

Public Guardian Provides Legal Services & More

What do you do if a person, for whatever reason, is not able to manage his or her own affairs and does not have a family member or friend available to take over this responsibility? One route to take is to look into the services of the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG).

Created by Guam Law in March 2000, the Chief Justice of the Guam Supreme Court appointed John Weisenberger, Esq., to be the first Public Guardian. Mr. Weisenberger developed policies and procedures, established the office, and opened for business on February 19, 2001. Upon his departure in August 2008, Robert Weinberg, Esq., and then Jasmine Vasavada served as the Interim Public Guardian. In the summer of 2009, Chief Justice Robert Torres appointed Marcellene Cruz Santos to the position.

As stated in the establishing legislation, "The Public Guardian shall serve as guardian, limited guardian,

testamentary guardian, or temporary guardian of the person and/or estate of an elderly or mentally incapacitated individual when so appointed." In other words, the Public Guardian is selected to ensure that the best interests of a person, deemed not able to manage his or her personal dealings, are protected.

A person's "interests" may cover a broad range of areas. In this case, the Public Guardian, "is responsible for ensuring that each ward has safe and appropriate housing, receives the necessary therapeutic care required by the individuals' disability or medical condition; that each ward is associating with the proper people, and not associating with the wrong people; that each ward is receiving appropriate and necessary medical and dental care; and that each ward has the opportunity to maximize life's potentials and opportunities."

See *Public Guardian* Page 2

I Linã'lã-ta (Our Life)

A Newsletter For Individuals With Disabilities



(L-R) **Marcellene Cruz Santos, Esq., Public Guardian**, works with a staff of two, including Rosa Taitague, secretary, and Esther Mendiola, social worker. Their office is located in the Old Superior Court Building in Hagåtña.

Public Guardian—*cont'd from page 1*

According to the Office of the Public Guardian's 2008 Annual Report, during the period from January 1, 2008 to January 20, 2009, the office served as guardian for 54 individuals.

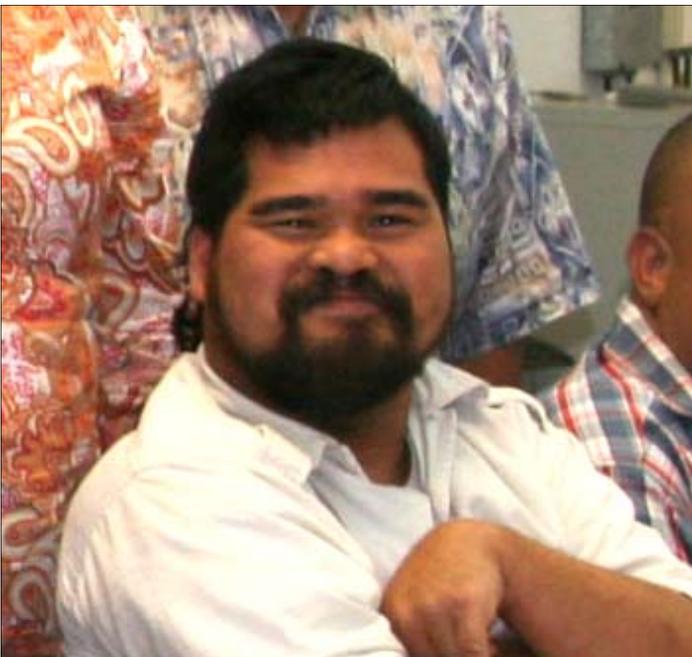
Attorney Santos, who oversees the services provided, takes care of the legal needs of their clients. Rosa Taitague, while officially the program's legal secretary who handles the clerical and notary type duties, performs additional responsibilities such as drafting certain legal documents, filing documents with the court, handling household finances, and bookkeeping for 60 individuals. This often entails accessing a broad range of services from Social Security, the Department of Public Health and Social Services, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, just to name a few.

