community. Now the movie boasts of the finest talents in the Philippine film industry.

### **The Primaries**

Tony Tuviera, Butch Jimenez and Tony Gloria, all icons in their own fields were asked and graciously accepted to be part of the endeavor. [Tony Tuviera](#), the award winning producer 25 years running of Eat Bulaga, took on *Umiyak Man Ang Langit* (Even If Heaven Cries), starring [Maricel Soriano](#). [Butch Jimenez](#), the head of Media and Communications Department Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) and producer of the award winning movies Jose Rizal and Muro-Ami, took on *Ang Kapatid Kong Si Elvis* (My Brother Elvis) starring [Michael V.](#) and [Carmi Martin](#). [Tony Gloria](#), first to truly crack the Filipino market in the US with award winning movies like *Crying Ladies* and *Mga Munting Tinig* (Little Voices), took on **Marie**, starring [Cesar Montano](#) and [Ricky Davao](#). And the movie trilogy started to take shape.

### **The Stories**

Before production could start, the painstaking process of deciding which stories to portray in the movie had to be decided upon. So many great stories, so little time, was the challenge faced. Finally after numerous meetings the decision was to portray the story of a beneficiary, a volunteer and his family, and a benefactor. The stories and characters were different yet the same in many ways. All have been touched and transformed by GK, one family at a time.

### **The Testimonials**

Two weeks ago was held the 2<sup>nd</sup> GK *Bayani* (Heroes) Summit at the Meralco Theater in the Philippines. The summit is an annual GK event where volunteers from all over the world and

representatives of various GK communities in the Philippines gather to get updated, inspire, be inspired and honor everyone for being part of the movement. During the program, a trailer of the movie was shown and the cast and crew who were present were honored on center stage.

Executive Director Bobby Barreiro shared that he didn't feel worthy to be on the same stage as the many GK heroes that were there. He was only supposed to be a bit player, an adviser, trying to help out his sister. Yet as it is, Bobby was instrumental in contacting and bringing in the right people of the movie industry to make the movie project a reality. Bobby was the conductor, of an orchestra ensemble, full of talent, but have hardly practiced together. Yet in the end were all in sync and made beautiful music together. "I was already crying, just reading the script" confessed Maricel Soriano on stage. "It's hard to believe this is all real. You are all my heroes" she continued. One at a time the major players were called on stage to share their experiences. Butch Jimenez, who produced the "Elvis" segment wanted to portray the family angle in choosing his story. Guarded at first against being part of a "propaganda movie" Butch explained "Before a GK volunteer can save the world, save the country, their own families have to be intact and should be their focus." But once convinced of GK's noble endeavor, Butch concluded that "this (GK) is an organization of integrity."

After all was said and done, only the faces changed but the messages were all the same. These icons of the movie industry, who commanded fees that you and I could only imagine, were thankful that they were given the opportunity to be part of GK. Shooting on location at various GK sites, the cast and crew of *Paraiso* were not spared of catching the GK fever. All, unanimously waived their fees as their *padugo* (bleed for the cause) for GK. They were thankful that GK was what it is, a movement destined to change the world by simple advocacy of caring for each other, in unity. One touched heart at a time, one family at a time, reshaping the world a country at a time.

*Paraiso* is about real people with real stories to tell from over 800 GK communities spread throughout the Philippines. Mabuhay!