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A "JEW-IPINO" INTER-CULTURAL SHABBAT



By Maxa Sawyer



Beautiful dessert prepared by Shaarey Zedek (Photo Credit: Dan Patrenko)

Primrose Madayag Knazan is a Filipinx Jewish Canadian living in Winnipeg. She converted to Judaism with Rabbi Green who she felt connected to because he had spent time in the Philippines teaching peaceful protest to Filipino rebels. Through her conversion she learned that there was a synagogue in the Philipenes among other Jewish-Filipino connections.

Primrose learned that the Philippines was one of the few countries to accept Jewish refugees after Canada rejected Jews from entering. The Philippines was the only Asian country to vote Yes to UN Resolution 181, which recommended the establishment of the State of Israel. Primrose thought she was one of the few people who knew these stories. These stories were important to her family as one of two Winnipeg "Jewipino" families that she knew existed at the time.

On Friday, November 29, 2024, at the Asper Foundation Community Shabbat, Primrose heard these stories repeated by various speakers.

She experienced the convergence of her Filipino and Jewish identities in public Winnipeg Jewish space as leaders from the Jewish and Filipino communities shared Shabbat together in the Berney Theatre alcove.

The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg organized the Jewish Filipino inter-cultural Shabbat dinner, with help from Rady JCC and Tova and Larry Vickar, and funded by The Asper Foundation. The Shabbat dinner was MCed by

Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's board Vice President Carrie Shenkarow who peppered phrases in Tagalog throughout her greetings. Manitoba's first Jewish Lieutenant Governor Anita Neville attended the Shabbat, alongside Carla Compton MLA for Tuxedo and Malaya Marcelino MLA for Notre Dame.

Rabbi Annibal Mass led Kabbalat Shabbat providing translations and interpretations throughout. He joked that he had not seen so many Spanish names in the crowd since the last time he was in Argentina. Pastor Wendell Olojan shared how he honours the Sabbath by following the 4th Commandment to rest and make the Sabbath holy. A recent stroke reminded Pastor Ologan how important it is to take time to rest. He quipped that when he came to consciousness, he saw a white nurse and thought he was seeing an angel in heaven. He asked the nurse if he was in heaven. When the nurse told him no, he asked if he was in hell. The nurse replied: Not hell, HSC. The clergies' charming jokes set the scene for an entertaining evening.

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Gratitude and Hanukkah Greetings from Realcare Inc.

Submitted by Elba Haid, Founder & CEO of Realcare

Thank You to Our Jewish Community: Realcare Inc. Celebrates Hannukah and 30 Years of Service

As the beautiful festival of Hannukah approaches, Realcare Inc. would like to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Jewish community for their unwavering support over the years. Your trust and partnership have been instrumental in our journey, and we are proud to serve you and your family.

Hannukah is not only a time for celebration but also a moment for reflection, hope, and community. We wish everyone observing this joyous season a warm and peaceful Hannukah filled with love, light, and togetherness.

At Realcare Inc., we are dedicated to providing exceptional homecare services that cater to the diverse needs of our clients. Our

comprehensive offerings include:

- Personal Assistance: This encompasses meal preparation, mobility assistance, medication reminders, and personal hygiene assistance.
- Household Support: We ensure homes are well-maintained with services like light housekeeping, deep cleaning, grocery shopping, and running errands.
- Transportation Services: We arrange transportation and provide medical escort shifts to ensure safe and reliable travel for our clients.
- 24-hour Homecare: Our overnight care and respite care services provide peace of mind, knowing that help is available around the clock.
- Specialized Care: We offer palliative care and stroke recovery care to support individuals with specific health needs.
- Long-Term Care: Our long-term care solutions include nursing assessments and round-the-clock homecare and nursing assistance.
- Memory Care: We specialize in caring for individuals with dementia, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's, providing the compassionate support they deserve.
- Additional Support Services: We offer in-

home nursing, including incontinence care, to enhance the comfort and dignity for our clients.

- Staffing in Nursing Homes: Realcare Inc. provides certified healthcare aides and registered nurses to ensure quality care in nursing homes. Our home support workers also provide 1:1 companionship for added emotional support.

As we look ahead, we are also thrilled to announce our early celebration of 30 years in service! To commemorate this milestone, we are introducing a new logo that reflects our commitment to excellence in home care. This new design is a testament to our evolution and dedication to our clients.