The third person assigned to the OPG is Esther Mendiola, a "judicial social worker." Ms. Mendiola handles the initial intake of persons referred to the office. She serves as a case manager, coordinates services through many community agencies, and attends to client health care and other personal needs.

If you, or know of anyone who may need the services offered by the Office of the Public Guardian, please do not hesitate to give them a call at 475-3173 or send an email message to publicguardian@opg.guamcourts.org. You may also visit them at the Old Court Building, 110 West O'Brien Drive in Hagåtña.



Marcellene Cruz Santos, Esq., Public Guardian.



One person who is very happy with the support he has been receiving from the Office of the Public Guardian is Moses Puas. The 24-year old resident of Yigo shared that, "they help me with my health and money. They hold my money for me and then I get the money from them. When I ask for help, they always help me."

Responsibilities of the Public Guardian

1. Serve as guardian of the person or estate of an adult in our community who by reason of age, disease, or disability is unable, unassisted to properly manage and take care of him or herself or his or her property, and for whom no alternate guardian among family and friends can be identified.
2. Assist the Superior Court in proceedings for the appointment of a guardian of an adult, and in supervision of persons who have been appointed guardian of an adult.
3. Assist, advise and guide persons who are seeking appointment, or who have been appointed as guardian of an adult person.
4. Offer guidance and counsel encouraging maximum self-reliance and independence of needful persons to avoid the need for appointment of a guardian, where possible.
5. Develop programs of public education on guardianship and alternatives to guardianship, and support and encourage the development of private guardians.

Update: Opening My Business by Jackie Cabrera

The following is an update on the career progress of former Guam resident, Jackie Cabrera. Jackie first appeared in I Lina'la-ta a year ago when she was completing her training at the Western Culinary Institute Le Cordon Bleu in Portland, Oregon.

I have officially started my catering (business) and so far it's going pretty good. (I'm) starting with small parties and hoping to make it grow bigger and to succeed.

My small parties are anywhere from a count of 35 to 60 pax. I have tried a bigger number up to 200 people so the small ones are good to go.

I am gearing my catering toward more of International Cuisine and not just limiting myself to our Chamorro foods. I wanted to make a variety and so far, it's going alright.

I get to make Italian Foods on my upcoming jobs and for the Holiday ones, I do have a set menu good to go for those as well.

So, I am just taking it one day at a time and still strolling through this journey of mine. For my extra curricular activities, I have my organizations for the blind and community as well as (I'm) still baking and cooking for the homeless shelter every Tuesday.

The name of my business is called: C What's Cookin' Catering.

Someday, I also would like to open some kind of cooking school for the blind and visually impaired and also for other individuals with disabilities who would like to pursue a career in the Culinary Field.

It's weird, sometimes when I think about the chapters in my life and where I am today, to think that with me becoming and now being blind, how it has brought me to this adventure in the Culinary Field. Even when I had my sight, I did not have time to do cooking and baking because I was working and my parents always had our meals cooked and ready to go.

Now, I am in my kitchen, which is my castle, about 98% of the time.

If my story can touch one person, I don't mind to reach out what the beauty of life has and what it has to offer to help others.

Sure there are many frustrations, challenges, and obstacles. Even once in a while, I do have a melt



down and get that feeling of emotional and mental challenges filled with anxiety. The hard thing is that it's so beyond your control. Sometimes it makes me feel like just closing the door.

Missing (my sight) and longing to see again, knowing that I never will be able to see again, just sneaks up on me when I'm not expecting it. Pow! It is like a kick in the dagan! But once I get over that, it's time to get back up and shake my booty!!! Hahaha!

For the most part, with the support that I also have from families, friends, and other wonderful people that I have come across and met with along this journey, I feel more motivated. High on life, ready to move forward and to hold a positive attitude.

I have since found this niche with cooking and it's what I can do best. I enjoy doing it. For me, it's not hard at all.

I have to share this with you—when I enter my kitchen, before I touch the food I am going to cook or bake, I ask God to bless my food, guide my hands, and bless them as well. I also ask my angels to watch over me in my kitchen.

