The Philippine Consulate General in Vancouver led the month-long celebrations of the 121st Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence in Metro Vancouver. This year, apart from the commemoration of the Philippine Independence, the Filipino-Canadian communities in Canada are also celebrating two other important milestones, the 70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Philippines-Canada diplomatic relations and the first Canada-wide celebration of the Filipino Heritage Month this June.

The following are the highlights of this year’s celebrations:

1. **Flag Raising Ceremony at the Filipino Plaza, 01 June 2019**

   The annual flag raising ceremony, organized by the United Filipino Canadian Association of British Columbia (UFCABC) was held at the Filipino Plaza in Vanness, Vancouver on 1 June. The simple flag-raising kicked off this year’s month-long Philippine Independence celebrations. The Philippine Consulate officers and staff attended the flag raising rites, which was also graced by MP Don Davies, and other members of the Filipino community.

   ![Left photo: Deputy Consul General Leo Tito Ausan, Jr. delivers his remarks; Right photo: MP Don Davies for Vancouver-Kingsway addresses the Filipino community at the Filipino Plaza.](image)

2. **Richmond’s Celebration of 121st Philippine Independence Day and the Filipino Heritage Month**

   Another flag raising event was held at the Richmond City Hall on 8 June 2019 in celebration of the abovementioned milestones. The Multicultural Helping House Society (MHHS) led by Mr. Tom Avendano and Ms. Marilou Yodogawa of MHHS 55+sers coordinated the whole-day event which included a flag-raising and singing of the Philippine national anthem, congratulatory remarks from various Filipino and Canadian officials, and celebration of the rich Philippine cultural
heritage thru dances, songs and martial arts (arnis). A proclamation on the Philippine Independence Day signed by Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brody was also presented to Mr. Tomas Avendano of the MHHS.

3. The Abbotsford Filipino Canadian Society PID celebration, 8 June

The Abbotsford Filipino Canadian Society (TAFCS) held the first PID celebration and Filipino Heritage Month within the Fraser Valley region at the Rotary Stadium in Abbotsford, BC on 8 June 2019. Deputy Consul General Leo Tito Ausan represented the Consulate and delivered his remarks on behalf of the Consul General. Also in attendance were MLA Mable Elmore and other local government officials. Adding color to the day-long celebration were the various performances such as traditional dances and songs.
4. **Philippine Days Festival, North Vancouver, 8-9 June 2019**

Post, led by the undersigned, attended the flag raising ceremonies at the Civic Plaza in North Vancouver on 9 June 2019. The undersigned was joined by North Vancouver City Mayor Linda Buchanan, MLA Mable Elmore, PCG and POLO officers and staff, and officers of the Metro Vancouver Philippine Arts and Culture Exposition Society (MVPACES) led by Mr. Alvin Relleve, the organizers of the Philippine Days Festival. MLA Elmore presented the undersigned with the Proclamation declaring the month of June as the Philippine Heritage Month in the City of North Vancouver. Following the flag-raising, Post joined the annual parade held at the Waterfront Park to celebrate the Philippine Days Festival and the 13th anniversary of MVPACES.

(Clockwise from top): 1) Consul General Austria is joined by North Vancouver Mayor Her Worship Linda Buchanan, MLA Mable Elmore and officials of the MVPACES; 2) Consul General Austria poses with the Filipino-Canadian Community in North Vancouver; 3) A signed proclamation from the North Vancouver City; 4) ConGen Austria addresses the Filipino Canadian community in North Vancouver

5. **New Westminster PID celebration, 9 June 2019**

The Royal City Sister City Society, under the leadership of Ms. Anicia Miles, spearheaded this year’s celebration of the anniversary of Philippine Independence which included a thanksgiving mass and the hoisting of the Philippine flag at the New Westminster City Hall by the undersigned and Mayor Jonathan Cote of New Westminster, a parade at the Quay participated in by the PCG officers and staff, and an afternoon of cultural performances.
6. “Proudly Philippines” Food and Travel Fair, 15 June 2019

On 15 June 2019, the Philippine Consulate General successfully held the “Proudly Philippines” food and travel fair at the Robson Square in Vancouver, as its centerpiece activity for the 121<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the declaration of Philippine Independence Day. The whole day event opened with a program hosted by Filipino celebrity news anchors, Jason Pires of CTV Morning Live and Michelle Eliot, host of CBC Radio’s BC Today. MP Don Davis, BC Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology Bruce Ralston and Vancouver Deputy Mayor Sarah Kirby-Yung, took turns in congratulating the Philippines and honoring the Filipino community for their invaluable contributions to the economic development and cultural mosaic of Canada.

Proudly Philippines featured Philippine food products and cuisine, tour packages to travel destinations in the Philippines, and some Filipino businesses in Vancouver, as well as cultural performances, with the objective of creating a greater awareness on the Philippines among Canadians and second-generation Filipinos, while also serving as a center for Filipinos and their families to congregate at in celebration of the above-cited occasions. The visitors who flocked to Robson Square for Proudly Philippines were treated to cultural dance numbers, musical entertainment, kali and arnis demonstrations, and a lot of free tasting and giveaways from the exhibitors/vendors.
Left photo: Consul General Maria Andrelita S. Austria welcomes guests to the opening ceremony of the “Proudly Philippines” Food and Travel Fair, held on June 15, 2019 at the Robson Square, Vancouver, in celebration of the 121st anniversary of the proclamation of Philippine Independence, the 70th year of PH-CA relations and the Canada-wide declaration for the very first time of the month of June as Filipino Heritage Month; Right photo: Consul General Maria Andrelita S. Austria cuts the ribbon to officially open the fair, with the assistance of (L-R) Senior Tourism Officer Pallugna, Deputy Mayor Kirby-Yung and MP Davies.

7. **UFCABC Independence Day Gala, 15 June 2018**

The annual UFCABC Independence Day Gala was held on 15 June to celebrate the 121st PID and Filipino Heritage Month. The undersigned, together with PCG Officers and staff, likewise attended the Philippine Independence Day Gala Night. Local officials, notably Member of Parliament for Vancouver Kingsway Don Davies, a staunch Filipino community supporter, were present to celebrate with the Filipino-Canadian community. Guests were serenaded by Filipino guests performers Mr. Ryan Fuentes and Ms. Sheryn Regis.

Left photo: Consul General Austria addresses the Filipino community at the UFCABC Gala; Right photo: Congen Austria is joined by members of the Filipino community
The undersigned, together with PCG officers, attended the 11th Annual Philippine Independence Day Celebration of Surrey Philippine Independence Day Society (SPIDS) on 16 June 2019. The undersigned, in her remarks, congratulated the organizers on their 11th anniversary, a landmark event for SPIDS spearheaded by Ms. Narima Dela Cruz, who has been at the forefront in celebrating Philippine culture and heritage in the City of Surrey. The event was also attended by Mayor Doug McCallum of Surrey, city councillors, MLAs, MPs, and Filipino community members from the cities of Surrey and Delta.

Left photo: Consul General Austria addresses the Filipino community at the SPIDS Philippine Independence Day event; Right photo: Congen Austria joins officers of SPIDS and members of the Filipino community in Surrey.

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