

**For Immediate Release**  
**December 10, 2011**

## **Manulife Philippines builds communities for the future**

**Makati City, Philippines** – Manulife Philippines has partnered with Gawad Kalinga (GK) Community Development Foundation, Inc. to build a 3,118-square meter housing community in Soldiers' Hills, Barangay Putatan, Muntinlupa City. Today, the first cluster of homes made up of 16 units will be turned over to the first batch of Manulife-GK Village beneficiaries.

More than a hundred employees from Manulife Philippines, Manulife Chinabank Life Assurance Corporation, and Manulife Business Processing Services (MBPS), as well as clients and insurance advisers, volunteered in building homes for a number of families during the lifetime of the project.

“We broke ground in February and just finished up the last few houses of the first cluster in November. Over the past 10 months, our employees have generously given their time and effort in helping to build these homes from the ground up,” said Pat Yuseco, Manulife Philippines project manager for the Manulife-GK Village venture.

For most of the year, volunteers from the Manulife companies gave up their Saturdays to go to the site and did everything from shoveling dirt and rock, to hauling cement bags and concrete hollow blocks, to painting the interiors and exteriors.

According to Ms. Yuseco, building the houses was just one aspect of the project. Their real goal was to get the dwellers to develop better habits and realize the value of owning a home. To do that, beneficiaries were required to help build the homes and attend a Values Formation Training (VFT) seminar.

“The beneficiaries were required to help build their homes by putting in a total of 2,666 hours. On top of that, and because we want them to fully understand the responsibilities they need to face in owning their own homes, we also asked them to attend 14 Saturdays worth of VFT seminars. Manulife’s slogan is “*For your Future*” and that was reflected in this whole approach – building not just houses but living communities.” explained Yuseco.

At the VFT seminars, beneficiaries of the Manulife-GK Village were taught core life skills such as managing their finances better and keeping their communities clean and safe.

“By helping instill in them the value of being forward-thinking, we also hoped to be able to improve the lot of people in areas that the company does business in,” added Marlene Cinco, one of the Manulife employee volunteers.

In doing so, some villagers have their own vegetable garden with produce that they can eventually sell. Manulife also plans to continue supporting the community by setting up an education center to augment the child-youth development programs in the area.

Chris Panizales, a 15-year veteran at Manulife Philippines, believes that in all the years he has been with the company, this project has, by far, been the most satisfying in all their efforts to give back to the community.

“In the past, efforts were scattered to little outreach programs here and there, such as donations to orphanages or other institutions. But I felt like there was a different sense of satisfaction from building these houses, particularly because you get to work side by side with the beneficiaries – they don’t remain anonymous,” Mr. Panizales claimed. “It was satisfying because you get to listen to their life stories, which in turn helped fuel the dedication and commitment I have in continuing to volunteer to help rebuild their lives.”

All of the beneficiaries identified by Gawad Kalinga are low-salaried employees of the local government, thus their situations may be less than ideal but neither are they in dire straits.

“The fact that these beneficiaries are hardworking individuals earning minimum wages, who still managed to put in additional time just so they can have their own homes, was really humbling,” Mr. Panizales concluded.

Although the Manulife team was working for the benefit of others, the time spent at the construction site also became beneficial for them as it became a way for them to get to know their co-workers better.

“We are a company that is made up of different departments with hundreds of employees. So this project became a great way for us to build camaraderie. We definitely built up a lot of new friendships as the months went by,” according to Ms. Cinco.

Ed Andal, another employee volunteer, agreed with Ms. Cinco and added that before volunteering for the project they worked on the same floor but rarely even noticed each other. “But now, the moment we see each other, we not only greet one another, but we stay and chat a little,” he said, adding that most of the volunteers have now become good friends.

### **About Manulife in the Philippines**

The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company opened its doors for business in the Philippines in 1907. Since then, Manulife’s Philippine Branch and later The Manufacturers Life Insurance Co. (Phils.), Inc. (Manulife Philippines) has grown to become one of the leading life insurance companies in the country. Manulife Philippines is a wholly-owned domestic subsidiary of Manulife Financial Corporation.

Manulife Chinabank Life Assurance Corporation is a bancassurance joint venture company of China Bank Corporation (China Bank) and The Manufacturers Life Insurance Co. (Phils.), Inc.

Manulife Business Processing Services (MBPS) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Manulife Financial created in 2006 to provide back office, accounting, finance and information technology services to other Manulife subsidiaries worldwide.

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