Nothing is hard if you want to do it, right?

Opening Doors—Easy as PIE with Dr. Zeni with an “I”



C. P. Cruz

What’s your favorite kind of pie; apple, pumpkin, humming-bird, or manha pie? Oprah’s is sweet potato pie. All are delicious, yes, but right now I’ve got another PIE in mind.

What kind of pie? PIE, partners in excellence. That’s what I call people who work to achieve excellence in accessibility for those of us with a disability or two. As part of my participation in a self-advocacy workshop conducted by Guam CEDDERS “transformer” Ginger Porter, a PIE herself, I opted to exercise my right to accessibility at the Hagåtña Public Library.

I wasn’t quite sure how to go about it. The Guam Public Library System makes efforts to be accessible. In fact, I am a frequent library visitor. For years, I have been coming in to use the special collection of talking books for individuals with visual impairments and physical disabilities. In the course of this, I would meet my cousin, who would come to the library to check her email.

As I learned more and more about what “accessibility” means and how the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its amendments shapes access, I realized that as a library patron, I, too, should be able to check my email, if I wanted.

I am legally blind, and I need to use a talking computer at the library to access my email, to browse the internet, and especially to access the catalogue of talking books. This exercise in self-advocacy forced me to sit down and identify what it was about the library that I wanted access. I emailed the Territorial Librarian asking for four things:

- use of library public access computers and peripherals, such as printers
- change of signage in the special collection to reflect a more respectful and accurate translation of “Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (individuals with physical disabilities)”
- Be able to use an adult-size table to read while in the reading room
- Easy perusal of talking books by display of Braille on book cases

What next? Follow-up with a meeting with library personnel. To ensure a productive and directed meeting, I had to identify the ADA compliance monitor for the Government of Guam. This person is Dr. Zeni Natividad, who works with DISID’s Evaluation, Enforcement, and Compliance Program supported by the Department of Interior’s Compact Impact funds. Dr. Zeni is the ultimate PIE!

She not only made herself available for the meeting with me and library personnel, but she gave me a briefing on what the ADA is, what it entitles me to, and how to proceed seeking ADA compliance. She kept me on track in the meeting, advocated for me and helped me to understand that in response to my requests, we had to identify specific actions that the library would do within a specified time frame.

At the time of the meeting, there was no appointed Territorial Librarian. Dr. Zeni and I met with library support staff Sandra Stanley, Teresita Kennimer, Joseph Baza, and Bertha Guerrero, who all stepped up to the plate, rolled up their sleeves, and asked what needed to be done. It was a great help to have Dr. Zeni there to level the field and make sure we were all using the same vocabulary and definitions in our understanding and discussion of accessibility.

It is a work in progress. And to think, it all started with that first PIE, Ginger, that is. Then another, Dr. Zeni with an “I,” and here we are, four Hagåtña Library PIE’s later. I like to believe that when life presents difficulties, a good [See *Opening Doors* Page 5](#)



Dr. Zeni is the “go to” person in the Government of Guam in assessing ADA compliance in public buildings and services. She can be reached at 475-4646.

Opening Doors—cont'd from Page 4

PIE always makes things better.

If you would like to learn how to make a good PIE, call Ginger Porter at Guam CEDDERS, 735-2478, or email ginger.porter@guamcedders.org

and sign up for the next self-advocacy workshop or call Dr. Zeni and learn how you can be a PIE yourself.

Tasks Identified For Follow Up:

- Research, identify and apply appropriate assistive technology (AT) software and strategies that can be used. Make contact with Carla Torres, GSAT AT Specialist.
- Contact the appropriate government agency to provide an appropriate and respectful translation of “Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Challenged).”
- An adult-size table has already been secured and will be placed in the reading room.
- Print cards will be removed from talking books in order to display already existing Braille with book information.

