

Street kids transform into world-class ballet dancers

 [marketmonitor.com.ph /street-kids-transform-world-class-ballet-dancers/](https://marketmonitor.com.ph/street-kids-transform-world-class-ballet-dancers/)

For years, Edward, Bernard and Daniel's daily routine was classroom work, house duties and community service at an orphanage. Early this year, little did they realize their lives would transform.³⁵

The three boys – Edward Sumera, Bernard Sabularse and Daniel Vallejos – are residents of Tuloy Foundation, a charitable organization for poor, abused, orphaned and abandoned children.

With the right physique and mind set, they passed the audition for free training at a ballet school. With stamina and patience, they learned the skills, and after months of practice (usually runs from 5 AM to 11 PM, six days a week) they reaped the fruits of their hard work by qualifying for an international ballet competition in Hong Kong where they won awards.

“I saw the potential in the boys. They proved to be great ballet dancers,” says Cherish Garcia, directress of Academy One Music and Dance Center. They have the right physical traits and mental alertness of a ballet dancer,” Garcia adds. Garcia offers free schooling for Tuloy Foundation residents as part of her advocacy.

Benedict is determined to make ballet his future craft while inspiring other Tuloy residents. “Kahit nahihirapan po kami, kahit lagi kaming puyat at pagod, hindi po namin iniisip yun, kasi iniisip namin yung mga pinagdaanan naming hirap nung wala pa po kami sa (Tuloy) Foundation. Kailangan din po naming isipin yung future namin. Iniisip din po namin na makatulong kami sa kapwa sa pamamagitan ng pagturo ng ballet sa ibang taga Tuloy pag laki namin,” he shares.

Recently the boys qualified for the Asian Grand Prix International Ballet Competition in Hong Kong where they bagged podium medals and special awards. Edmar won a silver medal and scholarship in Elmhurst School for Dance in the United Kingdom while Benedict placed fourth in his category and a special award, Fonteyn Prize.

Last January, Edward and Benedict again participated in a ballet competition, this time in Lausanne, Switzerland, for the prestigious Prix de Lausanne, an international competition for amateur young dancers that aims to showcase the potentials of exceptional dancers from around the globe and provide dancers opportunity to enter the world's finest schools and companies through scholarships.

They were among the 78 dancers chosen from 338 candidates from 36 countries. The Philippines sent an entry for only the second time in the 45 years of the competition's history. The first time was in 1998.

The three boys entered the orphanage some years ago when their parents separated and they turned over to relatives who were not capable of supporting them. They were brought to the Foundation where they were blessed with shelter, schooling, value formation and skill development in sports, vocational skills training and performing arts.

With support from generous individuals and organizations, the kids' wish of joining the competition materialized. The sponsorship came in droves under the initiative of Bubut de los Santos of Tuloy Foundation who initiated a sponsorship blog.

Daniel is thankful for PAL, through the PAL Foundation, for flying them to Hong Kong, as well as the warm and personal heartfelt service they experienced on board. “Masarap pong mag-alaga ang mga PAL stewardess, parang alaga ng magulang,” he says.

For Fr. Rocky Evangelista, president and founder of Tuloy Foundation, the help for the kids goes beyond the basic needs of the orphans but empowers them to become self-sufficient and eventually make a contribution to nation

building. "PAL's support has opened opportunities for these former street children to reach their dreams of a bright future through the world of performing arts and further ahead for their self-sufficiency and mastery."