September 1, 2020 - It has been three years now since I was assigned as the School-Based Feeding Coordinator. SBFP was implemented in the Philippines in 1997. It aims to improve school attendance and the nutritional status of target beneficiaries, to conduct group hand washing and tooth brushing activities, and to encourage backyard vegetable gardening to support the feeding program. The target beneficiaries are all either wasted or severely wasted kindergarten to Grade 6 children in public educational institutions who were evaluated by nutritional assessment. (Yamaguchie, 2018)

I could still remember how I refused to accept the job because of the so many complaints, yes "complaints" I have heard from the previous coordinators. "It's tiring! It's hard to manage" "Report is too long.. so many". Knowing that we teachers are needed to passed daily or weekly lesson plans, aside from the other paper works assigned to us, I guess then being the SBFP coordinator will mean an "extra burden" to anyone's part. But then, being taught to obey first before you protest. I accepted the task.

The first few weeks were very difficult. Upon checking the cooking materials, it was a headache to find that there were so many lacking items. No big casseroles. There were no enough spoons and fork plates etc. I don't want to take the blame to anybody but the least I could do is to remedy what the problem is at hand. How I managed to have new kitchen utensils and dining materials was a blessing. After reaching out to kind-hearted donors, through letters, emails, messenger, floods of help reach our school. It motivated me to make new plans for effective implementation.
I have thought of ways on how to encourage parents to assist the feeding activity. As well as more encouragement is made for the feeding recipients to eat more veggies. Luckily, three parents devoted their time to our endeavor. These for me were my comrades in the challenging battle. We had several brainstorming on how to make dishes of chayote, squash, upo, and others more inviting for the feeders. Then, little by little, the feeders were motivated to go to the feeding room wearing their happy faces and anticipating smiles of what could be the delicious meal for the day. We have thought them the proper eating manners, waiting in line, taking turns, and saying prayers before and after meals.

I have never felt the stress and tiresome that the others have told me about. It was because I was too captivated by the daily scenario of watching how our recipients are enjoying what we have prepared for them. Indeed, we feed not only their tummies but also filled their hearts with hope that in school they are much loved.

BUT! That was back then. Today, as I was standing in front of my kitchen stove while stirring my sautéed vegetables, it crossed my mind to think about the children we have been feeding before. How are they now! Everyone is now confined in each own houses, not knowing when to go back to the normal life. How I wish that the pandemic is over that I and my comrades can serve again the children we used to feed daily. With high, hopes, I pray that they also have food on their tables. I hope that they are the same jolly kids who are excitedly waiting for lunchtime to come. In God’s perfect time, everything will be back to normal and the School Based Feeding Program for needy children will prosper again.

References:

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