

Celebrating 33 Wonderful Years In The Printing Business

MAKE A
Colorful
IMPRESSION



KATH C. EUSTAQUIO-DERLA

For our “super parents,” Homer & Sol.

Make A Colorful Impression

Philippine Copyright © 2016 by Katherine C. Eustaquio-Derla

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher or author. The exception would be in the case of brief quotations embodied in articles or reviews and pages where permission is specifically granted by the publisher or author.

Printed by



Telfax: 7483551

Mobile Landline: 2086637

Mobile Number: 09178559889

Email: hsgrafikprint@yahoo.com

Website: hsgrafikprint.blogspot.com

Design and copy by Kath C. Eustaquio-Derla

Edits by Jacquie Bamba Zamora

Printed in the Philippines

Introduction

By Kath C. Eustaquio-Derla

Our parents are not rich people. But growing up, they never made us feel like we were lacking.

I couldn't remember a time when our parents said, "We can't do that because we are not rich" or "We can't buy that because we don't have money."

Maybe there were times our parents said these things to each other. Perhaps we were too young to remember. Perhaps we never heard. Perhaps there were moments of doubts, fears and scarcity.

And perhaps these moments were plenty. But they never, ever, told us or made us feel that we can't pursue anything we want or become anyone we want during those formative years.

Our parents are not rich people. But growing up, they never made us feel like we can't pursue the courses we wanted or even the universities of our choice.

When I was younger, I was unfamiliar with all the sacrifices our parents endured to put us through school. They never told us, at least explicitly. But that doesn't mean that I didn't appreciate every single drop of sweat or every sleepless night they had to go through just so we can all graduate in time.

Our parents are not rich people. But they have so much more than just material wealth. They have family and friends wherever they go.

Our parents are not rich people. But they never pretend to be someone they are not and they don't use other people to get what they want. They may not be rich but they are blessed, in the truest sense of the word. And they gave their children one of the most precious gifts anyone could ever have—*choices*.



They equipped us with *choices* to pursue what we want in this life. Even if it means being far away from home. Even if it means studying a little longer than most people. But the best thing about having choices is that, ultimately, each path is always rooted in family. And that's what I want to immortalize in words.

When my Dad asked me to write this book for his 60th birthday, we initially planned to capture the 33 years of the family business. I said *yes*—even though I had no idea how to do it.

I grew up hearing stories about how my parents started the business while they were both still employed in separate companies. I find it fascinating and I'm afraid that even I can't surpass what my parents have done when they were my age. But in the course of writing, a particular theme started to take shape—*gratitude*.

In this book, I attempt to detail the colorful journey my parents took to be where they are now. Here, my family and I will talk about the rough patches, the golden years, the heartaches and the many people who helped us along the way.

This book is filled with short anecdotes, musings and rants (most of which may come from me), but as a whole, this book is about Homer & Sol, who have sacrificed so much for their children. They are very selfless people who have decided to dedicate their whole lives to their children.

And for these reasons, we are proud to call them our “super parents.”



Every Christmas, we take turns putting the "star" on our Christmas tree. Mom and Dad would take turns holding us up, helping us reach the top. For as long as we can remember, our parents have always helped us reach for the "stars." Thank you, Mom and Dad.

*Photography: Mad Minds Photography
Makeup & Styling: Ada De Pedro & Kath Eustaquio-Derla
Studio: Toasted Mallows*

Kath

A man in a dark suit and tie is sitting on a chrome stool, looking down. To his left is a large, vibrant splash of paint in various colors including yellow, orange, red, green, and blue. The word "homer" is written in white lowercase letters across the center of the paint splash.

homer

The Early Years

Homero is the 2nd of 7 children of Urbano and Herminia Eustaquio, the couple who lived at the heart of Marikina.

It was midday. The sun was up and there were very little clouds. Even in the cool shades of the municipality hall, the heat was merciless in this part of town. There was no public office that day. There were no townsfolk rushing to get their affairs in order. There were no government workers slaving behind the counters. The municipality hall was quiet and empty, all except for the security guard eating “matshakaw” and sipping cola during his break, and a painter and his son painting letters on one of the walls.

The boy was small, about eleven or twelve. He watched his father painstakingly outline the letters that spelled “Vote For Congressman” that took his father the whole morning to paint. After a quick lunch of tilapia fish and steamed white rice from the eatery across the street, the father and his son returned to work to fill out the outlines with black paint. His father's hands were calloused and creased. His palms felt thick and his fingernails were never without some streak of leftover paint. His father was old, but his eyes were sharp with details and his hands were skilled with the brushes.

The boy admired his father's work, often going with him to help paint letterings or create political posters for elections. At a young age, the boy knew that he would follow in his father's footsteps somehow. But as he watched his father make out the words on the wall and paint the same letters

over and over again, he thought there must be some other way to get the job done faster. One day, he gathered some scrap wood, nails and his mother's old stockings. That day, he experimented with his first silkscreen template. It was 1968, a time when graphic design and advertising in the Philippines were in its infancy years.

Homero (H): Sa murang edad, na-expose ako sa printing dahil sa tatay ko. Grade 6 ako noon. Nag-aaral ako sa Malanday Elementary School.

H: Gumagawa kami ng tatay ko ng mga lettering para sa posters at signages sa backyard printing namin. Sa Roosevelt College naman, tinulungan ko ang tatay ko na gumawa ng stage design. Gumagawa din kami ng designs para sa mga karosa kapag may may float contest ang U-TEX.

H: Kapag nagle-lettering kami noon, mano-mano, puro kamay, kaya madumi. Ang ginawa ko, gumawa ko ng stencil ng silk screen para mapabilis ang trabaho namin. Ang una kong ginamitan ng silkscreen template ay yung campaign posters ng isang politician sa San Juan, Rizal. Bumilis ang trabaho kaya mas marami kaming naging kliyente.

In the years that followed, the father and son duo would use that silkscreen prototype to paint letters, make posters and other point-of-purchase materials. In the future, that little boy would use the same printing technique, of course adapting to new technologies, on stickers, paper bags, posters and even temporary car plates.



Homero at work.



Homero with colleagues from the advertising agency.



Homero with friends at a swimming party.



The Big World of Advertising

Tell us about your first job.

H: Ang unang-una kong trabaho ay sa Screen Fashion sa Marikina. Si Ninong Totong (Marcelino Eustaquio) mo ang nagpasok sa akin. Artist siya sa Screen Fashion noon.

How old were you when you had your first job at Screen Fashion?

H: Naku, ilang taon nga pala ako noon?
(Looks at Sol)

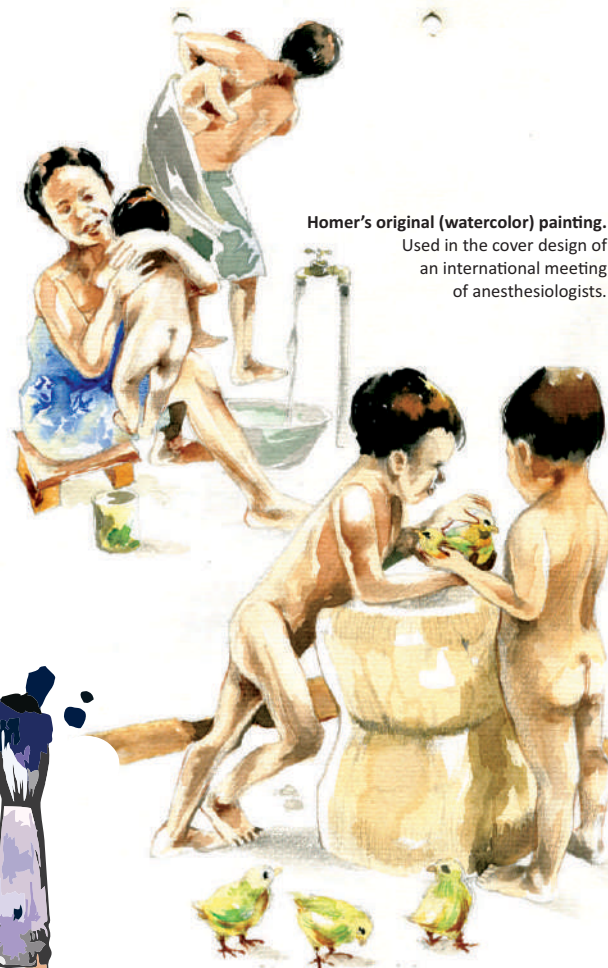
Sol (S): Naku, wag mo akong tanungin diyan. Hindi ko alam. Tanungin mo ako nung nasa buhay mo na ako. (Laughs)

H: Nagtrabaho ako sa Screen Fashion for three years. Then, naisip ko na mag-apply sa advertising agency sa Makati. Natanggap ako sa Advertising and Marketing Associates (AMA).

S: Yun ang “AMA” dati. AMA ngayon iba na eh, IT school na.

H: I worked in AMA for five years. Nag-start ako as a junior artist tapos naging senior artist ako. Eventually, naging junior art director ako. Sa AMA, I handled dietetic products, mga design of collaterals, TV ads and other campaign materials.

H: Madaming masasayang kuwento noon sa advertising agency. Kapag mayroon kaming client visits sa AMA, lahat ng tao sa Art



Homer's original (watercolor) painting.
Used in the cover design of
an international meeting
of anesthesiologists.



Department kailangan naka-formal or corporate attire. Instead na maglagay kami ng neck tie, ang ginagawa namin ay nag-ka-cut kami na korte ng neck tie sa illustration board. Yun ang nilalagay namin sa mga collar ng polo namin kapag may client visit. Kami nagpasimula non sa Art Department.

S: Naku tama lang pala na ngayon na tayo ininterview noh? Kasi after ilang years pa, makakalimutan mo na lahat yan. (Laughs)

H: Papunta na ako sa pagiging art director but I resigned after five years in AMA and transferred to another company, Intergraphics, where I handled appliances and car accessories accounts. I also handled Philips, isa sa mga leading technology companies in the Philippines at that time.



Homer's original watercolor painting.
Used in the design of a DHL Christmas card.



Some of Homer's Caricatures



Homer at work.



