

# **Alabang Ladies International Group**

## **Annual Report January 2011**

### **Overview**

The year started with a new board with a positive blend of old experienced hands and new fresh blood. They quickly gelled into a strong team following a team building session, which I would highly recommend for future boards. The year was marked by respect for each others' strengths and assistance given when it was needed with very little discord observed. We lost a few board members but new people volunteered very quickly to fill positions. This enabled everyone to concentrate on tasks in hand and I hope set the tone for ALIG gatherings.

Each section will provide a full report, but, as an overview, operations went very smoothly. The primary aim for ALIG is support to new people in country and existing members. Due to a professional website and displays at expat locations, we were able to catch newcomers very very quickly. At one point one lady was enjoying her first coffee with us just a few hours off the plane!

Unallocated funds were released from bank accounts and funding given to the social section to give extra entertainment to our parties.

A yahoo site was set up for husbands, however it proved to be unsuccessful.

My wish for an ALIG family event did not materialize.

Membership grew throughout the year and turn out at events was consistently high.

We have a responsibility to local charities. Not only were we able to increase funding to some of our existing groups, but we were also able to reach out and help new and different charities. Thankfully there was no Ondoy-type disaster in 2010. Having four members on the charity team was of great benefit.

One of our potential corporate sponsors was unable to transfer funds to ALIG as we do not have a BIR number due to our informal status. A full report will follow for the 2011 board decision on future actions.

Personally, I found my role very interesting and enlightening. ALIG will always be very special.

*Celia Gittus*

## **Vice President's Report**

9 General Meetings were held in 2010:

The January Annual GM was held at Sarah Prunoske's Home.

The February GM was held at Sarah Beuerle's home.

The March GM was held at Leigh Halliwell's home.

The April GM was held at Marilyn Duncan-Webbs home.

The May GM was held at Kirsten Maher's home.

No meeting where held in the summer months of June & July.

The August GM was held at Eli Fossum's home.

The September GM was held at Natalie Buijs' Home.

The October GM was held at Sarah Prunoske's home.

The November GM was held at Hilde Grimstad's home.

TGI Friday's provided lunch for most of our meetings, except for the October meeting where Jops Creative Catering had a Mongolian BBQ. The May and November Meetings were a potluck.

Attendance has been steadily increasing! The normal number of attendees is now around 60, compared to 45 last year.

We had raffles at each meeting and were able to raise P49,800 in raffle sales. Lots of prizes were won!

*Hilde Grimstad*

## **Treasurer's Report**

**Provided separately**

## Membership

ALIG had a great year in 2010 in terms of membership growth. We had a total of **200** members last year, of which 88 were new members and the rest were renewals.

This is a significant increase from two years ago and a steady growth from last year. We had a total of 146 members in 2008 and 157 in 2009.

The table below shows new membership over the last 3 years.

	2008	2009	2010
January	12	12	11
February	0	5	15
March	5	5	8
April	4	2	5
May	4	4	6
June	0	0	0
July	0	0	0
August	7	17	13
September	19	6	17
October	5	4	8
November	3	1	2
December	0	0	3
TOTAL	59	56	88

ALIG is a truly international group with over 44 different nationalities in ALIG. The main nationalities are American ( n= 52), British (n=18), Filipino (n=17), German (n=17), Dutch (n=11), Australian (n=9), Korean (n=9), French (n=6) and Canadian (n=4).

This year we continued to give members an option to go “green” by utilizing our directory on the yahoo website. But the directory is still available in printed booklet form for those who wish to have it.

*Sarah Prunoske*

## Newcomers

There were ten Newcomers Coffees held in 2010. The meetings were held at Avon McLaughlin’s, Theresa Thurman’s and Anelia Urmanova’s home and offered such hospitality that all felt welcome. Second half of the year Heidi Taylor partnered with Avon and me. She welcomed the people and was always baking delicious cakes and cookies for the meetings. Special thanks to Heidi for that.

Attendance was usually high, varying between 12 and 38 people. The attendance peak months were February-34 and August-38.

Each Newcomers Coffee added new members. In February they were 13, August added 13 as well, in September we had 10 and our extra edition in December added 4 more new members.

