

# I Linã' lã-ta (Our Life)

A Newsletter For Individuals With Disabilities



## Guam Developmental Disabilities Council Promotes Advocacy



Accessing supportive services in areas such as employment, education, health, housing, and transportation can be very challenging and often times frustrating and tiresome for people with disabilities. To make life a little easier, the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council (Guam DD Council) was created to advocate, build capacity, and support systemic change to assist people with developmental disabilities by helping them reach their maximum potential through increased independence, productivity, and integration within the community. Here are answers to some basic questions about the Council.

### What is the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council?

Each State and Territory has a Developmental Disabilities Council that functions to increase the independence, productivity, inclusion, and community

integration of individuals with developmental disabilities. The Guam DD Council was established by Executive Order No. 94-09, in accordance with Public Law 106-402, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act). It is funded through a grant authorized under the DD Act.

The Guam DD Council is comprised of 27 members, 16 of whom are appointed by the Governor. The make-up of the Guam DD Council is unique in that 60 percent of its members are individuals with developmental disabilities or are parents or guardians of individuals with disabilities. The remaining members (40 percent) are representatives of each major State agency that serves individuals with developmental disabilities in Guam. The "customers" of the service system direct the Council's activities.

The Guam DD Council employs a three-member staff to carry out the goals and objectives *See GDDC Page 2*



**Guam DD Council staff** attended the 2009 Technical Assistance (TA) Institute held on July 27-28 at the Westin Gateway in Arlington, Virginia. The theme of the Institute, "Shared Commitment--Shared Results" focused on collaboration that requires sharing risks, responsibilities, resources, and rewards. (L-R) Marie Tedtaotao-Libria, GDDC Program Coordinator IV, Faith McCormick, Acting Commission, Administration on Developmental Disabilities, & Manuel Q. Cruz, GDDC Executive Director.

# Guam DD Council—*cont'd from page 1*

outlined in its 5-Year State Plan. Manuel Cruz is the Executive Director. Marie Tedtaotao-Libria and Kristina Perez serve as Program Coordinators.

## **What are the major activities of the Council?**

The Guam DD Council works to change systems. It aims to improve the way human services agencies do business so that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families have improved or expanded services. It focuses on advocacy such as educating policy makers about unmet needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. It also focuses its efforts on capacity building. An example of this is the Council's work with Guam's service agencies to provide training and benefits to direct care workers to promote independence, self-determination, productivity, integration and inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life.

To accomplish this, the Guam DD Council utilizes strategies, such as training, educating policy makers and communities, coalition development, barrier elimination, and demonstration of new approaches to service. These strategies are incorporated into a 5-Year State Plan that includes a comprehensive review and analysis of services, supports, and other assistance that are available to individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Guam DD Council advocates with and for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families by:

- Speaking out on issues affecting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- Advising and educating the Governor, the Guam Legislature, State agencies and service providers about the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- Developing a 5-Year State Plan for Council activities.
- Reviewing State Plans of other government agencies that affect individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Funding a variety of small grant projects to increase our understanding and capacity to improve the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities.

## **How does the Guam DD Council work for systems change, advocacy, and capacity building?**

The Guam DD Council works in partnership with individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members in promoting self-determination and encourages the development of a consumer and family-centered comprehensive service system. The Council provides training and support so that individuals with developmental disabilities can advocate for themselves and for others, develop leadership skills, participate in their communities, exercise choice and control over their lives, and play a role in the development of public policies that affect them.

## **What are the goals of the Council?**

State Councils are required by the DD Act to develop a state plan addressing areas of emphasis in the following categories for the purpose of increasing the self-determination, independence, productivity, and inclusion and integration of individuals with developmental disabilities.

The major goals of the Guam DD Council addresses the needs of people with developmental disabilities to:

- get and keep employment consistent with their interest, activities and needs.
- reach their educational potential, and infants and young children reach their developmental potential.
- choose where and with whom they live.
- are healthy and benefit from the full range of needed health services.
- have transportation services for work, school, medical, and personal needs.
- benefit from inclusive recreational, leisure and social activities consistent with their interests and abilities.
- have the information, skills, opportunities, and supports to live free of abuse, neglect, financial and sexual exploitation, and violations of their human and legal rights and the inappropriate use of restraints or seclusion.
- have access to other services available or offered in our community, which affect their quality of life.
- benefit from public relations activities, educating policy makers and distribution of products.

For more information, please call the Council at 734-9127/8 or visit their office at Suite 17, Castle Mall, University Drive Mangilao between 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday.

