

Danilo de Leon (Pt.2)

September 8, 2022 Interviewers: Marco Luciano & Don Bouzek

Camera: Don Bouzek

*[Below are excerpts from a transcript of an interview conducted by the Alberta Labour History Institute. Read Danilo De Leon's full transcript in which he also speaks about working in Alberta as a Temporary Foreign Worker, efforts to organize workers at Bee Clean, and the campaign he is carrying out with Migrante Alberta and as President of Migrante Canada to fight for social justice for both TFWs and undocumented workers. Full transcripts of two interviews conducted by ALHI are available [here](#)]*

DD: I came to Canada in 2009. My first job was janitor at Bee Clean. Then after working as janitor with Bee Clean, I moved to Petro Canada. First, I started as food counter attendant; then, after a year I became a retail supervisor. I gained lots of experience as retail supervisor in Petro Canada for more than five years. Then after that I worked in A&W, Red Robin, and McDonalds as kitchen crew, and I worked in 7-11 as a cashier and I worked in the Safeway gas bar in Stony Plain as gas bar manager. Now currently I'm working as a delivery driver.

[.....]

Q: Where do you live now?

DD: West side.

Q: Do you live in Jasper Place?

DD: Yes.

Q: When did you move there?

DD: In 2019. I used to live on the south side. I lived on the south side for nine years.

Q: Why Jasper Place?

DD: This is a community where there's a lot of workers, a lot of Filipinos. In the area where I live, in most of the buildings you see Filipino people.

Q: Where is that exactly?

DD: On 156 Street.

Q: Is there a sense that there are two groups of Filipino people living here – those who are TFWs and those who have returned to the community? Or is it just one big group of people?

DD: It's composed of different people. I met a lot of undocumented in this area, foreign workers, residents. It's a mix of Filipinos from different walks of life. But they have the same thing in common – they are all workers. They all work hard to make money, work hard to meet ends, and work hard to send money back home, especially for the family that depends on them.

Q: Are some of the rents better here than in other parts of the city?

DD: Oh yeah, it's way cheaper here.

Q: Are people starting up businesses here to serve the community?

DD: Yeah, there's one here that I know. He's a well known JP, Bill Morris. There's a Filipino who owns a business on the south side, but you see his product here selling on the west side. There's also a Filipino store where you can buy Filipino products like foods and condiments, and aside from that it's also our remit centre, a store where you can send money back home.

Q: Are there places or coffee shops where people meet?

DD: West Edmonton Mall, where you see most of the people in the food court. In this area, sometimes we go in the Tim Horton's here on Stony Plain and 163. When you want some cheaper prices of groceries, you can go here at the No Frills.

Q: I was told that the second language in this area is Tagalog. Is that your experience as well?

DD: Yes. You see someone. You can distinguish if it's a Filipino or not. When you see them, instead of saying hi, you say kamusta, just to let them know that you're Filipino, just to let them know that you still value the culture of the country where you're from. But in some areas, people who've been here for quite a while, Filipino who grew up here, they don't speak Tagalog so much. So it's kind of a mix of Tagalog and English.

Q: Are there some in this area who are second generation?

DD: Yes.

Q: I've also heard that the church is important.

DD: Annunciation Church on 95 Avenue. I can't remember if it's 162 or 163 street, close to the Misericordia.

Q: And it has a big Filipino congregation?

DD: Yes.

Q: I know there's one big church in Mill Woods.

DD: St. Theresa. And there's one, St. Anthony de Padua.

Q: What do Filipinos need in this Jasper Place community?

DD: First I guess a centre, a centre where they can meet and talk and develop skills, talk about the issues of life and the issues in the community, if there are any. To develop a relationship. If you live in a community and you want to develop a good relationship with everyone in the community, you need to have a centre. A centre where people can meet, a centre where people are welcome, and give everyone a chance to develop their skills and talent. I think those are the things that we need. Everything starts with communication. If we have a centre that's open communication for everything, [and] will welcome those kind of things, then that's where small things started and became big in the future.

*[This transcript only includes Danilo De Leon's mentions of the Filipino community living and working in Jasper Place. The full transcript of his interview is available [here](#)]*