I have heard from numerous members that the Newcomers meetings were a lifesaver for them. They were able to get answers to questions they had from some of our members who have been here for some time.

We promoted sales of the “Arrival Survival” books.

We had the ALIG second-hand books and DVDs always on sale at the meetings.

*Anelia Urmanova*

## **Charities**

<b>Charity Budget for the year</b>	<b>845,000</b>
<b>Total charities spending for the year was</b>	<b>779,870</b>
Carried over from 2009 for Pacita roof repair	150,000
Repair cost	111,540

### **This year we have supported the following charities:**

Marillac Hills – Residential home for abused or exploited girls. The home caters up to 250 girls while they wait for their court hearings. This is a government-funded facility. We provided them P12,000 every month for their bakery program. These allow them to make bread for merienda (snacks) 4 times a week. The program also teaches the girls a skill. Starbucks continued to give us their day-old pastries, which we collected and delivered once a week for their merienda. We have celebrated birthdays once a month with a cake. We continue to give financial support for their garden-development. This year for Christmas we made lunch for all the girls, provided a small gift and a visit from Santa Claus. We had a private party for Dorm one.

Tunasan Drop in Center –this is a center for children in the area who would otherwise remain on the street. We provide P7500 a month for rice, groceries and needed transportation. This center provides washing facilities, meals and education support for up to 50 children a day. This year we provided hampers at Christmas from the budget for 100 Tunasan families.

Birthright Foundation School – This school provides education for physically and mentally disabled children and their siblings. In June we started a school-lunch-program for the children at the San Pedro dumpsite-school. We donate P6000 per month. Enrollment increased from 15 to 30 students with the introduction of this program. With personal donations from ALIG-members we provided 50 Christmas-hampers to the Birthright-families from both Tunasan and San Pedro areas.

Little Sisters of Assumption – This organization is run by a small group of nuns offering community assistance in Malibay near the airport. They provide a health clinic, livelihood project and a preschool. We donated P100,000 to them this year. This is mainly used for training for their livelihood-projects also in their preschool feeding-program, and their health programs. Our members continue to donate drink cans for one of their livelihood project. They are making mini-jeepnies and airplanes from the cans and are also sewing bags and purses from billboard tarpolines. These are sold at Cultura Philipines-stores.

We also provided 5000 pesos for their Christmas celebration.

Pacita Residential Center - This is a residential home for homeless children and caters to approximately 40 children ages 7 to 18. Each month we provide them P5000 for rice and P2500 for toiletries. We also have a rice sponsorship program where our members can provide a bag of rice each month, or a one off donation. This year we also donated money for a roof-repair and a well pump. A Christmas-party was provided and each child received a gift donated from ALIG members.

Philippine General Hospital – is a public hospital in Manila where we sponsor the NICU (Neo Natal Intensive Care Unit) ward. We donated P100,000 this year. This is used to buy various required medical equipment for this ward.

House of Light- This is a residential home for 7 children who are cared for by a house parent. We provide them P2500 a month for food and supplies.

#### Other

Members of ALIG, along with friends and family continued the school sponsorship program for Tunasan Drop-In-Center. Thank you to Dina Hourihan for coordinating the program again this year.

We had a kind birthday donation of P21,000 from a couple of our ALIG members and ALIG matched the amount and gave P40,000 to Springboard Foundation. They bought manual ventilators for Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital.

Throughout the year ALIG contributed to various charitable proposals.

The charity committee would like to thank all the members of ALIG and their families for their generous donations of time, money and items.

Special thanks to;

Dina Hourihan as coordinator for Tunasan Drop-In-Center and all the ladies who went to Tunasan and worked with the children each week.

Sheri Baghaie as coordinator for Marillac Hills and all the ladies who went every other week to visit the girls.

Stefanie Riedinger for all her wonderful craft ideas and her kind donations.

Betty Onken for organizing and running the garage sale.

Leigh Anne Reichow for letting us use her house for the garage sale and all the volunteers who helped with the sale or donated items.

Doris Wolf and Anja Rittner for doing such a great job with our calendar.