# Guam DD Council Hosts Activities for Consumers



**July 2009 GDDC General Membership Meeting.** The Guam DD Council held its bi-monthly meeting at the Hilton Guam Resort on July 15. Eugene Santos, (standing) GDDC Chairperson and Health Education Administrator for the Department of Public Health & Social Services, presented up-to-date information on the status of the H1N1 Virus on Guam. He reported that the H1N1 is considered an outbreak and not an epidemic, and that DPHSS is aggressively working with local and regional officials to prevent the spread of the virus. Mr. Santos urged members to practice good hygiene, such as regular hand washing and “coughing etiquette” — coughing into a Kleenex or shirt sleeve — to help control the spread of H1N1.



**Dr. Brian Que, a Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrician,** spoke on “Social Cognition & Social Skill Development” for children during the Guam DD Council’s 2009 Consumer Workshop held on August 29 at the Holiday Resort Hotel. Other topics addressed included: “Parent Involvement: The Key to Your Child’s Success,” “Students With Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Knowing Your Rights and Responsibilities,” “Social Security Benefits and Disability Work Incentives,” “Self-Determination,” and “Skill Development--Advocacy.”



**Guam DD Council staff** were on hand to answer questions and promote awareness of the Council’s mission during the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) Conference held on July 8. Shown here (L-R) are Marie Tedtaotao-Libria, Christina Perez, & Manuel Cruz.



**The Guam DD Council Work Session.** Fifteen Council Members attended a Work Session held on June 19 at the Holiday Resort Guam. The Work Session focused on the 5-Year State Plan Amendment for 2010. The 5-Year State Plan (2007-2011) addresses specific information that is required by the U.S. Administration on Developmental Disabilities and includes the Council’s “Area of Emphasis” and the resulting goals and objectives for the Plan. Based on local needs assessment and other forms of information gathering, the Council has identified specific FY 2009 initiatives to continue in FY 2010. The areas of emphasis that are addressed include: Employment, Health, and Education. (L-R) Manuel Cruz, Executive Director, Kristina Perez, Program Coordinator, and Council members Shirley Lujan, Jesse Pangelinan, Ella Cruz, & Claire Duenas.

## ***Opening Doors—We Want to Tango With You!***



C. P. Cruz

Self-advocacy was the key to opening the doors to the theaters for avid moviegoers Leah Rassier and Andrew Tydingco. Tango, Inc., theaters opened its doors enthusiastically in response to the needs of moviegoers with disabilities. In June, Leah and Andrew, in separate efforts, brought to the attention of Tango management, changes that would make the theater more accessible. An immediate and resounding “Yes!” and lightning-speed accommodation was Tango General Manager Kit Lanuza’s response.

“It was a pure, good experience,” Andrew said. Tydingco and his wife, Rowena, went to the movies at the Agana Center Stadium Theaters on Friday, June 19. He emailed Lanuza the following morning with some recommendations specific to Andrew’s needs as a person with low vision. Andrew asked for improved lighting for aisles within the theaters; hand-held large-print snack bar menus; and access to movie schedules and titles. Lanuza responded the same day thanking Andrew for his email and saying that Tango could accommodate all his requests, specifically asking what font size would serve best for the hand-held menus.

As a person with low vision Andrew was especially concerned about his personal safety while navigating within the theater between aisles, up and down steps and being able to find a seat suitable for

good viewing. Snacks? What is a trip to the movies without a trip to the snack bar? Andrew wanted to be able to make his own menu selection without holding up the line by having his wife read the entire menu out loud to him. A hand-held menu with large print was a good solution. Not only will this be of great help to Andrew on future visits, but also to other movie fans who can’t see the menu display either. Simply approach the counter and ask for a large-print menu.

Tango pulled two for two by meeting Leah’s request for improved accessibility for persons using wheelchairs or scooters. In her letter to Tango management, mailed via the postal service, Leah requested that designated wheelchair-accessible seating not be restricted to front row seats; that there be a drinkholder available in the accessible space; and finally, that companion seating be more prominently marked.

Since Leah had provided her email address in her letter, Lanuza was able to respond promptly via the internet. As a result of her requests Tango now displays a wheelchair accessible icon on their published movie schedules which shows which theaters are accessible to wheelchair users. Previously, Leah would not know ahead of time if the movie she was planning to watch would be accessible to her in her wheelchair.

Leah said that her experience in working with Tango General Manager Lanuza was good and that he was responsive to her concerns. She said that the willingness was there from the onset and that he appreciated having the recommendations on improving accessibility from their patrons as guidance.

Lanuza also assured Leah that drinkholders would be placed for accessible seating at the Micronesia Mall Stadium Theaters, that they were already in place in the Agana Theaters, and that companion seating next to accessible seating would be more prominently marked. Lanuza went a step further and said that movie ushers would make pre-movie announcements as a reminder that accessible and companion seating is reserved.

