

Fundraisers Help Family, Friends in Philippines

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Last Friday the world watched in horror as one of the largest typhoons ever recorded hit the Philippines. Super Typhoon Haiyan wiped away entire towns and left the death toll in the thousands. As the United States government scrambles to send aid to those left among the devastation, various community groups in Kodiak have begun their own fundraising efforts.

Filipino-Americans make up almost 35 percent of Kodiak's population, and many still have family and friends in the Philippines. Mary Guilas-Hawver is the president of the Filipino American Association of Kodiak and said many folks here have been able to get in touch with their relatives abroad.

"Luckily I have not heard of anybody losing a family member in the Philippines. But yes, they lost their homes, their farm. Because it seems like a tornado and several tsunamis hit it at one time, is the category five, is how people explain it to me. And they're all emotionally drained and physically drained. If you'll remember, a few days ago it was the earthquake in Cebu. And now it's this typhoon. So it's just one after another so people are kind of physically exhausted."

The 7.2 earthquake Hawver refers to hit the Philippines in mid October.

Here in Kodiak, Hawver said a number of fundraisers are going on to help send money to the Philippines. This Saturday there will be a Zumba fitness class with a suggested \$10 donation. All of those proceeds will go to victims of Typhoon Haiyan. That will be at 9:30 a.m. in the Main Elementary School gym.

Also, frozen eggrolls are being made for delivery this week. Folks can purchase 13 eggrolls for \$12 and have them delivered on Friday. Those proceeds will also go toward survivors of the deadly typhoon.

In addition to those, Hawver said bank accounts have been set up for folks to directly donate money.

"Actually there are two accounts.

One Fil-Am set up and the other one is set up by the Filipino community in Kodiak, not necessarily the Filipino American Association members, but nevertheless it's all going to the same folks that were very devastated by the typhoon in the Philippines. So there's two accounts, they're both with Wells Fargo."

In addition to financial assistance, Hawver said there are also opportunities to offer spiritual support for typhoon victims.

“You know across Alaska all of the leaders decided that you know we can do a vigil or service concurrently across the state of Alaska. So we decided Friday at 6 p.m., for an hour, will be dedicated to the folks that truly needed health, spiritual help.”

Kodiak’s vigil will be held at St. Mary’s Catholic Church.

In general, Hawver said she hopes people will help Kodiak’s Filipino community as they try and support their loved ones back in the Philippines.