

Mayor Karen Bass Visits Dollar Hits in Historic Filipinotown

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



City of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass visited **Dollar Hits** in Historic Filipinotown on September 29, putting a spotlight on one of the neighborhood's best-known Filipino-owned businesses and the community that has grown around it. Members of the Los Angeles Mayor's Office staff were also present for the visit.

Bass was welcomed by **Elvira "Tita Elvie" Chan**, founder and owner of Dollar Hits, along with Filipino -merican community leader Jennifer Taylor and members of the local community. Taylor has been active in Historic Filipinotown and has worked with several Filipino-American community initiatives.

Located along Temple Street, Dollar Hits has become a familiar destination for Filipino street food in Los Angeles. Chan started the business as a food stand in the same Historic Filipinotown strip mall in 2013 before expanding into a brick-and-mortar restaurant. Its communal outdoor grills and Filipino street food create an experience reminiscent of the ihaw-ihaw culture found throughout the Philippines.

But Dollar Hits has also become more than a restaurant. Its outdoor tables, grills, karaoke and casual atmosphere have created a gathering place where food, culture and community intersect.

The mayor's visit was especially timely as Los Angeles celebrates Filipino American History Month in October. Historic Filipinotown represents an important chapter in the Filipino-American story in Los Angeles, shaped by generations of immigrants, families, entrepreneurs, artists and community organizations.

Having the Mayor of Los Angeles and members of her staff visit a Filipino-owned business in Historic Filipinotown brought added visibility to the people and small businesses that continue to sustain the neighborhood. What began as a small food stand has grown into a destination while retaining the communal spirit at the heart of its success.

CHAT WITH MIC

Lilith Brielle: Finding Connection Through the Crown

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER

For **Lilith Brielle**, becoming **Miss Philippines USA 2026** was about more than winning a crown. Born in Belgium to a Filipino father and Spanish mother, Brielle grew up primarily in Europe and felt more connected to her Spanish heritage. Joining Miss Philippines USA became an opportunity to discover another part of her identity and find a deeper connection to the Filipino community.

Brielle moved to California at 17 to pursue her dreams in entertainment. Trained in ballet and acting, she says music has always been closest to her heart—an influence she credits in part to her Filipino father, who encouraged her to sing and perform from childhood. Now a singer-songwriter, she is preparing to record and release her own music while pursuing opportunities to collaborate with other artists.

Pageantry also became an unexpected journey of self-discovery. “I think I’m stronger than I think I am,” Brielle said, reflecting on the training, confidence and determination required throughout the competition. As Miss Philippines USA, she hopes to connect with more Filipino artists and use her title to become more involved with a community she once felt was outside her reach.

Her advice to young women considering pageantry begins with understanding their purpose. “Know why you’re doing it,” she said, emphasizing that the experience should ultimately be about discovering something within yourself. For Brielle, the crown has become part of that discovery—a bridge to her Filipino heritage and a new chapter in her journey as an artist.

Beyond pageantry, Brielle sees her title as an opportunity to become more involved in the Filipino creative community. After attending the Manila International Film Festival, where she met Filipino actors, directors and producers, she hopes to continue building relationships with Filipino artists while exploring how her own music and creative work can become part of that community.

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CHAT WITH MIC Episode 81: Lilith Brielle



CHAT WITH MIC

Chris Millendez: Taking the Leap

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER

When Chris Millendez heard his name called as Mr. Philippines USA 2026, he initially stood still, wondering if there had been a mistake. The moment marked the culmination of a transformation that began long before he stepped onto the pageant stage.

Millendez said he once weighed 258 pounds and was pre-diabetic. Over approximately 16 months, he changed his nutrition and fitness habits, eventually reaching 152 pounds by coronation night. His journey became part of the reason he entered the pageant—not simply to compete, but to show others that it is never too late to take control of their health and become a better version of themselves.

His transformation followed an even greater challenge. A victim of a violent crime, Millendez suffered a gunshot wound that damaged a nerve and affected movement in his hand. The injury forced the longtime chef to step away from the career he had known for most of his life. During his recovery, he focused on fitness, nutrition, mental well-being and his Christian faith. “Sometimes you got to take a step back to take a giant leap forward in life,” he said.

The pageant also gave Millendez something he had been searching for: a stronger connection to his Filipino heritage. After spending two months traveling through the Philippines, he returned wanting to become more involved with the Filipino community in the United States. Through the pageant, he says he learned more about Filipino culture and discovered a community he had not experienced growing up.

