



Stroke Champ Meets a Champ

By Lynn Bronikowski
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On March 21, 2016, stroke survivor Bryan Melchor met his hero—professional boxing legend Manny Pacquiao.

And on that same day, Pacquiao met his hero—Bryan Melchor, who in August 2015 just after singing at his church service experienced a brain stem stroke. He was in a coma for two weeks with doctors saying he may never speak or walk again.

His wife, Nikkolette Melchor wrote to churches asking for prayers and soon 90 churches began praying for her husband.

“He started walking and speaking again right after a month,” said Nikkolette. “Bryan is singing again in church which is amazing because his doctors said he might not talk again.”



Filipino boxing great Pacquiao, who currently serves as a Philippines senator, heard about Bryan through a letter and [video](#) that Nikkolette sent which focused on how her husband was doing in rehab as he approached his 31st birthday.

“It went viral with more than 100,000 views on Facebook and 1,700 shares,” said Nikkolette, adding that it also reached Pacquiao. “Manny sent a [video](#) message to Bryan wishing him a happy birthday.”

To celebrate his six months of stroke recovery, Nikkolette and “Champ,” as her husband is called, staged a “Fight Walk with Champ” by a lake near their Fremont, Calif. home. Pacquiao also is nicknamed Champ.

“Our goal was to walk 2.5 miles but when he reached that goal, he walked much further with different people,” said Nikkolette. “It was great motivation for my husband who is such a people person.”

Pacquiao’s team kept in touch with the Melchors and when Pacquiao was going to be in Los Angeles to train for his next big fight, they invited Bryan to meet his hero.

Nikkolette kept it a secret until the morning he was to meet Pacquiao at his home in Los Angeles.



“Usually his resting heart rate is 55 but it went to 90. It was one champ meeting another champ,” said Nikkolette.

The couple watched the Golden State Warriors game with Pacquiao.

“Meeting Manny gave Bryan a lot of encouragement because he said "Hindi ka pa tapos," which in English means, "You're not done in life yet,"” said Nikkolette.

The Melchors last year went to Atlanta for the Nico Corp.’s annual meeting where Bryan delivered a speech about his stroke and recovery. He had benefited from [Nico’s Brainpath®](#) surgery and was presented Nico's Trailblazer Award.

“My husband's goal is to be a motivational speaker telling his story about stroke and encourage other people,” said Nikkolette. “We’ve shared his story with some churches already. Manny was a big inspiration for him.”