

Written by

Tuesday, 14 August 2012 11:29 - Last Updated Thursday, 16 August 2012 18:56

By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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CHICAGO (*jGLi*) – Kim Navoa was three years old when she was brought in the United States by her parents from Manila

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Philippines
in 1994. She and her parents never returned to the Philippines until she lost her immigration status.

Now, 21-years old and attending University of Illinois of Chicago, Miss Navoa will be one of a million youth, more-than 50,000 of them Filipinos, across America, who will be applying for “Deferred Action” starting Wednesday, Aug. 15.

More-than 50K Filipino Youth To Apply For Deferred Action - MabuhayRadio

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Kim and her two siblings, Katrina, 28, and Carla, 23, will be three of about 3,000 to 5,000 Filipino youth in Chicago, who will be trooping to ICIRR (Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights) Dream Relief Day and College Fair at Navy Pier Grand Ballroom in Chicago, Illinois, starting at 9 a.m., the first day that the federal government will be accepting applications for Deferred Action following its announcement by President Barack Obama last June 15.

They will get information and attend a workshop on how they can openly continue their presence in the U.S. without being deported, obtain driver's license and work permit.

At 1 p.m. that day, Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin and Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez, two of the hard-charging proponents of DREAM Act in the U.S. Congress, and reportedly Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, will jointly lead a Dream Relief Rally to inspire DREAM-eligible youth and assure them that they cannot be arrested if they stepped out of their shadows and apply for relief thru deferred action.

In a message read for her by her staff Kennedy Papa, Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL-9th) told participants of the DREAM Relief Information Session sponsored by Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment (AFIRE) last Saturday, Aug. 11, at the Word of Grace Family Christian Fellowship at 3901 N. Whipple, Chicago, "I am proud to support the Obama Administration's announcement on June 15, 2012, which will offer many DREAM Act-eligible youths protection from deportation."

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NOT A LONG-TERM FIX

S chakowsky said, “Each year, about 65,000 U.S.-raised students graduate in our country and will qualify for the DREAM Act. According to the 2010 Census, there are 114,000 Filipino Americans in Illinois, which is a 25-percent increase in the last 10 years. It has become evident that there are many undocumented youth across the board, including Filipinos. There are 75,000 DREAMers in Illinois alone.

“Today is a critical step forward, but we must also recommit to passing the DREAM Act and comprehensive immigration – because, while this policy will make a world of difference in the lives of the 800,000 young immigrants expected to be eligible, it is not a long-term fix.”

At AFIRE’s session, ICIRR’s Cindy Agustin said in discussing the Dream Relief Campaign and Action Plan that only those who qualify for deferred action for childhood arrivals based on the memorandum issued by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano last June 15, 2012 and whose application will be accepted starting Aug. 15, if they are as follows:

1. Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012;
2. Came to the United States before reaching their 16th birthday;
3. Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time;
4. Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making their request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS;

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5. Entered without inspection before June 15, 2012, or their lawful immigration status expired as of June 15, 2012;

6. Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and

7. Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

NOT CONVICTED OF "SIGNIFICANT MISDEMEANOR"

M s. Agustin said the cost of the application is \$465. If applicants are 14-years old and will be turning 15 in October 2012, they can file on October after they are 15-years old. They must be graduates of high school or are still attending high school. But it is still unclear if those enrolled in GED can qualify. They have to present transcripts from their school, birth certificate, passport, government-issued ID or medical records to prove they were in the U.S. before they turned 16 years old.

They should be in the U.S. since June 15, 2007, until now and have not been convicted of significant misdemeanor, DUI, crime dealing with violence, drug trafficking, rape, domestic violence, burglary, sexual exploitation, unlawful possession of gun among others.

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Volunteer attorneys will be on hand to review their applications at the workshop on Wednesday before DREAMers submit their applications.

They will need to submit clearances from the county court that will cost \$9. The clearance will attest they have no criminal record.

“If they bought a candy from Walgreens with credit card or placed a phone call or texted on June 13 to 17, two days before and after June 15, 2012, that will establish their presence in the U.S.

or sent out emails and had a conference in school, they can use these as proofs,” Ms. Agustin added.

Males between 18-25 must show evidence that they have signed up for Selective Service at the U.S. Postal Service.

If the Deferred Action application was denied, the application will not automatically be sent to the U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE), whose principal mission is to deport undocumented aliens. But depending on why they are denied, applications will also be sent to ICE.

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ICIRR and AFIRE will be holding monthly workshops patterned after US citizenship seminar, according to Jerry B. Clarito, executive officer of AFIRE.

During the Dream Relief Information Session, host Pastor Loren Erese of the Word of Grace Family Christian Fellowship welcomed the participants while Connie Triggiano and Stacy Mae Delvo explained to Dreamers availing the Obama's deferred action initiative and the continued fight for comprehensive immigration reform.

Kim Navoa told her Dreamer's story while CIRCA/PINTIG presented a short play while Carrie Fox of ICIRR discussed Family Support Network. Kristina Tendilla and Stephanie Camba entertained questions and provided some answers. Angela Mascarenas, AFIRE president, delivered the closing remarks. # # #

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