

I Linå' lã-ta (Our Life)

A Newsletter For Individuals With Disabilities



Able Industries Employs Individuals with Disabilities



Able Industries of the Pacific
"Providing Challenging Employment Opportunities
To People With Disabilities"

Among the many businesses on Guam, there is one employer that actively seeks and recruits individuals with disabilities to join their workforce. Able Industries of the Pacific, a non-profit organization, is dedicated to the improvement of the lives of people with severe disabilities through employment opportunities. This organization works with NISH, a nationally recognized organization that assists in the employment of people with severe disabilities through the AbilityOne Program, formerly called the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program. AbilityOne offers a variety of work opportunities to people with severe disabilities that will help them develop their vocational skills. Since 1938, this program has provided thousands of people who are blind or have other severe disabilities with the skilled employment training necessary to succeed in challenging jobs. Working in conjunction with organizations like Able Industries of the Pacific, AbilityOne is a



Able Industries of the Pacific Recruitment staff include: (Left to Right) Selina Villagomez, Human Resource (HR) Assistant-Recruitment; Franklin Sablan, Director of HR & Administration, & Tasha Bituin, HR Specialist-Outplacement

Federal program that has made independent living and quality employment a reality for many generations of Americans with severe disabilities.

AbilityOne creates jobs and training for people with severe disabilities through the federal purchase of supplies and services. By law, federal employees are required to purchase from qualifying non-profit agencies.

As a result of the AbilityOne Program, participants lead a more productive, independent life, and the government is able to reduce entitlements. Since 1995, Able Industries of the Pacific, operating under the AbilityOne Program, has successfully trained and employed hundreds of people with disabilities in our local community.

Written by Franklin Sablan, Director of Human Resources & Administration, Able Industries of the Pacific.



Able Industries of the Pacific manages the following federal government contracts:

- **Base Supply Center Stores - ServMart** at Naval Base and Base Service Store at Andersen AFB.
- **Base Wide Janitorial Contract** Andersen AFB.
- **Child Development Center & Medical Clinic Janitorial Contracts**, Andersen AFB.
- **Magellan Inn Dining Facility**, Andersen AFB.
- **Water Blasting/Pressure Washing Contract**, Naval Base

Able Industries of the Pacific Mission

We believe in equal opportunity for employment for all people. We are committed to providing people with severe disabilities with greater vocational opportunities through innovative training with the AbilityOne Program. We will continue to persevere until individuals with severe disabilities are recognized as a critical component of the workforce on the Island of Guam. We will create a work environment, which will add value to our employees, clients, community and the Federal customers we serve.

Transit Talk



A Transit passenger looks over the posted bus schedule and island service map.

Individuals who don't drive have continued to be outspoken about the problems of getting around our community, and now there is positive movement to change the system of managing transit. Transit issues and transportation

problems are finally getting the notice of policymakers and planners, and that could mean a better system of rides for you.

On May 22, Senator Frank Ishizaki held a public hearing on Bill 203, an Act to Re-Establish the Guam Mass Transit Authority. Many people have asked, "What? Didn't we just get rid of GMTA? Why would we want to bring it back?"

There are many good reasons to return to the structure provided by a Transit Authority, one in particular, greater autonomy and the inclusion of a General Manager. In recognition of that, your Transportation Commission and the Mobility Planning Team provided support and input to Bill 203 at the Public Hearing. The return of an Authority as an independent agency provides greater flexibility in design, revenue development, marketing, retention and development of transit expertise, and most importantly, it places the responsibility of success and customer satisfaction on the General Manager, who is accountable to a 7 member board of diverse experience and expertise.

Our recommendations for additions to the bill included education and experience requirements for the General Manager, keeping the right to furnish all public transportation and certain public parking, ensuring that all public transportation is accessible, consolidating Senior Citizens transportation programs under the GMTA umbrella for purposes of coordination and efficiency, balancing the board membership between riders and others with backgrounds in finance, business, transportation, human services, and advocacy or ADA knowledge, and overlapping board terms to prevent loss of past knowledge.

Most recently, another legislative attempt at redesigning transit emerged from the office of Senator Tina Muna Barnes. Bill 304 proposes to redesign transit services under a new name, *Auturidat Isla Transitu*, or *Isla Transit Authority (ITA)*, which incorporates many operational functions into the mayors' offices, some of which propose to serve as hubs for a fleet of small, fuel efficient vehicles operated under a cooperative. Issues of accessibility are still loosely defined in this bill and the decentralized management challenges efforts to coordinate other transportation services and build transit expertise for long term improvement. It will pay for all of us to begin to understand both attempts to legislate improved systems of management and operation of transit and to advocate for the assurance of accessibility and improved service.

In addition to these legislative movements, there is transit service planning news coming from Public Works and their Territorial Transportation Improvement Plan, which is being prepared by the consulting firm of Parsons and Brinkerhoff. The Parsons/Brinkerhoff team has already put forth a recommendation to apply for \$30 million of federal grants to expand the island's service fleet to 50 buses. Other no cost structural recommendations are forthcoming within the month which, if implemented, will improve frequency and efficiency of service.