Homer with his life-long friends from Marikina.



H: Kapag nag-su-shooting kami ng products ng Pancake House noon, kailangan mag-isip kami ng tricks sa photography. Wala pang digital camera noon. Kapag ice cream yung kinukuhanan namin, dapat hindi matunaw kaya gumagamit kami ng mashed potato with food coloring para maging ube or vanilla colored.

H: Sa totoo lang, pareho lang din yung work na ginagawa ko sa AMA. Pero sa Intergraphics, binigyan ako ng boss ko ng chance na magtayo ng sarili kong company to support the printing needs of the clients. Mag-syota na kami niyan ng Mommy mo.

H: 1983 noon, nasa Intergraphics pa ako. Nagtayo kami ni Sol ng sarili naming printing company, **HS Grafik Print**. Dapat Grafik Print lang, kaso ayaw ng DTI ng walang prefix, kaya naging HS Grafik Print.

S: Since advertising agency lang yung Intergraphics, wala silang printing. So nagbigay ng opportunity yung boss ni Homer na magtayo siya ng company to offer silk screen printing. Sinabi sa kanya ng boss niya, magtayo ka ng isang company para dun natin ibabato yung printing jobs natin. Doon na nag-open yung doors namin to printing. That time mag-boyfriend na tayo. Doon nagsimula ang HS Grafik Print.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black sleeveless top and a grey skirt, is sitting on a grey chair. She is looking towards the camera with a serious expression. Her hands are clasped together on her lap. The background is a vibrant, abstract watercolor splash in shades of pink, red, yellow, and blue, with black dots scattered throughout. The word "soledad" is written in a white, serif font across the center of the image.

soledad

The Early Years

Soledad is the youngest of the 3 children of Eugenio and Rosario Castillo, the couple who lived in a barrio in Caloocan City, called Sta. Quiteria.

As a carefree child, Soledad used to gather *kuhol* (snails), *palaka* (frog) and *labong* (bamboo shoots) for her family's dinner. Growing up, her parents were so contented with their lives that they never thought of owning a real property. This was because they lived in such a way that they can just move their house from one place to another. As a young girl, she would get furious that she would urinate on top of the people who were carrying their house in a *bayanihan* style, usually relatives and townsfolks.

But she was a happy child, however, this happiness ended when they needed to move permanently from Caloocan City to Quezon City because their old place was being developed into a subdivision.



Young Sol with her mother at a school function.



Young Sol at a school play.



Left. Young Sol during her eldest sister's wedding, Felomena (Luming).

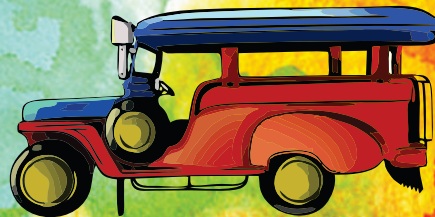


Right. Young Sol with her late elder sister Ester (Ester).

Their house was dismantled and reconstructed but they ended up owning only half of their original home. The family of her older sister's husband occupied the other half.

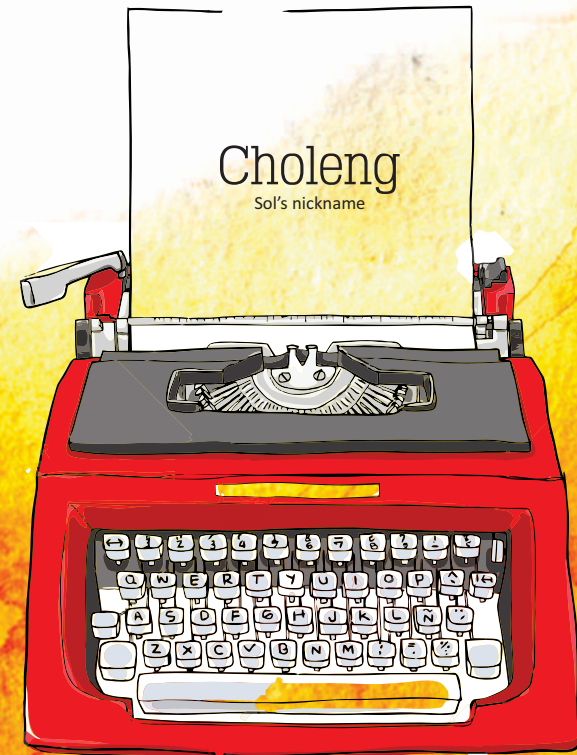
That was when she started hating the world. She hated the new place. She missed their old house, their old neighborhood and her old friends. In 6th grade, she was also forced to transfer to a new school. At this young age, she felt helpless. So she promised to herself that one day, she will leave this place and will create a nice home for her and her future family to live in.

Her father worked as family driver for a childless American couple. His employer's wife, Dabby, offered to finance Sol's education, provided that she will maintain high grades.



When she finished high school, Dabby helped her through the first two years in college until she was ready to support herself. In her third year, she told Dabby that she got herself a part-time job at a small accounting firm so she can pay for her last two years in college. Dabby was so proud of her foster child. She stopped the financial aid but the emotional support continued to pour in.

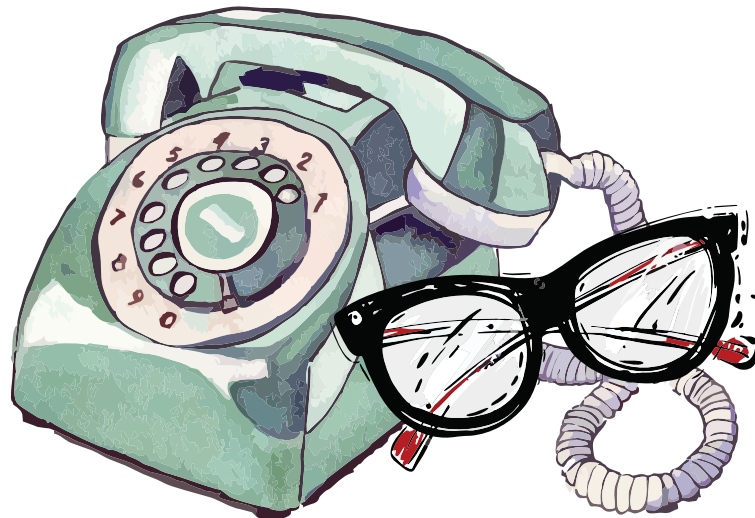
It was a difficult life and her anger towards the world helped her to stick to the right path. She worked as a secretary at the accounting firm during the day, attended night classes, finished her homework in buses and jeepneys and helped her parents in whatever way she can.



When she graduated, she sent a graduation photo to Dabby, who now resides in the U.S. with a note on the back that said, "This is me because of you. How can I ever repay you?" Dabby replied, "Look around you, do the same for someone else when you have the chance." And she did. Before their first child attended school, Homer and Sol paid for the college education of two relatives, one from each side.

Sol (S): Ang first job ko is reliever secretary ng four months sa Philippine Virginia Tobacco Administration (PVTa), kasi nanganak yung original na secretary. Second year college palang ako noon.

S: May klase ako sa Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) ng 8 a.m. kaya pagkatapos ng klase ko, kailangan ko pumasok sa office ng 9 a.m. Sa Cubao yan eh, sa Farmers, yung luma pa na building. After office, babalik na naman ako ng PUP kasi may klase ako ng 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.. Halos isang semester ko yan ginawa.



S: Sinamahan ko yung kaibigan ko na si Lorna na mag-apply sa accounting firm ni Oscar kasi may nakita kami na sign board na nangangailangan ng secretary. Ang pangalan ng company ay Chartered Business Services.

S: Since gusto ko na maging accountant, sinamahan ko si Lorna na mag-apply. Payat ng payat ako noon, 90 pounds lang ako, 24 inches lang yung bewang ko.

S: Sa Chartered Business Services ko na meet si Ninong Oscar mo, siya yung owner ng company. Lately ko lang nalaman na sabi pala ni Oscar noon, bakit hindi pa ako yung nag-apply. Mas pasok kasi yung skills ko noon sa pagiging secretary kasi marunong ako mag electric typewriter. Tinuruan kasi ako ng foster mother ko na si Dabby na gumamit non. Hinanap ako noon ni Oscar sa PUP, eventually, sabi niya doon na ako magtrabaho.



Sol at the accounting firm.



Sol with her nieces and nephew.



Sol at the Matabungkay beach in Batangas.



Sol with her friends in college.

How did he find you?

S: Tinanong niya kay Lorna kung saan ako nagtatrabaho noon. Yung office ng PVTa at ng Chartered Business Services dati magkatapat lang. Doon na nag-start yung destiny ko kasi gusto ko talagang maging Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

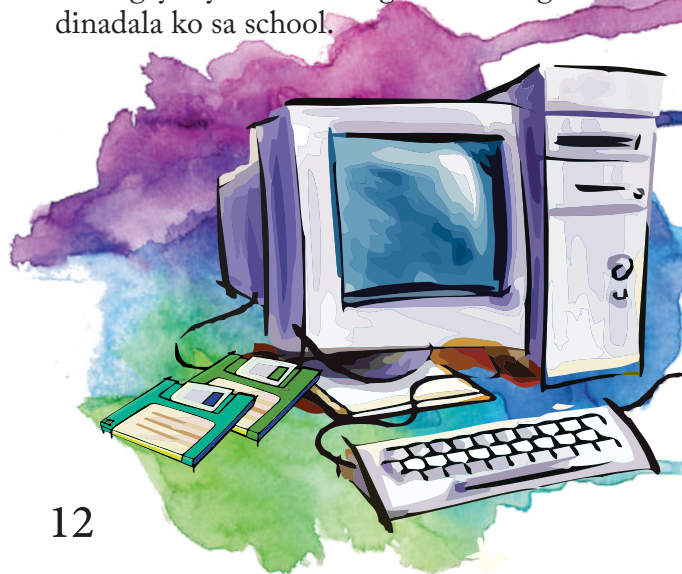
S: Binibigyan ako ni Oscar ng mga tips sa accounting at tinuruan niya ako. Parang naging mentor ko siya. Hangang naka-graduate ako, sa company niya ako nagtrabaho. Five years ako nag-aral. Nung natapos ko na yung two-year secretaryship ko, since gusto ko talaga maging accountant, tinuloy ko na sa accountancy.

