A CALL TO COMBAT MALNUTRITION

by:
Sheryl B. Asio
Teacher I, Jose C. Payumo Memorial High School

Wealth not only comes in the form of material things; it is also characterized by having good health and proper nutrition – a mantra commonly heard inside and outside school premises. Cliché as it seems, it has in-depth significance up to this very day that are mostly overlooked by the students, parents and sometimes, even the teachers. A proper nutrition has great impact on students’ learning and performance for it provides the body with energy, good thinking skills and generally makes them feel better. Many scientific studies have proven this, Krans (2016) pointed out that without good nutrition, the body is more prone to infections, fatigue and poor performance. Students run the risk of growth and developmental complications and poor academic performance can persist for the rest of their lives.

Malnutrition has been one of the prevalent crisis that the Philippine Government is facing throughout the years. According to Lina (2018), the bigger problem is undernutrition. Food and Nutrition Research Institute reported on 2015 that 31.2% of Filipino children are underweight, the highest in the past 10 years. This is very alarming; chronic malnutrition leads to stunted growth which is also related with reduced school performance, impaired cognitive ability, poor capacity and productivity as health experts often point out.

To address malnutrition and its possible effects in the future, the Philippine government, along with the cooperation of the Department of Education, improved the School-Based Feeding Program which started in 1997. The target beneficiaries are the “wasted” and “severely wasted” students of public schools in the beginning of the school
year. Its goal is to provide a healthy school environment that allows students to develop health-promoting habits and behaviors for a healthier future generation. The feeding program appeared to work best when complemented with other School Health Programs such as Gulayan sa Paaralan Program (GPP), deworming, and WASH in Schools (WinS) Program. With proper implementation, these programs are a great stepping stone in ensuring that students are ready to learn and participate in school activities.

Nutrition is perhaps one of the important factors which affects the totality of a person. Undeniably, the Philippines is in dire need to combat malnutrition for it has lasting effects not only the person, but for the entire nation. If the future generation does not have nourishment they need, they are incapable to work properly and adequately; thus, lessening their contribution to local economy. Alone, it is impossible to eradicate malnutrition in the country, but with the cooperation of the government, the schools and the community, it is a great stepping stone to alleviate malnutrition and hope that in time, it will soon be totally eradicated from the country.

References