Bill 203 - New GMTA

- General Manager
- Retain present personnel + as needed
- 7-member Board with various backgrounds including riders & people with disabilities
- One central base for island
- Scheduling & dispatch from one GMTA center
- May own or contract fleet of buses; all must be accessible
- Contract operation & maintenance
- Transit expertise builds & is retained
- General framework supports flexibility

Bill 304 - ITA

- Executive Manager & Executive Team
- 2 positions at mayors' offices, 4 for hubs
- 9 member Board: 3 appointed by Governor, 6 Mayors or Vice Mayors
- Multiple bases at Mayors' offices
- Scheduling & dispatch @ mayors' offices
- (30) 15-passenger vans, some accessible. Non-ADA vans eventually become part of owner-operated cooperative.
- Transit expertise changes with elections
- Very specific guidelines that may limit flexibility & growth

OPENING DOORS: Success! For The Record

There are good days and there are bad days. All days I wake up blind. Some days I remember that I am. Other days it doesn't occur to me until someone reminds me or a looming wall tells me. Bump! Each new day presents its unique challenges, that by the nature of being alive, I am called to face.

Some days I dance and some days I fall on my face. On a clear day, two weeks ago, I danced. I had set my sights on two goals: getting a copy of my marriage license and picking up a copy of my mortgage interest statement. As required I had called a day ahead to schedule a ride on the Paratransit. Driver Darrell Materne arrived like clock-work at my residence and dropped me at the front door of the Public Health building in Mangilao. Of course, I had called ahead to verify the hours of operation. In my life, there's a lot of calling ahead to verify and confirm. Thanks to Darrell, I knew to go down the hall and turn left.

At this point, let me explain to you my disability. Other than a mean streak of stubbornness, I have very limited vision. I see mostly just light and shadow. So with this vision, a white cane, and a mind full of determination, I followed voices and air flow to the open window counter. Once there, the attendant was quick to notice my white cane and assisted me accordingly. She was so efficient that I had my copies of my marriage license 40 minutes ahead of the time I had allotted myself.

I cannot answer to all the services of Public Health, but in the Records Section, they were kind and efficient. In the time I was there, I was also given a quick tour of their newly renovated bathrooms that are wheelchair-accessible.

Again, like clock-work, the Paratransit bus arrived at

the front of the Public Health building, this time driven by Shawn Wolford. Another 35 cents in the fare box and I was off to my second errand. We arrived at Citibank soon after, where I made my way in from the accessible parking space. Customers are greeted immediately upon entering the front doors at a reception counter. I was treated with courtesy and efficiency and had the copies of my mortgage interest statements within a few minutes. Again, I had called ahead of time to make arrangements to pick up copies of the statements I needed.

I was three for three! Paratransit, Public Health, and Citibank came through. That day was a good day.

Though I know that my husband, relatives, and friends are always ready and willing to help me, some days I like to do things on my own. Y'know, some days I just want to be like everybody else.

It's always a balance of living within my reality as a person with a disability and reaching for and wanting the things "normal" people want: the ability, the capability, and the freedom to move about freely. Every day is a new day. After all, I do love to dance!

"Opening Doors" is written by Lee Cruz, editor.



Lee Cruz is all smiles over the quick service provided by Dolores Diaz at the DPHSS.

Able Industries of the Pacific



Teamwork involving Magellan Inn Staff (L-R) Joven Teves, Doreen Flores, and Keven Duenas gets the job done!

Offering the following training opportunities for people with severe disabilities:

- Administrative/Clerical Staff
- Retail Cashiers
- Material Handling Laborers
- Janitorial
- Food Service Workers
- Laborers

For more information contact:

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Quentin San Nicolas, Material Handling Laborer at ServMart, Naval Base shows his delight while performing his tasks

Community Events



Guma' Mami, Inc., in collaboration with the Guam Gallery of Art and the Chamorro Artists Association, held an art exhibit, "Creative Spirits," on May 30 at the Cars Plus Showroom in Maite. Paulina Torres, at left, is shown with two of her four paintings included in the exhibit. Enjoying the event with Paulina is Berni Grajek, Executive Director of Guma' Mami.



Guam Developmental Disabilities Council

Upcoming Events

Guam Developmental Disabilities Council General Membership Meeting

July 9, 2008
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Marriott Resort, The View

Executive Director
Manuel Cruz

Chairperson
Eugene Santos

Vice-Chairperson
Josephine Cortez

2nd Vice-Chairperson
Esther Arca

Secretary
Ella Cruz

Children and Family Issues Committee
Joseph Mendiola

Adult Issues Committee
Tom Mangloña

Cross-Cutting Issues Committee
Elisabeth Cruz

For more information call
Kristina Perez at **735-9127**



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Alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print, or audio tapes) of **I Linå'lå-ta** will be made available upon request. Please contact Margaret Johnson at 735-2477 (v), 734-6531 (TTY), or 734-5709 (fax) for more information.

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