

WENIFREDA V. SOTO

Midwife III
Municipal Government of Nabua
Nabua, Camarines Sur
Dangal ng Bayan Awardee, 2008



The first time she had to deliver a baby, Wenefreda Soto, a public midwife in Nabua, Camarines Sur, had to brave a strong typhoon and wade through floodwaters in the middle of the night.

Despite the rigors of her work, Wennie, as she is fondly called, said, "I love my work. What can be more satisfying than directly taking part in God's creation every time I help bring out a new baby into the world?"

Indeed, Wennie has an unselfish commitment to service that knows no bounds or distinction. Apart from exhausting her daytime on various calls for aid in and out of the *barangay* health center, the period from dusk until dawn is sometimes not her own.

At the time when most of us are sleeping soundly, she rises even on unholy hours and trails mountainous terrain to render birthing services. At times, she gets trapped in the middle of crossfire between military forces and insurgents on the way to an expectant mother's home.

Wennie pioneered various development programs that have uplifted many lives, one of which is the Pig Dispersal project designed to provide

income to indigents. She also spearheaded the establishment of a Birthing Clinic that provides quality health services including safe maternal and newborn care, and a Day Care/Feeding Center that houses pre-schoolers and provides a venue for feeding malnourished children.

When Wennie received a P50,000.00 cash award for winning the "Natatanging Komadrona" award, she refused to keep the money for her personal benefit. Instead, she used it to start the "*Botika Binhi*" project, which provides accessible and affordable medicines to the poor. *Botika Binhi* has become a network of 34 outlets dispersed in the 42 *barangays* of the Municipality of Nabua.

For this 24-hour midwife, being able to contribute to the betterment of other people's lives is a reward in itself. "Amidst all the circumstances and experiences that life has brought me, I thank God that I am a midwife," Wennie said. •