Now Millendez hopes to turn his transformation into service through his nonprofit, Your Legacy Begins Today, with plans to return to the Philippines to share what he has learned about fitness and nutrition. He is also exploring opportunities in modeling, television and film. His message to others considering an unfamiliar path is simple: “Keep believing in yourself, keep believing in the Lord... just try it because you never know.”

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FOOD & DRINK

PARES PLEASE!

Almuchow Brings a Filipino Favorite to West Covina

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



Photos by Mic Diaz

A Filipino comfort-food favorite is making its way to West Covina. On September 21, **Almuchow Atbp.** hosted a special tasting of its new **beef pares**, giving guests a first taste of the dish ahead of its addition to the restaurant's menu, including a heartier **Pares Overload** option.

Pares has its roots in Quezon City, where the dish became popular in the late 1970s. The name pares means “pair,” referring to the pairing of tender braised beef with garlic fried rice, traditionally accompanied by a light beef broth. Over the decades, what began as an affordable roadside favorite expanded into pares kanto, pares mami and other interpretations found in restaurants, carinderias and street-food stalls throughout the Philippines.

More recently, Pares Overload has taken the dish in an even more indulgent direction, piling additional meats and toppings onto the familiar beef-and-broth combination. The style became especially visible through social media, showing how a relatively simple Filipino comfort food continues to evolve for a new generation of diners.

For Almuchow Atbp., which is already known for Filipino breakfast favorites and comfort food, adding pares expands the restaurant's menu while bringing another familiar taste of the Philippines to West Covina.

And the timing could not be better. As Southern California enters the Filipino “Ber months”—September through December—and temperatures eventually begin to cool, a steaming bowl of tender beef and savory broth offers exactly the kind of warm, satisfying meal many Filipinos associate with comfort and home.



1559 E Amar Rd, West Covina, CA 91792 • (661) 519-5760

COMMUNITY

San Beda Alumni Gather for Forgotten Island Fundraiser

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



The **San Beda Alumni Association of Southern California (SBAASC)** brought alumni, families and friends together September 26 for a fundraising screening of DreamWorks Animation's *Forgotten Island* at LOOK Dine-In Cinemas in Glendale. The event was part of the association's continuing fundraising efforts to provide college scholarships for high-achieving, low-income students.

The choice of *Forgotten Island* offered a fitting backdrop for an organization built around lasting connections. The DreamWorks animated film follows lifelong best friends Jo and Raissa as they enter the mythical island of Nakali, drawing heavily from Filipino culture, folklore and family stories while exploring friendship, memories and the meaning of home.

Those themes echoed the spirit of the San Beda gathering,

where alumni living thousands of miles from their alma mater came together around a shared history while helping create opportunities for another generation. According to the association, its fundraising efforts provided \$21,000 to San Beda University in Manila in 2025, and it has raised more than \$10,000 gross so far this year.

The impact of those efforts can already be seen in students such as Denise Penuela, who was recently selected to receive a scholarship at San Beda University's College of Arts and Sciences. For SBAASC, events such as the *Forgotten Island* screening are not simply opportunities to reconnect—they help turn the alumni community's shared connection to San Beda into tangible support for students pursuing their education.



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FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

COMMUNITY EVENTS • OCTOBER 2026

Celebrating Filipino American history, culture, community and creativity across Southern California

PEOPLE
HISTORY
CULTURE
COMMUNITY
CREATIVITY
OUR FUTURE



OCT 1 THU

- FAHM Kickoff Mahjong** ⌚ 6:00 – 9:00 PM
📍 Café 86, Placentia | **ORANGE COUNTY**
- Baryo Brunch + Bazaar** ⌚ 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
📍 Grand Central Market | **LOS ANGELES**
- Kapwa Square Dedication**
📍 Panorama City | **SAN FERNANDO VALLEY** | @cd6losangeles

OCT 2 FRI

- FilAm Creative Film Festival** ⌚ 10:00 AM
📍 Luckman Fine Arts Complex, Cal State LA | **LOS ANGELES**

OCT 3 SAT

- FilAm Creative Film Festival** ⌚ 10:00 AM
📍 Luckman Fine Arts Complex, Cal State LA | **LOS ANGELES**
- Fil-Am Festival**
📍 Santa Clarita | **SANTA CLARITA**
- FAHM UbeFest (Oct 3–4)**
📍 Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts | **CERRITOS**
- Baryo Bazaar x Grand Central Market** ⌚ 12:00 – 5:00 PM
📍 Grand Central Market | **LOS ANGELES**
- Pinoy Poolooza**
📍 Wild Rivers Waterpark, Irvine | **ORANGE COUNTY**