This story started as an exercise at a self-advocacy workshop sponsored by Guam CEDDERS

See ***Opening Doors*** Page 5



Using self-advocacy skills, Andrew Tydingco provided suggestions to Tango Theaters on how to make going to the movies a more pleasant experience for people with low vision. Andrew is shown here with his wife, Rowena Tydingco.

## Opening Doors—cont'd from Page 4

and led by Ginger Porter, University of Guam CEDDERS Initiative Area Coordinator. It was scripted, produced and directed by two people who simply wanted to go to the movies.

This story has a happy ending, or should I say a hopeful beginning? Thanks to the initiative of Leah and Andrew and their action and follow through in self-advocacy, more places on Guam have improved accessibility. Tango Management's willingness and action to provide immediate accommodations with the personal care of Lanuza made this effort a success for all involved. Congratulations to Tango Theaters and special thanks to General Manager Kit Lanuza!

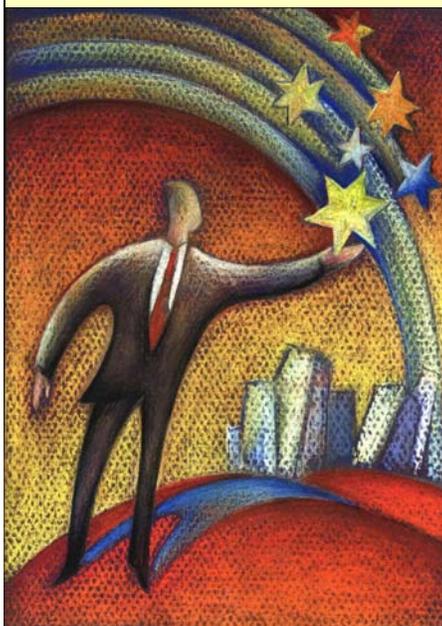


Through the efforts of Leah Rassier and the accommodating attitude of the management of Tango Theaters, wheelchair users now know which movies have accessible seating available ahead of time.



### Tango Theaters Is Hereby Awarded the **Gold Star for Accessibility**

**For their Positive  
Attitude & Efforts to  
Improve Accessibility  
for the  
Residents of Guam!**



## Would You Like to Learn More about **Self-Advocacy?**

UOG CEDDERS invites you to learn more about self-advocacy and practice the skills to become a good self-advocate. This just might be a life changing event, and we think you'll be glad you chose to come.

### Two Sessions:

**Saturdays, September 19 & October 3  
8:30 am - 12 Noon**

**GSAT, House 19, Dean Circle  
University of Guam**

For more information, contact  
Ginger Porter at 735-2369 or email at  
[ginger.porter@guamcedders.org](mailto:ginger.porter@guamcedders.org).

### Self-Advocacy is...

- Speaking up for your rights
- Doing your own thing
- Telling people what you want
- Sharing problems
- Making choices
- Taking responsibility for your own life
- Enjoying the same rights as everyone else
- Getting rid of disrespectful words
- Being part of a support group
- Not letting others run your life
- Coming and going when you like



## GSAT Conference Highlights “Universal Design”

Over 200 people attended the 15th Annual Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) Conference held on July 8th at the Westin Resort Hotel. Co-sponsored by GSAT/Guam CEDDERS, Guam Legal Services, and the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council, the theme for this year’s conference was “In the World, a Person; In a Person, a World: A.T. Unlocks It All!”

Session topics included “A World of Inclusive Schools,” “A World at Home,” “A World of Faith,” “A World at Work,” and “A World on the Road.” During the lunch period, GSAT put on a demonstration titled, “A World of Fashion: Adaptive Clothing and A.T. Accessories.” Students from the University of Guam modeled clothing that provide comfort and ease of

dressing.

The finale of the show was young and vivacious Desiree Tyquiengco riding her Rifton Tricycle. This AT device provides Desirae the exercise she needs to strengthen her muscles while she enjoys the fresh air and scenic view of the outdoors.

Next year’s conference promises to be bigger and better. Stay tuned!

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*(Left Photo Below)* Siblings Lynn and Andrew Tydingco, Owners of Pokilabot Computer Sales & Services, share information about their company as vendors at the GSAT Conference. *(Right Photo Below)* Desiree Tyquiengco peddles while riding an adapted tricycle while her grandmother, Maggie Reyes, steers, during a demonstration at the GSAT Conference.



Members of the deaf community enjoyed their time learning about “Universal Design” concepts with friends. (L-R) Jonah Cacayan, Richie Abastas, & Annie Rose Cruz.



