

Alaskans Respond to Philippine Typhoon

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Casey Kelly/KTOO and The AP

Alaska's Filipino community is pulling together to help the victims of Super Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the country early Friday morning. Thousands are feared dead and injured from the storm, one of the most powerful ever recorded.

The storm knocked out power and communications to much of the central Philippines, and Filipino expatriates in Alaska and the Lower 48 continue to struggle to make contact with friends and loved ones back home.

The Filipino population in Alaska is just over 19,000, according to the 2010 Census, making it the largest Asian group in the state.

Anchorage contractor Vince Fronteras told the Anchorage Daily News that people in the Philippines were just getting back on their feet from an earthquake when the typhoon hit.

Dante Reyes is president of Juneau's nonprofit Filipino Community Inc. He's from Aklan province, where close to 10,000 homes were destroyed.

"We're still waiting for some reports coming in from our relatives and from some of our friends what happened to them, or are they okay, or fine or something like that. So, it's really hard."

Reyes' organization held a membership meeting on Saturday, where he says they decided to cancel the organization's free Thanksgiving Day meal. Instead, the group will donate the \$3,000 dollars budgeted for the event to relief efforts. In addition, there will be a fundraising dinner next week at the Filipino Community Hall in Juneau.

Filipino groups in Anchorage, Kodiak and elsewhere around the state are planning events to help raise funds for typhoon relief.