



Jossie P. Balasta

I am Jossie P. Balasta from Tinambac, Camarines Sur. I was born on June 5, 2008, a child of Marilyn Paladan and Dennis Balasta. We are 5 siblings and I am the second, the eldest daughter. My father is a farmer and my mother's work varies based on available work but most often she is a house maid in Manila. Our school was far because we lived in the fields, so we woke up early and walked to the road, then rode a jeep just to attend school. We crossed two rivers every day, and when it was raining, we waded through floods to avoid missing school. In grade 4, our family decided to relocate nearer the road, yet we still rode vehicle to school. Despite these challenges, we overcome them. When I was grade 7, our neighbor told me about the Sisters of Mary. I took the exam and I passed. I was dropped out in my previous school, our principal helped my mother to process the requirements of grade 6 only, so that I can study at the Sisters of Mary School.

During first year, I was extremely homesick. I cried every night and wanted to go home. I stayed quiet and did not have many friends. I was not grade conscious and was not in section A, but I was in the 3rd section. I never dreamed of being section A because I thought they were smarter than anyone and I never joined any competitions and extracurricular. Luckily, I received a lot of opportunities such as a tour outside the school and visited places that I have never been before. I became comfortable staying here. My perspective in life was changed, I can still dream a better future and pursue education despite financial needs. In my second year, I was still quiet, yet I made many friends. I did not expect to be placed in section A during our re-sectioning. I was happy yet pressured. From then on, I became grade conscious and I started studying harder. I wanted to maintain my grades and not to be removed from being an honor student – that was always in my mind. Unfortunately, I got sick and was confined in the clinic and even in the infirmary, but I was trying by best not to miss any examination. In my grade 9 journey, I became lively and talkative, sometimes naughty by my intentions was not to offend anyone. My friends kept telling me, “Hope all, you’re intelligent” but I was denying it because I was just studying and did not want to be cocky, but sometimes being proud was just fine.

My 2024 journey was a challenge, I was already grade 10 that year. I joined CAT (Citizen Army Training) and became busy with training, community services. It was tiring but I loved it. I was also appointed to be a helping sister in one of the family in our batch. At first, I refused because I was not confident and did not want to have another responsibilities. Also, I

did not want to be a leader because I did not know how to lead a group, yet my mother sister told me, “Why don’t you try?” – so I decided to try. It was fun and enjoyable, I learned many things like being a leader. During my vacation, I got news that my parents were already separated, my auntie and father told me everything. I was so sad and cried every night that I could not decide if I will return to school or not. I really thought my family were okay until it happened. But then, my relatives encouraged me that I should finish my education without my mother and prove them that a broken family is not a hindrance to success.

In my 2025 school year, I was recommended for a German language training which developed my time management and new vocabulary. It was tough but helpful to me. Unfortunately, I was returned to my own family since I was sick. But then, I was still given a lot of opportunities. This year also was our moving-up ceremony and I was happy because I made it to the top 10. During our visiting day, I got a news again that my big brother did not continue in college. For the reason that, they cannot afford it and my brother next to me only finished grade 9. If I’m not mistaken, he was down due to his grades and did not study anymore. I promised to my father that I will finish my education for them and for our future. In addition, I passed the assessment in Bookkeeping NCIII. I was nervous at that time because I thought I failed and we were the first batch of Bookkeeping so we should have a good record and luckily we did it.

Now, I do not know where is my mother though she still has contacts with my siblings. My mother promised us that if he earns enough money, he will find our mother. I make my past experiences as my inspiration to continue my journey. My dream is to be an accountant because certainly it will change my future and my skills are aligned to accountancy since I am taking accountancy path in senior high school. I really want to be an accountant and help the poor to reach their dreams. So, I am very thankful that I am a scholar of Bona Via Foundation. Thus, my family will not worry anymore for my college. Now, I am focusing on my academics so that I can maintain my academic performance. I know that upon growing, there will always be challenges but with dedication, perseverance and passion, I can overcome it. I believe that success comes from struggles.