S: Ito nga yung nagagalit yung nanay ko kasi bakit pa daw ako mag-aaral e graduate na ako ng secretary. Sabi ko gusto ko din maging professional. Naintindihan din naman ako ni Oscar kaya tinulungan niya ako to the extent na pati yellow paper, ballpen at pencil binibigay niya. Pati adding machine ng office dinadala ko sa school.

S: Tapos diyan ko pala makikilala si Homer kasi nung nanga-ilangan kami ng artist na gagawa ng logo, yung kaibigan ni Oscar na si Edwin, ni-refer si Homer sa amin. Kaya sabi ko lagi kay Oscar, who will be my forever Sir, hinding hindi ko siya makakalimutan, not just because he guided me in my chosen career, but most importantly he gave me my Homer...

S: So ginawa ni Homer yung logo namin. Hanggang sa niligawan niya ako tapos naging mag boyfriend-girlfriend kami, tapos hinahatid niya ako sa school. Doon niya kinukuwento yung mga ginagawa niya sa office. After two years, nagkaroon kami ng common interest and opportunity na itayo yung HS Grafik Print.

S: When we founded the company, hindi pa kami mag-asawa, that explains why all the papers of HS Grafik Print is in my name, kasi takot siya na mawala ako, ha ha ha... parang yung company ang unang nagtali sa aming dalawa.





how  started

hsgrafikprint
WeDesign/WePrint



HS Grafik Print started out like any other mom-and-pop operation: at home or in the backyard. Homer and Sol started out with very little working capital, so small that they had to wait for their respective monthly salaries to buy raw materials and supplies before they can start on a project. On paper, they used Oscar's accounting firm as their first business address – and business phone, to which Sol's former mentor and boss agreed upon.

Why did you use Oscar's address and office phone for HS Grafik Print?

Sol (S): Para kapag may client na tumawag, may sasagot, which is ako nga because I worked there. E di parang ang laki-laki na kaagad ng HS Grafik Print kasi may secretary na. May blessing yan ang boss ko.

Their very first client was an automotive aircon manufacturer which was then called Nippondenso. They started producing custom-designed stickers using the conventional process of silk screen printing.

When Oscar left for the U.S., Sol inherited some of his accounting firm's clients, one of which was the Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists (PSA).

It was then when the couple decided to focus on their small but growing operations while Sol continued to work as an accountant of PSA to continue her accountancy practice.

S: Pareho kami ni Homer na employed that time. Pero pinili namin na mag-focus sa business. Si Homer nag-resign na sa Intergraphics while I continued my accounting profession by providing the accounting needs of some clients that Oscar left me.

mom-and-pop (adjective)

relating to a small retail business, usually owned and operated by members of a family:
a mom-and-pop grocery.

The mom-and-pop operations continued. From their first rented apartment in Project 4, Quezon City, the small family transferred to their first, privately owned home in Cainta, Rizal, bringing with them the small business.

Unlike some small businesses, the long list of clients came first before the fleet of printing equipment. In fact, HS Grafik Print operated for a long time without their own printing machines. From 1983 to 2006, Homer and Sol acted as the “middle men” or “jobbers” between clients (both local and international) and printing suppliers who have their own equipment.


S: Hindi kami marunong mag-computer ni Homer noon. Pero nagtiyaga kami na pindot ng pindot. Hindi namin kayang bumili ng computer books. Ang ginawa namin nagpa-photo copy kami ng libro ng kaibigan namin. Yun ang ginamit namin para matuto ng CorelDRAW, a design software.

H: Mayroon din kaming mga suppliers na naging mabubuting kaibigan, isa na dyan si Mang Rene, owner of Emerald Commercial. Isa kami sa mga unang-unang customers niya. Sa kanya kami bumibili ng mga paper materials.

But unlike other “jobbers,” HS Grafik Print used the latest in computer design technology to produce top quality, camera-ready materials. This dedication to the back-of-house printing process made them one of the most sought-after jobbers in the local printing industry. It also helped the business grow their list of clients, which soon included other medical societies, retail brands, automotive companies and schools.

H: Noong una, tinuturuan ko lang si Sol kung paano gumawa ng quotation for a printing job or production. Tapos nang natuto siya, mayroon pala siyang mga shortcuts na mas madaling intindihin.





H: Nagkaroon na kami ng rate per page. Yun ang kagalingan ng pagiging CPA ni Sol. Ako sa creatives, siya sa finance. Napaka-gandang partnership. Kaya nga noong una pa lang, naisip ko na talagang mag sarili. Na-foresee ko na kasi yung tandem namin mag go-grow talaga, kasi nga magkaiba kami ng profession. Wala kaming conflict of interest. Tandem talaga.

S: Yun din ang naging edge namin sa ibang printers, kasi artist si Homer, so we're giving the design for free basta sa amin magpapa-print. As for me, noong una, parang worried ako kasi hindi ko na nagagamit ang pagiging accountant ko. Sabi naman ni Homer, "Anong hindi, e yang mga ginagawa mo sa negosyo, kung hindi ka accountant, magagawa mo ba?" Which is true, kaya nga siya sa art, ako sa computations.


S: But the best thing that happened is that we have all the time for our family. Sabi ko nga dati sa mga anak ko, saan naman kayo makaka-hanap ng mga magulang na sa pagtulog at pag-gising nyo nasa tabi ninyo. Maybe that's the reason why mababait sila, bantay sarado, ha ha ha.

As the years passed, a pattern emerged. While HS Grafik Print catered to all printing needs from paper bags to temporary car plates, they soon specialized in souvenir programs, annual reports, yearbooks and similar printed materials.

When Ramon Gonzales, owner of RNG Studios and a co-parent at Roosevelt College Science High School, referred them as a print supplier, HS Grafik Print's decades' worth of experience in print and design enabled them to produce top-quality yearbooks given on the students' graduation day.



camera ready (adjective) PRINTING
(of matter to be printed) in the right form and
of good quality to be reproduced
photographically into a printing plate.



H: Yung studio ni Ramon ang official na photographer ng mga schools sa Marikina. Naki-criticize ang mga pictures niya kasi kapag daw na-print sa yearbook, it's either malabo or maitim. E nung tinignan ko yung output ng RNG Studios, napaka-ganda ng quality. Kaya sinubukan namin gumawa ng yearbook. Ang unang client namin ay Sta. Elena High School in Marikina.

S: Nakipag-deal pa nga si Homer na kapag hindi maganda yung ginawa namin na yearbook, walang bayad. And we're talking about hundreds of thousands worth of goods. Nagawa namin ng maganda. Doon na-open yung doors namin sa yearbook printing.





H: HS Grafik Print ang nagpasimula na magbigay ng yearbooks sa mga students during graduation day. Yung iba kasi, years and years after pa maibigay. College graduate na, wala pa din high school yearbooks. Ang joke nga dyan di ba kapag "year" book, ilang years bago maibigay. Naiba ng HS Grafik Print kung ano yung nakagawian na.

S: Wala kaming ahente. Word of mouth lang talaga ang nakatulong sa amin kasi syempre kapag may nakakita ng yearbook na gawa namin, hahanapin na kung sino ang gumawa, kaya dumami ang nagpapa-print sa amin.

The small family operations grew and its milestones are parallel to their own children's growth. In a way, the business can even be seen as the couple's first child, with several growth milestones of its own.

Finally, businessman Jun Delos Santos gave Homer and Sol a way to buy their own printing and cutting machines. Business was good but unfortunately, calamity struck in 2009.



In 2009, HS Grafik Print operated in a small, rented commercial space in Karangalan, Cainta. The day started out like any other. The couple left their home in Cainta early to open their shop. It was raining. The family was used to the flash floods that come and go after a continuous downpour.

At that time, the eldest was working at a digital advertising agency in Ortigas while the second daughter was taking up architecture at the University of Santo Tomas. The two daughters stayed home to man the house while the youngest child, who was then pursuing chemistry at the University of the Philippines, went to the campus for their organization's extra-curricular activity.

The rain continued to pour and the two daughters dutifully lifted the floor-level furniture that could get soaked when the ankle-length flood water comes rushing in. Having lived in the Cainta home for more than 20 years, they were used to such events.

But the flood water continued to rise. In no time, it reached their knees and soon, their waists.

Water and electricity were cut. Communications were dead. It was pitch black inside the house. Their five dogs—two adult Shih Tzu and three small ones—were securely fenced-in on top of the Uratex single-bed foam that miraculously floated.

Photo taken post-Ondoy.

After a few hours, the flood water inside the house subsided a bit. But there was no way out. They couldn't get to the two-story house across their lot because the newspaper they used earlier to soak the wayward water stuck to the front door and jammed it shut.

The dogs had their milk formula while the two daughters survived on chocolate snack bars—the only food item that survived intact when their refrigerator floated and toppled face down because of the flood water.

Mobile phones were dead. Their last communication with their parents at the Karangalan office was about 10 o'clock that evening. Everything was dark.

At the office, things were much worse.



hope

Thankfully, the family car was soaked but didn't float away because of an open window.



Hiedel Machine soaked in mud



Hundreds of thousands worth of printed goods were destroyed.



Car being towed for repair



Having operated in Karangalan, Cainta for almost two years, Homer and Sol were used to the recurrent rain and occasional flood water in front of the office but the 2009 flash flood was something else. When the water started to rise inside the office, the first items they saved were the computers. They carried everything to the second floor bedrooms and grabbed as many files as they could. When the waters reached waist-level, they only had a small window to open the 'Toyota Vios' car windows to keep the car from floating away.

But the flood water didn't stop. It rose up to chest-level that Homer and Sol decided to let go trying to save the printed products and paper supplies that lined that small business office, not to mention the stockroom at the back filled with more supplies and items ready for delivery. At that time, the couple told their youngest child to stay in UP and not attempt to go home because the whole of Marikina, Pasig and Cainta were in complete chaos.

