

Agnes Serrano

Originally from Manila, Philippines, Agnes' family migrated in the early 1990s and settled in the metro Detroit area. She finished high school at St. Theresa's College in Quezon City, Philippines. She initially attended Madonna University before transferring to Wayne State University where she received a degree in Biology with minor in Spanish in 1999. At Wayne State University, she was instrumental in the formation of WSU Project Volunteer and Alternative Spring Break. She organized volunteer opportunities for students to engage in that included MLK Day of Service, ASBs, Make A Difference Day and other service-oriented activities.

After college, Agnes served the AmeriCorps VISTA Team Tech program for a year in Detroit. she had the opportunity to work with 30 tri-country nonprofits by providing computing services such as Y2K compliance, IT networking and securing technological grants for Team Tech organizations from United Way, IBM and Microsoft. After AmeriCorps, she stayed with Think Detroit to continue their computer recycling and refurbishing program where donated computers are refurbished and given a renewed life for those who are interested in learning. The clients included mostly the elderly and the the youth, who received the computers for free or for a voluntary donation of \$25, which also included instructional materials and tutorial lessons. She was first exposed to urban gardening programs through the Wellness House and The Franciscan Project. Both nonprofit organizations were in the southwest Detroit area and were volunteer-driven like MUFI. They cultivated vacant lots and provided fresh produce to the neighborhood.

Agnes is currently the Treasurer, webmaster, one of the sports coordinator and executive board member of the Filipino American Sports Association of Michigan (FASAMI.ORG). FASAMI promotes and develops sports awareness and strengthening the bonds of Filipino families within community. She am also the founder of the Asian-American Volleyball Association of Michigan (AAVAMi), which is primarily a sports club that engages Asian-American volleyball enthusiasts in the metro area.

Agnes love Detroit. Although she's lived in the suburbs my entire existence in America, she is passionately drawn by its history, its rich cultural treasures from music to architecture, its pioneering industry in Americana and its hardworking blue-collar attitude. The city may be struggling amidst the decay and abandonment but it still has the tenacity and the heart to go on. Agnes wishes to be a part of this resurgence. The North End neighborhood may be a small part of Detroit's 143-square mile area but it is a great starting point. She may not be as adept on urban agriculture or farming, but she can offer the rich diversity of pooling resources and engaging people to support the efforts in making a beautiful Detroit.