

## SAVE A HEART TEAM Presidential Award for Exemplary Achievement



Conceptualized following the tragedy of 911, the Save A Heart mission has been in operation continuously for 13 years since 2004. The triumvirate of Drs. Jose and Stella Evangelista, Drs. Dionisio and Zita Yorro and Dr. Primo and Sylvia Andres were on their way back to the United States after an extended trip to Brazil and Peru was informed as they were flying over Mexico and about to enter US airspace that the twin towers of the World Trade Center were bombed and America had "declared war". Given the option of crossing the border on their own or flying back with the Brazilian Airlines to Peru and be under their care, they chose to fly back to Lima where they were stranded for five days. Amidst the sense of loss and with nothing else to do but to moat over the tragedy, they mulled on the idea of giving back to humanity by doing regular Cardiovascular medical missions especially in the Philippines, at the UST Hospital. It took two years for the seed to grow and bear fruit to what we now know as the Save A Heart mission.

The Section of Cardiology headed by Drs. Milagros Yamamoto and Wilson Tan de Guzman, in cooperation with Cardiovascular Surgery, are the implementing arms while the USTMAA Foundation provides the funding. Catheters, stents and devices including expensive pacemaker and implantable defibrillators are solicited from corporate partners. Cases are screened weeks before the yearly Alumni Homecoming and the mission is carried out shortly after the USTMAA Alumni Homecoming. Opportunities to teach students, residents and fellows in addition to providing care for needy patients has become the norm. There is active interchange of ideas between the US-based and local physicians that benefited all those who are present. This is one program that we look forward to doing year in year out.