Sol (S): [There were] thousands of copies of books na ready for delivery, naitaas namin sa mesa pero yung mesa nagiba sa sobrang taas ng tubig. Nakita namin kung paano nabasa ng mga dapat ide-deliver na. Even the machines! Nalubog yung printing machine. Nalubog yung cutting machine.

Homer (H): Nalubog din yung car.

S: Tapos nagbibiruan pa nga kami ni Homer kasi yung tubig kapag dumikit sa katawan mo para kang nag-lotion kasi nga lumabas lahat ng oil ng mga makina. Lahat lumutang wala kaming nai-save. Even the car, one-year old palang yung Vios that time. Lahat lumubog, walang natira, sa bahay, sa office.

H: Tapos yung tatlong anak namin hindi ma-contact. Yung dalawa nasa bahay walang communication. Tapos yung isa hindi na nga naka-uwi, natulog na lang sa waiting shed sa school.

When the sun came out and the waters finally subsided, it was a heartbreaking scene everywhere you look. The so-called Ondoy of 2009 ravaged homes, killed people and destroyed livelihood. Back then, it was so easy to be angry because of the lack of proper disaster management program in the two cities but it was even easier to feel so small and so helpless in the middle of all the chaos.



But what the family felt were humility, relief and an indescribable sense of gratitude that they were all alive. Together with Rey, a relative from the maternal side, Homer walked the length from the office to their home in Cainta to retrieve the two daughters and their pets.

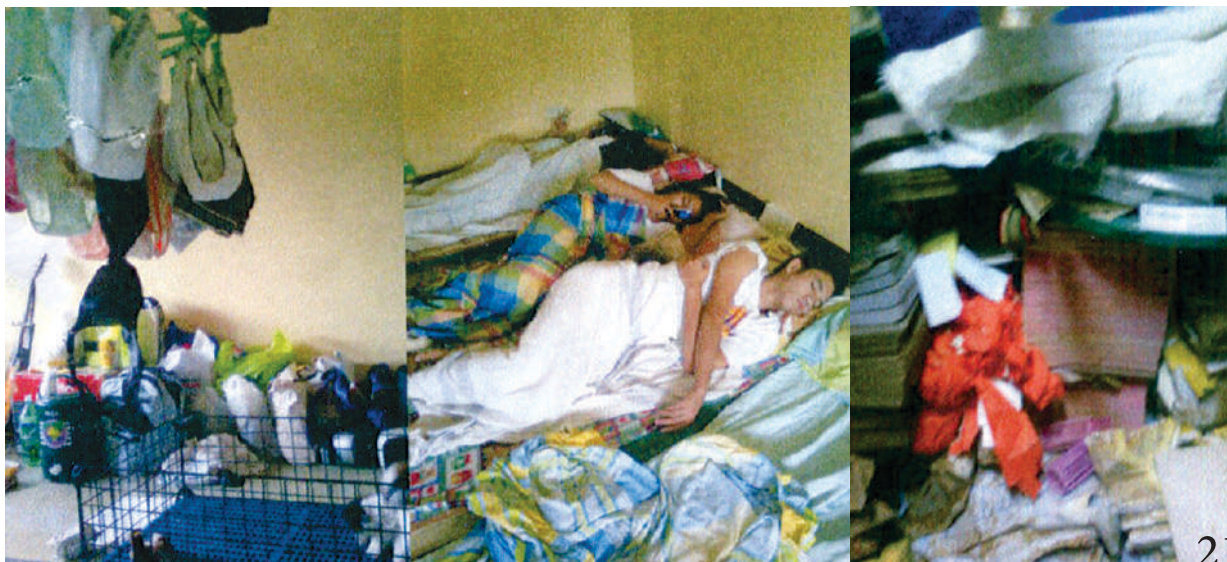
When the jammed front door finally flew open, the relief and joy that the daughters felt seeing their father alive after a fearful night not knowing what has become of their family was something the eldest daughter could probably never put into words.

Neighbors flocked to the Cainta home, especially the ones living across who tried to check if they were okay but couldn't get in because of the jammed door. In the previous years, when the waters rise, the children would often retreat to the neighbors in front and stay at the elevated two-story house. But in 2009, they couldn't get out to safety.

Using a make-shift Styrofoam board, the family loaded everything they can carry and walked back to the Karangalan office together with the dogs. They abandoned their Cainta home, fearing that another period of rainfall might bring the same catastrophe.

The walk back to the office was an eye-opening experience. Everywhere you look, people were carrying what they can, looking for refuge. Sol's eldest sister, Luming, even walked the length from Katipunan corner Aurora Boulevard to the office to give her sister a helping hand in this trying times.

The business suffered a huge financial loss. The machines were drenched and needed repairs. Raw materials were lost to the flood water and hundreds of thousands worth of delivery items were destroyed. But during these trying times, it changes people and their perspective.



S: Parang alam mo yun, hindi mo maintindihan kung anong nangyari. Tapos yung machine nga na sabi natin 'dream come true,' nakita mo na puro putik tapos hindi mo alam kung paano mo mapapaandar ulit.

S: That time, mayroon kaming two big clients na mag-e-event. Tinatanong nga nila kung kaya ba namin ma-deliver yung orders after what happened. But with the help of friends, na-deliver namin yung printing orders nila. Doon namin na-realize na sobrang dami talaga naming mga kaibigan kasi lahat sila nagtatanong kung paano makakatulong, kahit na wala kaming sinasabi na kailangang-kailangan nga natin ng tulong kasi wala nga natira sa amin, ultimong panty wala.

S: Doon nagdatingan yung mga tulong kung saan-saan—mula sa plato, damit, pati lutong ulam nagpadala ang mga kaibigan at kamag-anak. Dinalahan nila kami kasi nga hindi kami puwedeng magluto kasi lahat puro putik. Lahat ng mga kaibigan namin nagbigay ng tulong. Pati sa America, yung mga kamag-anak namin nagpadala ng tulong.

S: Doon mo mare-realize na napakadami pala naming kaibigan kasi kahit hindi mo sila hingian, tutulong sila sa iyo in times of need.

When Ondoy happened, Sol was recovering from a recent major operation. The family was deeply terrified that staying soaked in the flood water would infect her wounds from the operation. But the fears never materialized and she miraculously survived while many suffered wound infections and Leptospirosis.

Machines can be fixed. Raw materials can be replaced. Job orders can be remade. But the lives of the people we love can never be replaced. When Ondoy happened, the family received much more than what they lost in the flood.

Relatives and friends came to the family's rescue, offering help in all kinds. It was during this period that they realized how blessed they really are to have relatives and friends who didn't abandon them when they needed help the most.



kindness

*Growing Up
Amidst
Paper And Ink*

Katherine

*Photography: Acheron Studios
Hair & Makeup Rachel Aberasturi Cadiz*



resting bitch face
a person, usually a girl,
who naturally looks mean
when her face is expressionless,
without meaning to.

On my first day in college, my Mom and I boarded a jeepney to España, Manila from Project 3, Quezon City. It was around 6 o'clock in the morning, a good hour before my first morning class.

We rode in silence but I was pretty scared, thinking that a robber or a lunatic would hijack the jeepney and run away with all our belongings. I looked to my side and my mother was sitting beside me, stone-faced. I looked at the traffic behind us and saw our family car, then a black Mitsubishi Adventure, slowly following the jeepney. I felt safe.


On my second day in college, at 6 o'clock in the morning, I boarded the jeepney, alone this time, while my parents followed riding in the family car. They followed it all the way to the University of Santo Tomas. But wait, there's more.

On the first day, my mother waited for me (yes, just like preschool!) in front of my college building. And she showed me how to take a jeepney back to Project 3. But this time, my Dad was waiting for us at the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Project 3, the same church where I was baptized. On the second day, I took the public transportation on my own while my parents waited for me at the church.

To some people, my 16-year old version probably sounded (and looked like) a vain, spoiled brat who knows nothing about the so-called "outside world." And they're probably right. I really didn't know anything or any better back then. There were scenes in Manila that sent shivers down my spine during my first year in college.

To some, our parents might seem "over protective" but you can never really blame them. I was in college when I first took public transportation on my own. The LRT 2 was still a pile of construction back then so I had no choice but to take the Project 3 jeepney. The church was located along the notorious Aurora Boulevard in Project 3, thus the need for extra caution.

When he was younger, my dad was shot with a stray bullet on his side onboard a jeepney on his way home in Marikina. My parents knew the dangers of taking the public transportation so their best advice to me was to look alert all the time. I took it to heart and walked the streets looking like I could punch anyone who gets in my way.



I also carried a small knife all those years in college. Better look like a bitch on the outside even though I am deathly scared on the inside. For people who don't really know me, the years I spent passing through Cubao on my way to UST probably etched my “resting bitch face” in stone.

It's one of my favorite stories to tell, not because I didn't know how to take the public transportation then, but because it made me realize how our parents helped us become who we are.

Just like the first day in college, our parents held our hands and inspired us to try new things until we get the hang of it. And just like the second day, when we finally try it on our own, they're always—forever—in the background, onboard whatever kind of car they drive. And even if they escape our line of sight due to the traffic buildup, we go on, confident that they are always behind us.

My parents and I don't always see “eye to eye” in many things. Oh boy, there were many years filled with tears because I didn't understand their way of thinking sometimes. It was only when I left home and lived on my own in a rented condo unit in Mandaluyong that I realized why my mother hated dirty dishes in the sink. My husband already left for Malaysia during this time but I decided to live on my own even though I could have stayed at his property in Taytay or at our family home in Pasig. Living on my own made me realize just how much I still didn't know about being a responsible adult and how much more I needed to learn from my parents.

*Photography: Mad Minds Photography
Hair & Makeup Rachel Aberasturi Cadiz
Styling: Katherine C. Eustaquio-Derla*





Stringing Words

Growing up amongst reams and reams of paper, the smell and feel of it will always remind me of the family business. Paper and ink—literally and figuratively—paid our way through college. And now that we're all grown up, I see that my siblings and I have taken paper and ink to heart and found ways to make it our own. The true value of paper and ink is what you create with it.

For my sister, they are the blueprints of her architectural projects. For my brother, they are the medical prescriptions he will soon write for patients. For me, they are the books I want to write to help change people's mindset because it's one of the best ways to change the world. But the writing profession presented itself quite a bit late, at least the kind of writing I really want to focus on.

