

CRAFTING CHANGE: A Celebration of Strength, Sustainability and Solidarity

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In celebration of **World Lupus Day**, the **Rheumatology Educational Trust Foundation** and **LUISA (Lupus Inspired Advocacy)**, in partnership with rheumatology consultants and fellows from the **University of Santo Tomas Hospital and St. Luke's Medical Center**, hosted a heart-warming event titled **"Crafting Change: An Upcycling Workshop"** held on May 31, 2025, at the UST Hospital Multipurpose Hall. This meaningful initiative brought together individuals living with lupus, their families, healthcare providers, and environmental advocates in an atmosphere of creativity, learning, and unity. The workshop served not only as a celebration of resilience in the face of chronic illness but also as a call to action for environmental awareness and sustainability.

Participants arrived dressed in **purple and green** — colors **symbolizing lupus awareness and environmental consciousness** — ready for a morning that promised not just fun, but meaning. The day began with prayer and movement, grounding everyone in a shared spirit of unity and wellness.



An insightful talk by Dr. Oliver Sta. Ana, an environmental psychology advocate, opened the program with a thought-provoking talk where he emphasized how healing is deeply connected to the spaces we live in and the way we care for our environment. His message resonated powerfully with the audience: that **healing the planet and healing ourselves go hand in hand**.



The event closed with a vibrant display of artwork, a group photo, and heartfelt singing — the kind that only comes from a **place of community, courage, and love.**



After some lighthearted games and hidden surprise prizes, the spotlight turned to the main event — an interactive upcycling workshop led by creative facilitator Ms. Marissa Cruz, who guided participants in transforming simple, old items into something new and beautiful — a perfect metaphor for life with lupus. During the session, **stories were shared, hands got busy, and hope was woven into every creation.**



“**Crafting Change**” was more than a creative workshop; it was a **testament to the power of solidarity, environmental consciousness, and inclusive health advocacy.** As lupus continues to be an often misunderstood and invisible illness, events like this offer a crucial platform for visibility, support, and hope.

Through upcycling, participants were reminded that **what may appear broken or discarded still holds potential**—*mirroring the journey of many lupus warriors who find strength and beauty in the face of adversity.*