Thank you once again to the Jewish community for being an integral part of our journey. We look forward to continuing our partnership and supporting your homecare needs in the years to come. Happy Hannukah from all of us at Realcare Inc.!

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Elba Haid
CEO & Founder

To learn more about us please visit www.realcare.ca or contact us at 204-957-7825

Larry Vickar and Perla Javate, President of the Philippine Heritage Council of MB amongst other impressive community and professional leadership roles, shared welcomes from their respective communities.

One could argue that Larry Vicakr is part of both the Jewish and Filipino communities. In a phone interview Primrose Madayag Knazan told me that she grew up seeing Larry Vickar's contribution at every event. Since she had only heard the Vickar name pronounced by members of the Filipino community, she assumed Vickar was a Filipino surname.

Larry Vickar first became involved with the Filipino community when he first met his wife Tova, who was a recent immigrant from Israel. Tova worked sewing and many of her colleagues, turned friends, were Filipino. The Vickars made lasting friendships that have connected the family to the Filipino community and related charitable endeavours.

The intersection between the Jewish and Filipino communities in Winnipeg continued with the evening's entertainment. Joseph Sevillo, creator, playwright, director and choreographer of *Ma Buhay!*, credited Shelley Shearer of *Shelley Shearer School of Dance* for his success. Shelley Shearer saw his talent at an early age. Her studio allowed Joseph to take endless dance classes without having to incur the prohibitive expense.

After spending years in Toronto working in the dance scene amongst his fellow Winnipegger Lindsay Nelko-Peretz, Joseph Sevillo returned to Winnipeg to help take care of his dying parents. The experience as a caretaker, and not knowing where his creative career would

take him in Winnipeg, inspired him to write a musical growing up in the Winnipeg Filipino community. The musical *Ma Buhay!* was developed for Rainbow Stage in part because of the support of Gail Asper Family Foundation and Shelley Shearer School of Dance.

Joseph recounted that he would not have been able to succeed like he has without the support of his parents and talents within the Filipino community. He honoured that talent by asking Joy Lazo, Joseph's voice teacher, to play the role of Lola (grandmother in Tagalog).

After *Birkat Hamazon* Joy Lazo and Andrea Macasaet, of Broadway's *Six the Musical* fame and lead in *Ma Buhay!*, sang a beautiful duet from *Ma Buhay!*. Andrea credited Tita Joy Lazo's voice coaching for her success. Andrea followed the duet with a powerful solo from the musical. Rochelle Kives, daughter of David and Margarita Kives, who was also part of *Ma Buhay!*'s main cast, was invited but unable to attend.

Paul Ong, a classically trained tenor and Winnipeg School Board Vice Principal, also moved the audience with his voice and accomplishments. Upon immigrating to Canada in the early 2000s, Paul thought he would have to give up singing. He has used his voice to raise over \$150,000 for Manitoba charities (*WSO News*) and raises thousands of dollars a year organizing and singing in his fundraiser *Concert for a Cause*.

Paul Ong and Rabbi Mass performed a bilingual rendition of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*. Paul Ong sang one verse in English, Rabbi Mass responded in Hebrew, then the whole audience joined in the chorus. The power of the collective

performance vibrated throughout the room.

The talent in the room could be tasted as well as heard. As *Jewipino* Primrose Madayag Knazan was honoured to be invited to the Shabbat Dinner. She was even more honoured when she was asked to provide *Shmoozers by Shaarey Zedek* a *Jewipino* inspired recipe for dessert.

Primrose wrote the award-winning Young Adult novel *Lessons in Fusion* (2021). The book, which features a *Jewipino* teen on a TV food-based game show, starts each chapter with a recipe that fuses Filipino and Jewish recipes. Since the dessert recipes in her book contain milk, she shared a pareve recipe she had created for a previous family Passover *seder* which was a take on "lemon freeze" and macaroons. The dessert she created switched lemon for calamansi, a small citrus fruit that is popular in Filipino cuisine.

Primrose Madayag Knazan said that the Shabbat dinner was a wonderful way for her Filipino Jewish family to know that they are not alone. When we started our phone conversation, she thought there were only two *Jewipino* families in Winnipeg. Over the course of the conversation we produced more than 10 *Jewipino* families that live in Winnipeg. She said the dinner was the perfect backdrop to re-introduce two communities, who might not be familiar with each other. The dinner allowed each community to discover what they have in common and the importance of intercultural relationships. The Shabbat dinner was a touching tribute to the work both communities have done to help make Winnipeg "One Great City."



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