I initially wanted to become an architect, but I suck at math, so I let my younger sister pursue that dream for me. I wanted to be an artist, like my Dad, but my parents advised me years before, why not combine writing and design?

I pursued a course in Journalism but when I graduated, I didn't want to write. I worked as a graphic designer for almost two years before writing wooed me back again.

I transitioned from being a designer to a copywriter and eventually to a digital marketer and an internal communications specialist for one of the biggest brands in the world. Unlike some people whose career timeline looks like a straight line, mine looks like a starburst.

And it took a lot of soul-searching abroad to finally decide on what I want to do.

I want to write books. People - even strangers - have told me I have a way with words and that I should not stop. If there was ever an indication that I missed years ago, it was the relationship blog that I wrote for Cosmopolitan Philippines from 2009 to 2013 - "Bedroom Blog by Veronica."

When my first self-published novel hit the bookstores in 2015, it felt like throwing gas into the flames that have been idle inside of me for such a long time. It set me on fire. And I haven't stopped writing ever since.





I am grateful for: The chance to live abroad. It's an eye-opening experience. It reminds me that there's a big world out there that I want to see more of.

What have others done that has benefitted my life - even if I don't know who those people are?

K: Our parents continue to dedicate their lives to their children, even if the kids are now older and taller. For as long as I can remember, they would plan their day to fit our schedules, never the other way around. And it's this kind of luxury that we are most thankful for.

How can I be thankful for the challenges that I've experienced? What did I learn from them?

K: I used to get *really* angry whenever I learn that some relatives talk badly about my parents. If it's just me, I wouldn't mind. But if it's my family, I go She-HULK. My brother took psychology in college and he advised me to try to trace where people's actions are coming from. I soon realize that it all boils down to envy. So now, whenever I hear these stories, I just feel sorry for these people because they are still

trapped in an endless cycle of envy. I am thankful for these experiences as a writer. I use them for inspiration.

How is my life different today than it was a year ago? How can I be thankful for those changes?

K: Last year, I packed up my life in Manila to follow my husband abroad. I don't believe in long distance relationships. I tried it for half a year, and it's not for me. I resigned from a multinational company. I ended a lease on a pretty nice condo with its 4 Olympic-sized pools. I put my career on hold to support my husband. I felt both excited and scared. I've always been a go-getter and I do my own financing for my own *livin' la vida loca* lifestyle. I didn't know what kind of life awaited me in Malaysia but now, after several flights back and forth, I realized that moving abroad enabled me to do more.

What insights have I gained that I am grateful for?

K: The older we get, the better we understand our parents' wisdom. I am grateful because the path our parents chose was not easy but they persevered. I am grateful for the insights my husband share with me and tips on how to deal with difficult people.

What about my surroundings (home/neighborhood/city/etc.)
What am I thankful for?

K: At present, we live just outside of Malaysia's capital city, Kuala Lumpur. Unlike the city center, it's quieter here. I found a Malaysian coach so I can continue my kickboxing practice. There are two parks nearby where we can run for free.

K: We have a small, tightly knit Filipino community here. Even though I miss good ol' tapsilog and chicharon, Petaling Jaya feels just like home because my husband and I are together. I don't know where we'll be a year from now but as long as we're together, it will always be home to me.

What opportunities do I have that I am thankful for?

K: I am grateful for the chance to work anywhere. I currently write for a media company in New York and for several clients in Singapore and Manila. As long as I have my laptop and there's Wi-Fi, I'm good to go. As for my passion projects, I can work on them anywhere. In May, I wrote the first three chapters for a new novel 36,000 feet in the air on a flight to Tokyo.

Where can I help people more?

K: I've always believed that the best way to change the world is to change mindsets. And the fastest way to change mindsets is to create powerful stories. For my first anthology project, I invited aspiring writers in Manila to collaborate on a book project with me. And it's just the beginning.



A story about the love you find,
the love you lose, the love you expect
and the great love you deserve.



“Before I Do” is available in select National Bookstore branches and in Radish (online). “What Am I To You” (prequel) is available in Bookbed.org as a serialized piece.

“What Am I To You” and “Finally, I Do” (sequel) will be released in December 2016.

roseanne

Of Blueprints, Paint Strokes and Dance Steps





*Photography: Mad Minds Photography
Hair & Styling:
Ada De Pedro & Kath C. Eustaquio-Derla
Studio: Toasted Mallows*

Growing up, it was the eldest daughter who vandalized the garage walls using crayons but it was the youngest daughter who grew up and turned it into a livelihood. Architect, mural painter, dancer and entrepreneur, Homer and Sol's youngest daughter is making a name in the field of arts.

In the mid-90s, like most parents, Homer and Sol would ask their kids what they want to become when they grow up. Katherine would say she wants to become an astronaut; Patrick would say he wants to go to Bicol; and Roseanne would say she wants to have long hair. It soon became an inside joke.

When you were younger, what did you want to become when you grow up and why?

Roseanne (R): Magpahaba ng buhok, ha ha. Joke lang. I wanted to become a pediatrician because I like kids. Naaaliw ako sa kanila.

But as it turned out, only one of the three children pursued the calling for a medical profession. Roseanne got hooked into drawing cartoons and animé characters in grade school. Having an artist for a father helped a lot. During regular trips to Tagaytay, the kids would have art sessions with Dad and learn how to draw nature.



R: Then drawing lang ako ng drawing hanggang high school. Tapos dumating din sa point na gusto ko maging veterinarian kasi I like dogs naman.

R: But when I reached 4th year high school, I thought of pursuing Accountancy or Fine Arts/Engineering kasi I like Math and of course, I like to draw. So, before ako nag-graduate ng high school, I decided to pursue Architecture because it is a combination of both Math and drawing. And sabi ko sa sarili ko, gusto ko boss ako kaya mas kinuha ko Architecture.

Roseanne graduated with a bachelor's degree in Architecture from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines. She took the Architect Licensure Examination the following year, passed and worked for several architectural firms in Ortigas. Doing sidelines (extra projects) runs in the family. Just like her father, Roseanne accepted several standalone projects that have nothing to do with her chosen professional field.

The first sideline was **Tyang's Kitchen**. Together with fellow Tomasian Architect Odessa “Ding” Flores, Roseanne became the other half of the “archi-baker duo” and started selling homemade mini tarts and oatmeal chicken fillets. The small operations continue to supply food items to several coffee shops and restaurants within and outside of Metro Manila. Tyang's Kitchen became the “food” arm of the duo's sideline operations.

The second professional sideline was **What the EF**, which became their “creatives” arm. They took on small design projects and eventually ventured into interior design. The first big deal was the interior design of a fellow Tomasian's new coffee shop in Maginhawa, Quezon City – **The Nook Café**, which became an instant hit to all book and Harry Potter fans.

The restaurant and their works have been featured in several publications including *Hola! Philippines*, *Speed Magazine*, *Spot.ph* and *Cosmo.ph*.





Painting on walls became a lucrative sideline that both Roseanne and Ding decided to quit their respective jobs and focus on entrepreneurship. They landed a deal with a multinational search engine company that recently opened its headquarters in the Philippines, and were given 19-storey's worth of staircase to paint on.

They also created the murals at the world famous coffee shop in Antipolo, a board game-*slab*-coffee lounge in Quezon City and a French-American bistro in Greenbelt, Makati City.

Light on her feet, Roseanne also dabbles in performance art. In college, she co-founded Arkimmerce, the fusion of two dance groups from Commerce and Architecture colleges in UST.

Competing also became second nature as dancing became as natural as breathing. Outside the confines of the university and together with other Arkimmerce alumni, she co-founded a new dance group called LGAC (read as 'legacy'). The team represented the Philippines in the Arena Dance Competition in Chengdu, China on June 5, 2016. Out of 21 dance crews, LGAC finished in 6th place.

Growing up, what are your two most favorite memories with Mom and Dad?

R: Tuwing may competition ako, like quiz bee, sabayang bigkas, dance contest, Little Miss Sta. Lucia at kung anu-ano pang contests sa school, nandoon sila lagi to support me in every way they can.

R: Also, tuwing may ginagawa si Daddy na carpentry or welding works, lagi akong tumutulong sa kanya, pinapanood ko and ako madalas maglinis ng gamit niya. Nag-aayos ako ng mga pako and tools. Pinagsasama sama ko yung pare-pareho.



Can you share a funny moment with Mom and Dad when you were in high school?

R: Sobrang naging close sina Ma and Dad sa classmates ko. Sobrang naging intact yung relationships namin, hanggang ngayon, hindi nagbabago. Every time may project kami, sa bahay kami gumagawa. Sina Ma and Dad sobrang supportive, kahit anong kailangan namin, nandyan talaga sila.

How about in college?

R: Yung preparation for my debut. Busy month ang March because of the yearbooks na kailangan ma-deliver on graduation day. Sobrang sinubukan nila na maasikaso yung debut ko at the same time, matapos lahat ng deadlines. The day before my debut, sobrang ngarag na, nag-deliver pa sila ng mga yearbooks. Sobrang nag-magic sila kasi natuloy pa rin debut ko. Kaya nung nagsalita ako sa debut ko, naiyak talaga ako kasi natuloy pa rin kahit impossible na, nagtulong-tulong na kaming lahat.

R: And of course, nung thesis defense ko. Lahat ng kelangan ko, they provided. All I can say is, support all the way. Ganoon din sila ka-supportive sa mga high school friends ko. Warm welcome ang binigay nila sa mga college friends ko. Thank you Lord because I have a great family.

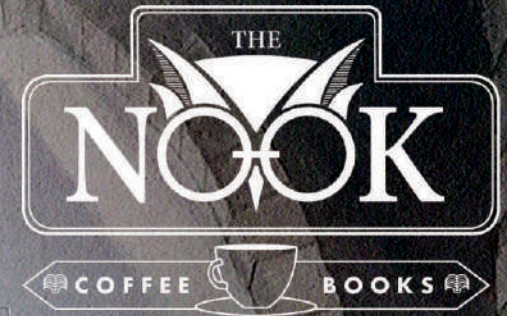
Behind The Scenes with What the EF.