The committee for our annual dinner dance 2010 making the fundraiser a big success.

*Betty Onken, Cora Lynch, Pam Johnston and Eli Fossum*

## **Programs**

Speakers for ALIG General Meeting for 2010

<b>Month</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Subject</b>
January	No Speaker – AGM	
February	Doctor from the Asian Eye Institute	General Eye Care
March	Chris Hoffman	Project Officer of International Organization for Migration (IOM) and his work in Haiti
April	John Havan	Self Defense
May	No Speaker	
June	No Speaker	
July	No Speaker	
August	Sarah Novak	Usage of various internet mediums such as Face Book, Twitter etc...
September	Dr. Joel Nicdao	Plastic Surgery – What works and what doesn't
October	Pam Johnston Cora Lynch	ALIG Supported Charities
November	No Speaker	
December	No Meeting	

*Stella Gonzales & Nancy Beachler*

## Day Social Events

Date	Activity	Participants
Feb 15	Charity outing: Pacita Residential Center, Birthright Foundation School Visit factory Custom Clay, lunch at Sophia's in Westgate	
March 4	Manila Now 2010, lunch at Café Breton	
April 14	Seven lakes San Pablo Laguna, lunch and Carlito's workshop	21
May 15	Pahiyas festival in Lucban (Individual trip this year, provided all info)	
Sept 3	Chinese Cemetery, lunch at Golden Fortune Restaurant, Divisoria	30
Oct 8	LazerXtreme ATC, lunch at Cibo, pearl talk by Jewelmer	14/19
Nov 23	Higantes festival in Angono, Blanco museum	26

*Natalie Buijs and Annamaria Kissaun*

## Evening Social Events

Date	Event	Location	Food/Drink
April	Happy Hour	Manong's Bar & Grill	
May 8th	Cinco de Mayo	Cassandra's Place	Pot Luck
June/July	None		
Aug. 27th	Happy Hour	Union Jack	
Sept. 24th	Happy Hour	Manong's Bar & Grill	
Oct. 30th	Halloween	Melissa Nicholls Home	Jops Melrose

Dec. 4th	Progressive Dinner:		
	Pre Dinner Drinks	Leigh Halliwell	(Food) Jops Melrose
	Dinner	Eli Fossum	(Wine) The Wine Museum
	Afterparty	Cesilie Tveit	
2011			
Jan. 28th	Happy Hour	Appenzeller	
Feb. 19th	BALL	Alabang Country Club	
			(Food) Alabang C.C.
			(Wine) The Wine Museum
			(Soft Drinks) Coca Cola

*Cassandra Hilton and Linda Ford*

## **Newsletter/Website**

[ALIGManila.com](http://ALIGManila.com), our public-facing site, continues to act as a source of information to expats arriving or living in Metro Manila. With the permission of our member-writers, we've posted valuable information on expat living, tips on Manila/Alabang living, and nutrition. In 2010, there were 17,149 visits to the website with the most visits to the homepage followed by the Living in Alabang FAQs. Willy Nagtegaal was board member and tour-de-force on both the website and newsletter through August when she returned to her home country. Willy has left behind an updated FAQ which needs a bit of TLC and can be added to our website for 2011!

We have 27 links to our website and regularly receive emails to our main email address, [info@aligmanila.com](mailto:info@aligmanila.com), with inquires on membership, advertising, and upcoming metro Manila events. The main questions from prospective members and expats are focused on advice. I believe this is because we have such a warm and authentic tone throughout our website (true to the group) and visitors know we can help with schools, dogs, shopping and, most importantly, socializing! The top search word used to find the homepage: **"alabang social groups" (93.12%)**

There were 11 monthly newsletters issued, with a combined Nov-Dec newsletter at the end of the year. ALIG was able to find new sponsors in the culinary and arts world in the fourth quarter to spur us onward. We found that even members who departed for new adventures contributed their advice and kept-up with ALIG news from their new homes. It's nice to see a pride in ALIG by our "alumni."

I'd also like to express a special thanks to Fawn Babin, Sheri Baghaie and Stephanie Lindqvist for their help with the newsletter.

*Kristen Owen*