



## Joy in Retirement

• Michelle M. Felstead, EdD

“Retirement is not an end; It’s a transition to another beginning.” While other retirees were stuck in their common routines and were bored for having much free time, retired Schools Division Superintendent of SDO Dagupan City, Madam Maria Celia Junio-Fernandez, fondly called as Ma’am Joy is enjoying the best of both worlds of being a domestic engineer and a professional.

To date, it’s been six months since her retirement and for her, six months is still too early to give a conclusive statement on how retirement changed her life.

“Honestly, I am still on total control of my time, doing what I want to do without rush and pressure. It feels like I am on a grand vacation,” said Ma’am Joy.

Having no rigid schedule to follow, Ma’am Joy is coping beautifully with the changes; however, even without a stiff schedule, she still chooses to manage her time.

“Time becomes more valuable when you’re nearing the finish line and yes, I want to do everything I was not able to do when I was still working; well, so I get to do everything in my bucket list,” she uttered.

Indeed, in her old stress that fires her up, yet children in the classrooms

“A teacher is always a teacher,” she articulated. She is undoubtedly right because even after her retirement, she still practices her profession by having some online speaking engagements.

As a national government scholar of the Public Management -Development Program Academy of the Philippines (PMDP -DAP) in the government, she continuously serves the country in various ways. She gets USAID, particularly with trainings for DepEd school heads and supervisors in other regions. The Regional Office invites her whenever they need her expertise. Also, she is now a member of the Board of Trustees of the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Lingayen Dagupan.

The pandemic affected much of her plans that she had to make a 360degrees turn to seize up everything and make a complete change. She plans to travel more places after



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# PRECEPTORS' VIEW



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her retirement, yet the pandemic restricted her of doing so. That is why she devoted her time doing jobs at home that are not-so-new to her like gardening, cooking and innovating concepts and practical tips in managing the home. As she applies the things learned from her travels, combined with her innate creativity, she frequently comes up with excellent home ideas. For her, doing these jobs is fun and she loves to share it with others for inspiration.

“I love the workplace, the importance of my job to my clientele and knowing that I am doing this job better than I used to. Plus, I get instant evaluation and an outstanding rating all the time,” she shared.

Of course, who wouldn't have an outstanding rating with a kind of woman like her who puts all her best and love for everything she does.

As a certified 'plantita', Ma'am Joy knows what she wants. She has a vast knowledge about the many varieties of plants and their benefits. She has a myriad collection including some predatory plants which were fed on insects like the famous Venus flytrap.

As an excellent chef, Ma'am Joy has an encyclopedic knowledge on food. She personally prepares exceptional and healthy dishes, making even the ordinary ones special by mixing complementing ingredients and excellent plating.

Aside from cooking and gardening, she loves reading her favorite books in her reading corner. She also enjoys watching movies on Netflix and gives some recommendations and reviews on movies watched which is a great help for someone looking for a movie guide.

Being a family-oriented woman, it makes her sad with the uncertainties and the possibility that this pandemic will make the family miss out some precious moments together. Others may claim that the pandemic got them closer

to their families, yet it is the reverse with them. Prior to the pandemic, the family regularly meet and bond despite the distance where her children reside. They have a regular family get together with or without special reason. Now, they get contentment seeing each other online with virtual hugs and kisses. However, still she keeps her trust in the Lord and continue hoping and believing that this health crisis will soon be over.

Just imagine when this pandemic is over, life for Ma'am Joy after retirement will be even more fun and exciting and her bucket list will be jam-packed with check marks. She believes that as long as someone lives, he/she should always have a goal to achieve.

“With or without a career, you ought to have goals in life. As long as you still breathe, you will always have a reason and purpose for living. A goal free life is not for the living,” she stated.

Indeed, just like Ma'am Joy, when someone retires, it doesn't mean that it is the end. It is actually a time for new adventures – new goals towards a fulfilling life from the many enjoyable and rewarding activities.

When asked for her advice to the people considering an early retirement, she said, “Do what makes you happy and compleat.” -- an advice that she certainly savors.

Truly, with her unfathomable passion towards everything that she does, she serves as an inspiration for everyone on how she balances and manages her home and career after retirement—being a certified 'plantita', an adept chef, a loving wife, affectionate mother and grandmother and an exceptional consultant—life after retirement is all summed up in three letters... JOY.



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