The Nook Café

Words by Kath C. Eustaquio-Derla
First published online in December 2015

When that Harry Potter-themed café opened its little red door to the adoring Maginhawa crowd, it caused quite a stir. And it should. After all, how many little red doors in this tropical country can transport you straight to Hogsmeade? The only question now is, “Are you a Gryffindor or a Slytherin?”

I’m a big fan of the books, even the movies. But I’m probably the biggest fan of **The Nook Café** because my sisters not only designed the café interiors, they also painstakingly hand painted the murals that adorn its walls.



Before **The Nook Café** officially opened, my last few weekends in Manila were spent checking in on how my sisters' interior design gig was unfolding. **What the EF** ■, a small design firm owned and operated by Thomasian architects Anne Eustaquio and Ding Flores, brought the café walls to life. Every detail was carefully planned, hand drawn and meticulously painted.

I remember setting dinners at restaurants in Maginhawa so my sisters could take a break and eat with us. We ate mostly at **Empire Steak**, owned by our good friend, Conrad Legaspi.

The Nook Café opened a few weeks before I officially relocated to Malaysia. The café, despite its limited floor area, was packed with so many friends who supported Nicole Guanio, a young entrepreneur who attended the same university.

I'm proud to share some behind-the-scenes photos before **The Nook Café** was transformed into what it is now. There were nights when the only light accompanying my sister was a tall desk lamp they borrowed from our printing press.

All the hard work paid off. *Lumos Maxima!*



Anne and Ding from **What the EF** ■ handpainted the murals and tables at **The Nook Café**.





Painting the mural at a master bedroom in Cavite.

I am grateful for: Everything in my life—family, friends, loved ones, work experiences, projects, nature (when I travel), new friends (when I travel), ongoing and future projects. Kahit small things lang na nagiging mahalaga sa akin and lumalaki after some time, grateful ako.

What have others done that has benefitted my life—even if I don't know who those people are?

R: Yung iba-ibang ugali ng mga taong nakikilala ko. Iniintindi ko lahat. Tahimik lang ako. Ina-analyze ko kung bakit ganoon sila. By doing that, nagbe-benefit ako kasi alam ko kung paano i-handle mga bagay. Connected pala lahat. The way I think, the way I talk, kung paano ako nakiki-halubilo sa mga tao na nagiging connections din in every way— true friends, acquaintances, work relationships, etc.

How is my life different today than it was a year ago? How can I be thankful for those changes?

R: I am much stronger now. Na-experience ko iba-ibang bagay na gusto kong gawain and thankful ako kasi puwede ko pang ma-improve yun in the future.

What insights have I gained that I am grateful for?

R: Always be positive. Kahit may mga nangyaring negative, kailangan i-take yun positively para makaisip ng tamang solution.

What about my surroundings (home/neighborhood/city/etc.) What am I thankful for?

R: Home will always be love.

What opportunities do I have that I am thankful for?

R: Projects namin ngayon and future projects pa.

Where can I help people more?

R: By giving advice to other people about life through my own experiences. And by rendering our services—architectural and mural paintings to more clients.

How can I say thank you more?

R: By giving back the favors to the people I am thankful for and to others too.



Mural at a board game-slash-coffee shop along E. Rodriguez, Quezon City



Mural at a famous coffee shop along Marcos Highway, Antipolo



Mural on a food stall in Maginhawa St., QC.

Roseanne and Ding recently opened the doors to their new business venture, **ef. Studios Dance Block**, a dance studio located along Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City.

The Thomasian duo personally designed and managed the construction of the new dance studio, which will be the official home of LGAC and other friends from the local dance community. At the same time, the new commercial area will be the architects' workspace for the creatives arm of the What the EF. brand.

The **ef. Studios Dance Block** aims to welcome fellow dancers, regardless of skills level. They eventually plan to hold workshops and dance events for the local community.



A snapshot of the dance studio during its construction last August 2016.



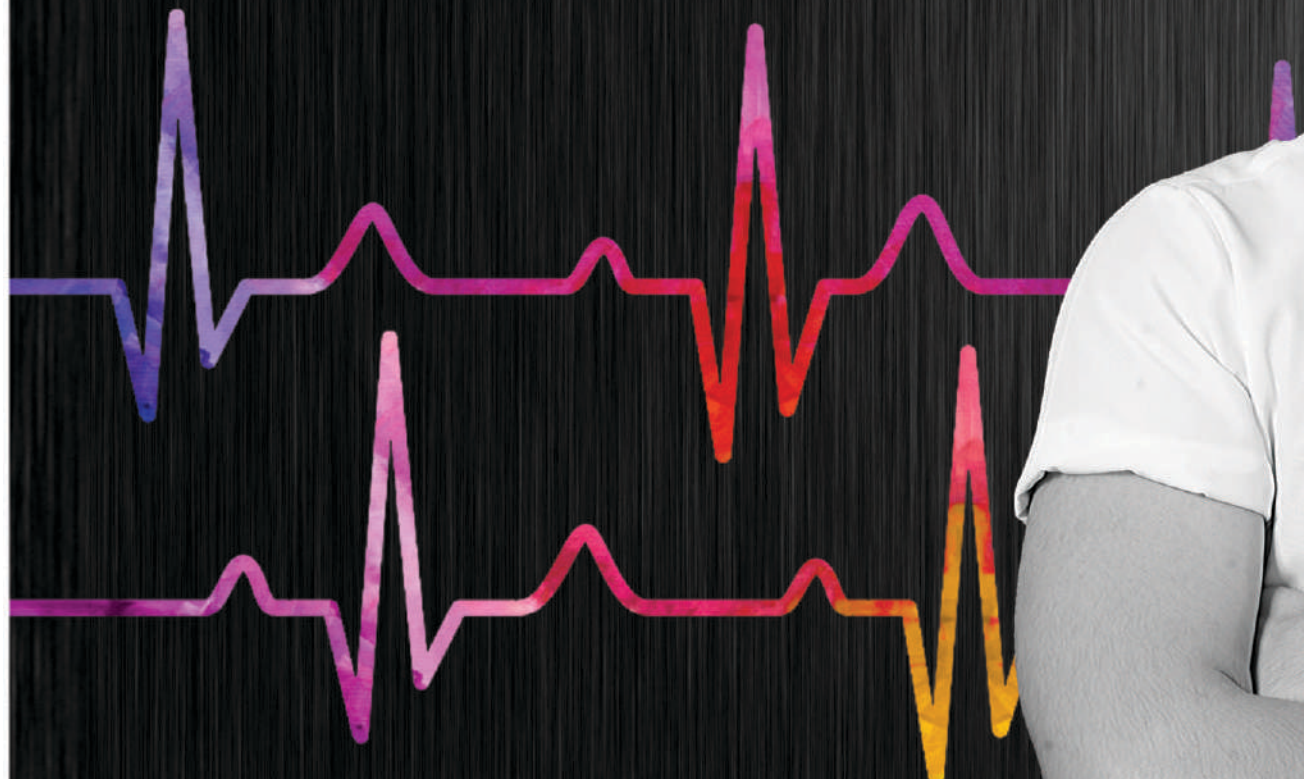
Painting the master bedroom in Rosario, Cavite.



Mural paintings at the staircase of a search engine company in Bonifacio Global City.

patrick

The Calling For A Medical Profession





When they were little, Homer and Sol would dress up Roseanne and Patrick in matching clothes and pass them off as twins. They did this for almost half a decade but when puberty hit, the youngest child outgrew everyone in the family, making her “fake” twin sister seem like the youngest of the three.

In the late 90s, everyone would pick on the youngest kid and one joke ended up in a crying fit at a video store. It was during the time when VCDs (video compact discs) of Hollywood movies first became a hit in the Filipino market. It might be hard to believe now but back then, people drive to a video store to “rent” a VCD of their favorite movies.

The family went to this video store on a weekly basis. It had one of those radio-frequency identification (RFID) anti-theft systems at the entrance. Just like any other weekend, the kids proceeded with their routine: pick a VCD of their choice.

Patrick was about six or seven years old when he accidentally walked through the RFID sensor holding a VCD with the tags still on. The alarm went off and he stood there, frozen, holding the VCD in his hands. When he asked what was happening, Sol jokingly told him that the alarm went off because it “sensed” that he wasn’t wearing any underwear. During that time, the couple was training their youngest child to learn how to put on clothes without any help.

The six-year-old Patrick stood even straighter with a look of horror on his face. He started to cry and shouted, “Wala akong briip (briefs)!” Everyone in the video store laughed. The crying continued all the way home. The following weekend, Patrick made sure he was wearing underwear before going the video store. They finally told him the real reason for the alarm a few years later.

And the inside joke stuck.

Photography: Mad Minds Photography

Hair & Styling: Ada De Pedro & Kath C. Eustaquio-Derla

Studio: Toasted Mallows



Their childhood years also provided opportunities for discovering what they want to pursue in life. When Patrick was old enough to travel, Sol would bring him to out-of-town work events. Just like his sisters before him, Patrick would help in the registration, handing out pens and IDs for local and international doctors who attend the annual conventions for anesthesiologists. Being exposed to the medical communities' events at a young age, Patrick realized that he, too, wants to save lives and help others in need.

Patrick (P): I've always wanted to become a medical doctor. Having both very responsible, sacrificial and selfless parents made my passion for medicine even more meaningful.

The decision to pursue a medical profession didn't rest solely on his shoulders, but the biggest weight remained on his, because it meant extending his parents' income-generating years. Some parents would discourage it and with good reason: medicine school requires money that goes beyond just the tuition fee.

Homer and Sol are not rich but they never—not even once—made their children feel that they cannot pursue something they've always wanted. When the decision was made, they had no idea if they can raise the money to put their youngest through medicine school. Even if they had any doubts or fears, they didn't show it. Instead, they encouraged Patrick, just like his elder sisters before him, to go after his dreams.

But the road to medicine school didn't come without sacrifices. To prepare himself for medical school, he decided to shift to another degree program in college—from BS Chemistry to BS Psychology. He found Chemistry extremely challenging but he also thought that being a Psychology major would help him relate and understand his future patients.