If you are an individual who is entitled to **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)** or **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** based on disability or blindness and you are interested in working or returning to work



The **Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) Program**

with Guam Legal Services Corporation may be able to provide you with information, advocacy or other services related to securing or regaining gainful employment.

For more information, please contact **GUAM LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION** at **477-9811/2** or via email at **information@guamlegalservices.com**

SSA has reviewed this publication for technical accuracy. However, this ad should not be considered an official SSA publication.

The Program for **Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI)** and **Protection and Advocacy for Individual Rights (PAIR) and Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (PADD)** with Guam Legal Services Corporation will be holding **Public Input Sessions** on **Saturday, September 26, 2009**

**PAIR & PADD**

Proposed Goals and Objectives for FY2010  
9:00a.m. to 10:00a.m.  
and

**PAIMI**

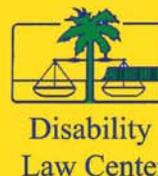
Proposed Goals and Objectives for FY2010  
10:00a.m. to 11:00a.m.  
at the Guam Hilton Resort & Spa, Tumon

The proposed Goals & Objectives are now available for public review.

To request a copy, request reasonable accommodations, or for more information, please contact:

**GUAM LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**  
Telephone no. **477-9811**  
TDD/TTY: **477-3416**

Written comments will be accepted until September 28, 2009 at  
Guam Legal Services Corporation  
113 Bradley Place, Anigua  
or via email at  
information@guamlegalservices.com



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# Guam Developmental Disabilities Council

Konsehelon Guåhan para I Taotao ni' Maninutet desde ki Manhoben

130 University Drive, Suite 17, Mangilao, Guam 96913 ■ Tel: (671) 735-9127 ■ Fax: (671) 734-9121 ■ [guamddc2@teleguam.net](mailto:guamddc2@teleguam.net)

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### We are currently seeking new members!

The Guam Developmental Disabilities Council (GDDC) is currently seeking applicants for membership terms beginning in **August 2009**. GDDC membership must comply with categories listed in the federal DD Act. Openings this year will be for the following categories: a) Individuals with a developmental disability; b) immediate relatives or guardians of adults with mentally impairing disabilities who cannot advocate for themselves; and c) parents or guardians of children with a developmental disability.

All candidates for DD Council membership should have experience serving on committees, boards or organizations and have first-hand knowledge in the developmental disabilities field. It is very important that applicants have time to attend the GDDC monthly meetings, including time to work on at least two committees. The Council advocates for, and plans and conducts activities to improve the system of support and services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

The Governor will appoint members to a 4-year terms. Application packets are available from the GDDC office located at the University Castle Mall, Suite 17, 130 University Drive, Mangilao, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. For additional information, please contact the GDDC office at 735-9127 or email: [guamddc2@teleguam.net](mailto:guamddc2@teleguam.net). **Applications are being accepted** and may be mailed to:

Attn: Manuel Q. Cruz, Executive Director  
Guam Developmental Disabilities Council

University Castle Mall, Suite 17 ■ 130 University Drive ■ Mangilao, Guam 96913

Funding for this ad is provided by the DD Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, Federal Public Law 106-402.

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

## Upcoming Events

### SEPTEMBER

- **Sep 9**-Guam DD Council's General Membership Meeting, Guam Hilton Resort, Gallery, 11 am-2pm
- **Sep 19**-Self-Advocacy Training Session 1, GSAT Training Center, House 19 Dean Circle, 8:30 am-12 Noon
- **Sep 26**-Guam Legal Services Public Input Sessions for PADD and PAIMI Proposed Goals & Objectives for FY 2010, Guam Hilton Resort & Spa, 9-11 am

### OCTOBER

- **Oct 3**-Self-Advocacy Training Session 2, GSAT Training Center, House 19 Dean Circle, 8:30 am-12 Noon



## Guam CEDDERS WANTS YOU!

Guam CEDDERS is looking for individuals with disabilities who are interested in taking a leadership role in various trainings.

Contact Terrie Fejarang at House 21 Dean Circle, University of Guam or call her at **735-2477** for more information.



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Comments may be sent to:

Guam CEDDERS

Office of Academic & Student Affairs

University of Guam, UOG Station

Mangilao, Guam 96923

Phone: 735-2480/1

Fax: 734-5709

TTY: 734-6531

Email: [terrie.fejarang@guamcedders.org](mailto:terrie.fejarang@guamcedders.org)

Guam DDC Executive Director: Manuel Cruz

GLS-DLC Director: Harold Parker, Esquire

Guam CEDDERS Director: Heidi San Nicolas, Ph.D.

Editor: C. P. Cruz

Associate Editor: Terrie Fejarang

Layout & Design: Margaret Johnson

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Alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print, or audio tapes) of **I Liná'lá-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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