OCT 4 SUN

- FilAm Creative Film Festival** ⌚ 10:00 AM
📍 Luckman Fine Arts Complex, Cal State LA | **LOS ANGELES**
- Haven City Market** ⌚ 3:00 PM – 10:00 PM
📍 West Covina | **WEST COVINA**
- Sunday Jump Open Mic** ⌚ 5:00 – 7:00 PM
📍 Pilipino Workers Center | **HISTORIC FILIPINOTOWN** | @sundayjump
- PMASD Carabao 5K Run**
📍 San Diego | **SAN DIEGO**

OCT 5 MON

- SIPA Giving Greens Golf Tournament**
📍 Historic Filipinotown | @sipacares

OCT 9 FRI

- Meet LA28 in HiFi** ⌚ 12:00 PM
📍 SIPA | **HISTORIC FILIPINOTOWN** | @projectpamana

OCT 10 SAT

- FAHM/Halloween Hangout + Mini Mahjong** ⌚ 6:00 – 9:00 PM
📍 Malaya, Arcadia | **ARCADIA (LOS ANGELES COUNTY)**
- A Concert for Mindanao**
📍 Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts | **CERRITOS**
- Baryo Bazaar x Grand Central Market** ⌚ 12:00 – 5:00 PM
📍 Grand Central Market | **LOS ANGELES**
- Bass Building featuring Bambu & Friends**
📍 The Ford | **LOS ANGELES**
- FAPCCA Legacy & Media Awards Dinner Gala**
📍 Sheraton Cerritos | **CERRITOS**
- Remote Control Crawl & Trail Challenge**
📍 Eagle Rock Plaza | **EAGLE ROCK** | @projectpamana

OCT 11 SUN

- Filled Market**
📍 Smorgasburg at ROW DTLA | **LOS ANGELES** | @filledmarket
- Tikim at Tiles: Mahjong Day**
📍 Almuchow | **WEST COVINA**

OCT 16 FRI

- City of Los Angeles FAHM Honorees** ⌚ 10:00 AM
📍 City Hall Council Chambers | **LOS ANGELES**
- FilAm Fiesta** ⌚ 5:00 – 9:00 PM
📍 Anaheim Packing District | **ORANGE COUNTY** | Kabataan Culture
- City Hall FAHM Lighting Celebration** ⌚ 6:00 PM
📍 Los Angeles City Hall | **LOS ANGELES**

OCT 17 SAT

- Baryo Bazaar x Grand Central Market** ⌚ 12:00 – 5:00 PM
📍 Grand Central Market | **LOS ANGELES**
- Long Beach FAHM Celebration**
📍 Long Beach Civic Center Plaza | **LONG BEACH**
- Pistahan sa Almuchow**
📍 Almuchow | **WEST COVINA**

OCT 18 SUN

- Kultura Pilipino Day**
📍 Disneyland | **ORANGE COUNTY** | @dkababayan
- 2nd Annual Filipino American Fiesta**
📍 Museum of Ventura County | **VENTURA**

OCT 21 THU–SAT

- FilAm FunFest**
📍 OC FilAm Comedian Shows | **ORANGE COUNTY**

OCT 23 FRI

- Katipunan Poetry Slam**
📍 Historic Filipinotown | @sundayjump
- SoCal Filipinos Plaza Meetup** ⌚ 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM
📍 Plaza West Covina | **WEST COVINA**

OCT 24 SAT

- Baryo Bazaar x Grand Central Market** ⌚ 12:00 – 5:00 PM
📍 Grand Central Market | **LOS ANGELES**
- Carson FAHM Celebration** 📍 Community Center | **CARSON**
- Larry Itliong Day Festival** ⌚ 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
📍 Pilipino Workers Center | **HISTORIC FILIPINOTOWN** | @pwcs
- FAHM Brunch (Oct 24–25)** ⌚ 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
📍 Manila Inasal | **HISTORIC FILIPINOTOWN** | @socialfilipinos

OCT 25 SUN

- ManilaSound: Daytime Disco**
📍 Historic Filipinotown | @manilasound.la
- FAHM & Howl O Ween** 📍 Café 86 | **WEST COVINA**

OCT 26 MON

- Filipino American History Month Celebration** ⌚ 12:00 – 6:00 PM
📍 Café 86 | **WEST COVINA**

OCT 27

- Kuya Lord x Kasama Kamayan**

OCT 29

- Mahjong Lumpia Collab** ⌚ 6:00 – 9:00 PM 📍 Green Cheek | **ORANGE COUNTY**

OCT 31

- Mabuhay CU FAHM Poster Making Contest** 📍 MCU | **CARSON**



A COMMUNITY CALENDAR BY
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