P: I remember calling Mom over the payphone 10 minutes before the deadline of one of my toughest decisions in life. It meant dropping some subjects I was currently taking that would not be credited in the program I am going to shift into. This would result in under loading and a disqualification from graduating with honors. I was crying because I thought it would ruin my chances on being accepted to the top medicine schools in the country.



P: “Okay lang yan, anak,” she told me. “Basta alam naman natin na matalino ka, okay na yan.” I went home welcomed by hugs from Mom and Dad—hugs of same tenderness like those I received from them during my college graduation despite not receiving my *magna cum laude* medal. They also showered me with the same when I learned I got into the best medical school in the country.

P: I've always believed that living life with an advocacy is a life well spent. During my first few days in medical school, I was invited by some members of the upper classes in UP College of Medicine to establish a college organization that would empower equality, human rights and health, regardless of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), that is equality whether one is heterosexual male or female, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender / transsexual. I co-founded **One's True Nature (OTN)**.

P: I remember being reluctant at first but little did I know that I would become President of OTN on its second year, and that we would come up with pioneer projects in the country such as the first Philippine Gender, SOGIE, and Health Conference, and having these groups as my greatest friends in life. Aside from gender equality and human rights, I have been advocating for Health for All and against HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) stigmatization. I am planning to continue all these throughout my medical career.

P: I am considering pursuing a vocation in Public Health as a doctor in far-flung places in the country without physicians before pursuing a career in Emergency Medicine, Trauma, or Head and Neck Surgery.

Patrick is currently a fourth year medical student at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine and a clinical clerk at the Philippine General Hospital. He took his clinical elective in Head and Neck and Trauma Surgery at the Tan Tock Seng Hospital in Singapore in mid 2016.

Growing up, what are you two most favorite memories with Mom and Dad?

P: Mom and Dad never forced us to be hungry of achievements. While my sisters are always receiving medals every year during recognition day for their outstanding academic and extracurricular performances, I promised Mom and Dad that I would bring them home a medal, too. I was able to bring home one recognition day, not for being academically or extracurricular-ly excellent, but for Perfect Attendance *hahaha*.

P: I will always remember going with Dad when he fetched Mom from PSA (Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists) because we both know that we will be having snack at SM North EDSA. Dad and I always eat at Carl's Jr. and order our favorite plain cheeseburger (the one without pickles, onions and ketchup) and get our unlimited soft drinks. Until today, we always prefer our cheeseburgers plain.

Can you share a funny moment with Mom and Dad when you were in high school?

P: Mom and Dad also became second parents to our high school friends. Some of my classmates jump for joy whenever they get randomized to become my group mate in class projects because they know my parents always help out!

P: I remember Mom talking to Joanne, my high school ex-sweetheart without me knowing when she saw her at the parking lot in Roosevelt College. I have been keeping our relationship a secret. I never found out what they talked about but I was really, really embarrassed. After then, however, they helped me bring Joanne home whenever possible and even support her in her endeavors.

How about in college?

P: Before entering medical school and before engaging in yet another financial challenge, all of us talked at the dining table about how everyone is adjusting and how are we going to work all together to achieve my dream of becoming a physician. It was agonizing to see how everyone is making their adjustments because I was the only one who had dreamt a little more than usual. This means my sisters could not enjoy their income from work 100% because they have to help in our finances, which includes my school fees.

P: The conversation started with my parents telling me that my dreams of becoming a physician would come true. And after that, just like any other dinner, as a family, we started cleaning up.

What relationships am I thankful for?

P: My family, for the very loving and supportive environment vital to my personal growth. Friends, for always being there for me through all victories and failures. Patients, for giving me opportunities to develop my knowledge, skills and attitude as a future doctor *para sa bayan*.



Patrick in medicine school.



Homer and Sol during Patrick's college graduation.



**How can I be thankful for the challenges that I've experienced?
What did I learn from them?**

P: I always take challenges seriously because only through these that I could fully experience how adult life should be. Some of my professors would make me look stupid in front my classmates and patients; some patients could be uncooperative; some groupmates can be difficult; some reading assignments are too long; some may be absurd but one thing is for more: Newton's third law. For every action, there is always an equal and opposite reaction. For every challenge, there is always an equal and opposite reward at the end of it.

**How is my life different today than it was a year ago?
How can I be thankful for those changes?**

P: Some things matter less, some matter more. Back then, the toughest decision I had to make was choosing the most appropriate crayon, but now, I have to decide on what pharmacologic treatment to give to our patients or decide if I should sleep or not so I can catch up on my studies. Time seems faster now. I feel that I get tougher with every decision I make, which have become more difficult and challenging.

What about my surroundings (home/neighborhood/city/etc.) am I thankful for?

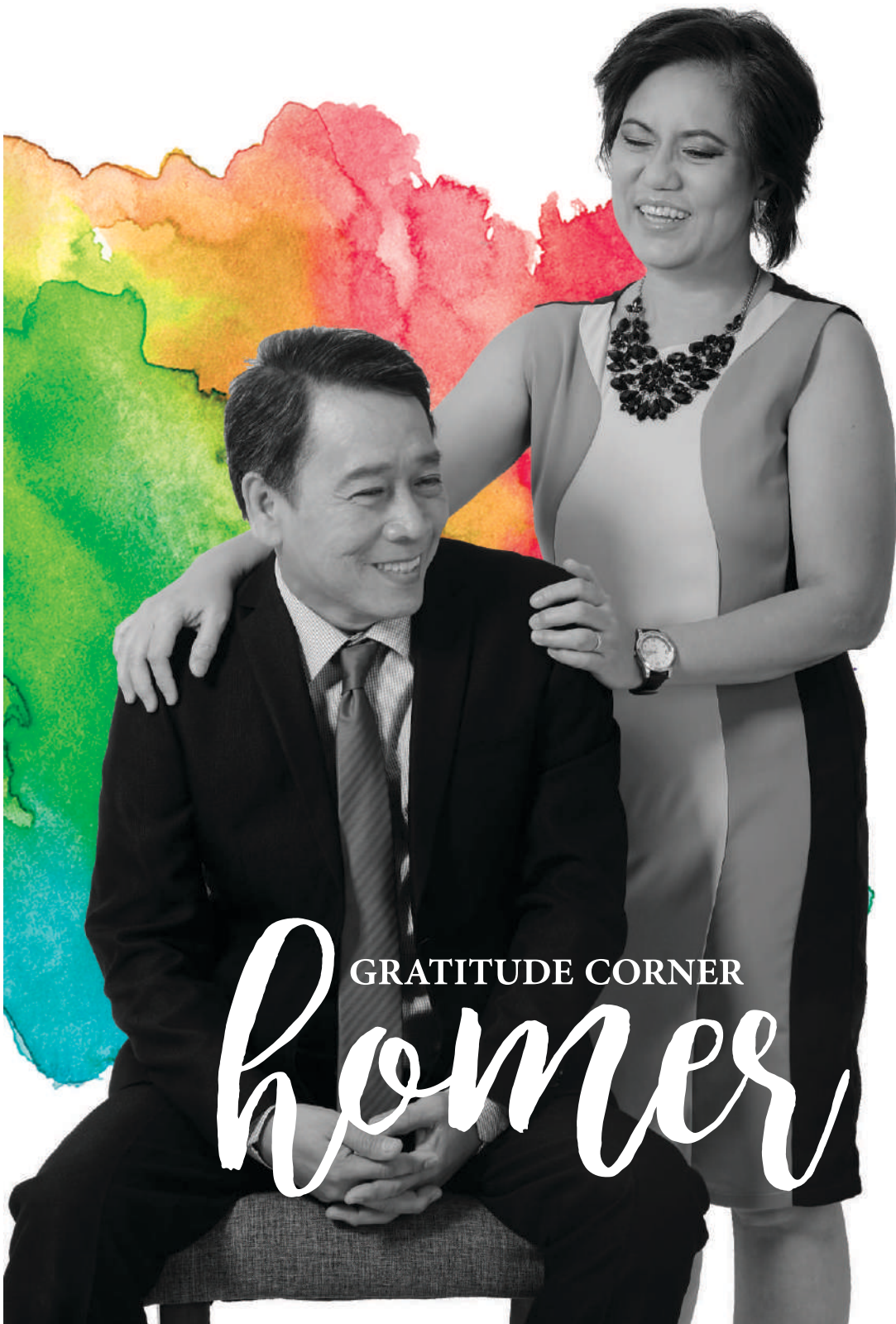
P: I live near my classmates and friends in Manila. We always hangout in each other's condos. Manila, although horribly dirty, is always an exciting place—from men punching each another in front of Cuevas bakeshop to early morning rallies in front of the Department of Justice (DOJ).

What opportunities do I have that I am thankful for?

P: Learning medicine in the country's national tertiary care center wherein we get to handle really complicated and rare cases. With the undying and overflowing love and support from family and friends, who could ask for more?

How can I say thank you more?

P: Being always my best in fulfilling my role as a son, brother, ka-barkada, student, classmate, "doktor" and a lot more.



What have others done that has benefitted my life—even if I don't know who those people are?

Homer (H): Yung Art Director ko sa advertising agency. Ayaw niya akong bitawan dahil pareho kami ng style ng drawing. Pero gusto ko talaga magkaroon ng sariling negosyo. Kaya ako nag-resign and itinayo namin ni Sol ang HS Grafik Print. Thankful ako sa experience na ito kasi nakita ko kung ano yung value ko sa company and kung ano ang kaya ko pang gawin.

What relationships am I thankful for?

H: Having a good marriage with my wife and good relationships with my children. I am also thankful for friends and relatives.

How is my life different today than it was a year ago? How can I be thankful to those changes?

H: Taon-taon siyempre may pagbabago. Ang maganda doon ay lumalawak ang pang-unawa mo at nagiging maayos ang buhay dahil sa mga natutunan mo.

Who do I appreciate? Why?

H: Having an understanding and supportive wife and three nice kids. Very grateful din ako sa mga taong tumulong sa amin noong ma-operahan ako sa gall bladder. Thankful ako sa mga nagtatrabaho sa HS Grafik Print kasi dedicated sila sa top quality ng products at services namin.



H: Thankful ako sa mga katrabaho namin na naging mabubuting mga kaibigan. Thankful din ako sa mga alaga namin na aso, sina Cloee and Tokii kasi napapagaan nila yung pakiramdam mo kapag pagod na kami sa trabaho.

What material possessions am I thankful for?

H: Having my own offset printing machine, a digital printer, a cutting machine and a laminator. One-stop-shop na ang HS Grafik Print. Unlike noon na kailangan natin ng ibang suppliers, ngayon kaya na natin gawin.

What opportunities do I have that I am thankful for?

H: Creating designs sa computer and printing them sa machines. Masarap sa pakiramdam na pinagkakatiwalaan ka ng mga clients mo.

How can I help people more?

H: Napakalaking pasasalamat namin ni Sol dahil napa-graduate namin ang mga anak namin sa dekalidad na mga unibersidad sa Pilipinas. Malaking pasasalamat ko sa maayos na buhay at sa maasikasong asawa. Noong hindi pa nag-aral ang eldest namin, nagpaaral kami ng dalawang kamag-anak. Kapag natapos na si Patrick sa medicine school, gusto pa namin magpaaral ulit ng ibang tao.



HS Grafik Print summer outing in Batangas.



What have others done that has benefitted my life—even if I don't know who those people are?

Sol (S): I admire people who, despite being poor, are able to pursue or finish their studies, no matter what. This became my guiding light to work hard to achieve my dreams and then help other people to do the same.

What relationships am I thankful for?

S: I am very thankful for my family, my husband, my children, my sister, my nephews and nieces and my relatives. They make my life colorful. I am very grateful for life-long friends and colleagues. And to my former and current angels (angels are my household employees), thank you so much for making life easier.

How can I be thankful to the challenges that I've experienced? What did I learn from them?

S: Problems and challenges make my life exciting. There were events and problems that came into my life wherein I felt I couldn't go on anymore. But thanks to my family, I am still here, and those problems made me stronger.

What about my surroundings (home/neighborhood/city/etc.) am I thankful for?

S: Our present home is so nice that I now don't think of flood. I can even come home more quickly compared to our house in Cainta.

What opportunities do I have that I am thankful for?

S: I always welcome opportunities wherein people ask me for help. Although I can't help them all, I can give my opinion or pieces of advice that I hope can help them eventually.

How can I help people more?

S: I help most people by sharing my thoughts and experiences. I help them through my friends. I am so thankful because those friends are also willing to help others.

How can I say thank you more?

S: I say thank you more by helping others, not necessarily the people who helped me before but also other people who need guidance in this life. I believe that life is a cycle and that helping others will bring world peace, in its own way.



Colorful Stories

Sol: When Patrick was young, nasugatan siya sa noo and kailangan tahiin. He was lying on the hospital bed, hawak ni Homer yung lower body, ako hawak ko upper part. Iyak siya nang iyak at sigaw nang sigaw. Sabi namin, “Okay lang yan, kaya mo yan anak.” Pero hindi tumigil kakaiyak tapos biglang sumigaw, “Ang sakit ng paa ko, kasi dinadaganan ni Daddy!” Akala namin dahil sa sugat niya sa noo.

Sol: Nung bata pa si Karen, isinama namin siya sa Chinabank sa Cubao. Hindi kasi ako nag-aakay ng anak. Basta bahala siya sumunod sa akin. Pagpasok ko, kasunod ko naman siya pero kasunod din niya yung security guard. Iniwan pala niya yung shoes niya sa door kasi daw ang linis ng floor baka bawal ipasok ang shoes.

Homer: Nung baby si Karen nasa crib lang siya. Hinahayaan namin siya doon para maglaro. One time, sigaw siya nang sigaw. Di pa siya marunong magsalita noon. Hindi namin pinansin akala namin naglalaro lang. Pero nakita namin may hawak siya na parang saging pero maitim. Yun pala hawak niya yung poop niya na matigas parang saging.

Homer: Galing kami ng SM Megamall one time, tapos uhaw na uhaw si Karen. Nakakita siya ng lalagyan ng mineral water na may laman so ininom niya. Tapos sumigaw kasi daw bakit ang panget nang lasa nung “Mountain Dew.” Yun pala, ang nainom niya yung mineral water bottle na may laman na wiwi ni Patrick. Bata pa silang lahat noon, he he.

Sol: Nawala si Anne sa SM Cubao nung bata pa siya. Akala namin kasunod namin naglalakad. Yun pala nasagi niya yung naka-hanger na mga damit kaya pinulot niya isa-isa and binalik sa hanger. Hindi na niya kami makita kaya lumapit siya sa saleslady at sinabi na, “Nawawala po ako.” Dinala siya sa customer service tapos pina-page kami. After niya masabi lahat ng information saka siya umiyak ng tuloy-tuloy.



Sol and the kids during the New Year celebration.



Baby Karen with
Nanay Inyang Marikina



The three kids at Karen's
18th birthday pictorial.



Karen, Anne
and Patrick



Anne during her Foundation Day presentation.



Patrick and Anne with Ate Weng and Ate Gay making kites.

Sol: Nung mga 4-years-old si Anne and mga 2-years-old si Patrick, naglalaro sila sa playground. Nasa swing sila, then may dumating na much older na mga bata, pinapaalis sila kasi gusto mag swing. So umuwi si Anne at Pat, nagsumbong sa Ate Karen nila. Biglang sinugod ni Karen yung bata sa playground and said, "Hoy bata, bakit mo pinaalis mga kapatid ko sa swing, hindi mo ba alam na anak kami ni Sol?" It became a family joke. Nobody messes with Sol and Homer's kids. Astig.



Karen, Anne, Patrick and Sol at the beach in Cavite.



Luming and Sol with balikbayan relatives Pepper, Tommy and Allan.

Homer: Nasa Sta. Lucia Mall kami, kasunod namin maglakad yung tatlong bata. Paglingon namin, dalawa na lang, nawawala si Patrick. So binalikan namin yung route namin. Nakita namin si Patrick nakaluhod sa tapat ng store selling religious items. May malaki kasi na santo, ayun nagdasal pala at nakapikit pa. Mga five years old siya noon.

Homer: Noong maliit pa si Karen, gusto niya lagi sumali sa pagbalot ng Christmas gifts. So we needed to wait for her to sleep bago kami magbalot kasi nanggugulo siya. One time, hindi namin makita yung ibang mga damit namin. Yun pala binalot niya!



Homer and the little kids.



Roseanne during the Little Miss Sta. Lucia pageant.

Sol: Nung Grade 4 si Karen ayaw pumasok sa school. Paghatid sa kanya sa school, kasama din pagbalik. Sabi niya binu-bully daw siya nung classmate niyang si Raymond. So pinatawag ko yung nanay nung bata. E napakabait naman pala ni Raymond. Gumawa lang pala ng dahilan si Karen para di pumasok sa school. We almost agreed to let her skip one year, buti na lang hindi.

Sol: Noong Kinder 1 si Anne, first time nya pumasok ng school. Pag pumasok sya ng 10 a.m., iyak siya nang iyak sa desk niya pero yung tahimik na iyak lang. Hangang 12 nn iiyak siya tapos kakain ng lunch tapos iiyak ulit hanggat sunduin na siya. Mga one month siyang ganon.

Thank you



When my Dad asked me to write a book about the family business for his 60th birthday, I immediately said *yes*—even though I had no idea how I will do it. Sometimes, you just have to say *yes* first and find the solution later.

“Make a colorful impression.” The line came to me when I first designed the company's tabletop calendar years ago. Later, we decided to use it as the title for this book.

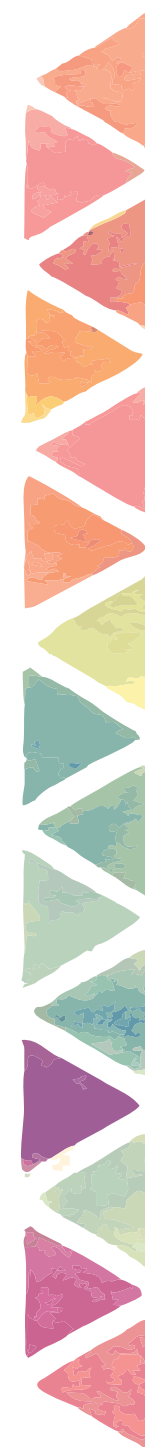
The idea is to always come swinging. Do your best in every project and leave a mark on people's lives to help them become the most vibrant, most amazing, most promising and most intoxicating versions of themselves.

Colors are inspirations and we hope that through this book and the anecdotes within it, we are able to inspire you to leave the same colorful mark on people's lives.

We would like to thank everyone who helped us transform ideas and stories into a real coffee table book. Personally, I'd like to thank my good friend **Jacque Zamora** who helped us edit this book despite the distance from Malaysia and Japan; the amazing couples from **Mad Minds Photography** (Marvin and Marley Gonzales) and **Aceron Studios** (Ace and Rona Peteza) for the photos; Rachel Aberasturi Cadiz, Ada De Pedro and Sai Sayson-Montes for the styling and makeup; and for everyone who contributed and helped us launch this book during **Homer@60**.

Please keep this copy as a token of our heartfelt gratitude for being part of our ongoing story. You make our lives colorful. You are a blessing to our family.

 **Kath**



The background of the page is decorated with abstract watercolor splashes. In the top right corner, there are splashes of teal and blue. In the bottom left corner, there are larger splashes of green and yellow. The text is centered on a white background.A small, simple line drawing of a coffee cup with a wisp of steam rising from it.

Paper & Ink

In this book, I attempt to detail the colorful journey my parents took to be where they are now. Here, my family and I will talk about the rough patches, the golden years, the heartaches and the many people who helped us along the way.

This book is filled with short anecdotes, musings and rants (most of which may come from me), but as a whole, this book is about Homer & Sol, who have sacrificed so much for their children. They are very selfless people who have decided to dedicate their whole lives to their children.

And for these reasons, we are proud to call them our *super parents*.

Kath