Friends, Books, and Life: Page After Page (Ode To Anne) by Cecilia “Lee” Cruz

One of the greatest losses I have had to endure after losing my eyesight was the ability to hold a printed book in my hands; to let its pages open to me and delight in the look of it, the feel of it, and the knowing of it and it, me. I was about 28 when I read my last book by seeing the lines and curves of its font, its printed text.

I had grown up with school days and summers filled with books of every kind. My grandfather, I Difuntu Tun Kiko Bino, had encouraged his children to read, and my mother passed this on to my brother, sister, and me. We had our own family book club. We shared books and had endless conversations about what we had read.

Unplanned as it is, the people closest to me in life are also book lovers: my husband, my aunt, and my best girlfriends; we all love books.

I’m 48, oops, almost forgot, 49 now, and though I access books via audio files, I cannot help but take a book into my hands now and again just to “pretend” that I can still read it page after page. I imagine I will do this for the rest of my life.

In celebration of friends, books, and life, I wrote this poem several years ago. It is dedicated to Anne Hattori, a professor of history at the University of Guam, who is most especially, my friend. She has spent many days sharing books and life with me.



In the Book of Friends, you are the “and” and “the” that make a thought whole.

You are the delightful turn of events that keep me reading,

The building of character
Defining and redefining space
And moments in time, of time, and I read on.

You are gold-gilded pages, gently lifted, and turned.

Serifs and sans serifs, you weave a tale I want to hear
With all its pauses, inflections, and clues.

This book tells me as much or more of myself
As it tells me of you.

You are the delightful turn of pages, of days, of places.
As years pass we will find palaces to lay in,

Palms to slide down
Into the surf, leagues under the sea.

We can be the sparkle of moon beams
on slippery river stones

The chimes of bamboo waving to the skies

And what we cannot find on the pages we will create
In spontaneity, in collusion,

Word by word, line by line, page by page

And never take time to rest on a shelf.

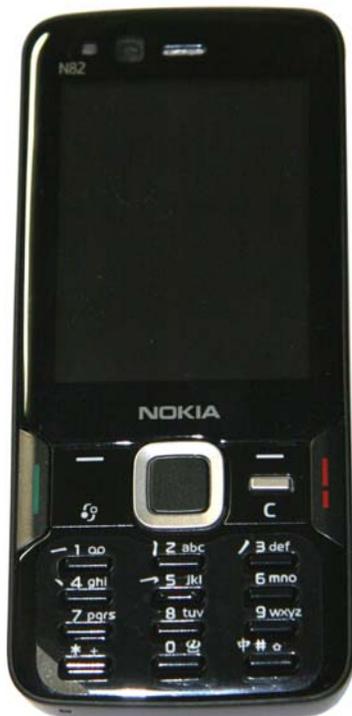
Assistive Technology Corner

knfbReader Mobile

The latest breakthrough in print accessibility, the knfbReader Mobile, places the functionality of a reading machine into a multifunction cell phone. The Mobile Reader product can be activated and ready to use with the touch of a single button on the phone.

The user takes a photo of the print to be read and the character recognition software, in conjunction with a high quality text-to-speech option, will read the contents of the document aloud. At the same time, it can display the print on the phone's built-in screen and highlight each word as it is spoken. In addition, with the use of a screen reader, the user can access the other functions of the phone device, which includes making and receiving phone calls, and managing personal information, such as contacts, calendar, etc. This little device also contains the ability to run accessible GPS programs, enables access to Adobe PDF files, and has a voice recorder, music player, and much more.

If you are interested in testing out this neat little AT "gadget," contact Carla Torres, AT Specialist at the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) Center, at 735-2490 or through email at: carla.torres@guamcedders.org.



A Phenomenal Recliner

If you or a family member have some mobility challenges and have a hard time getting up or out of a chair, the "Comfort Lift" chair is definitely something you should look into.

As is indicated in the User's Manual, this chair is "ergonomically designed to provide the user with years of comfort and added convenience in daily living." Equipped with electronic controls, the user can adjust the back of the chair to a full reclining position while adjusting the foot rest to the desired height. What makes this recliner extra special, though, is its ability to extend the seat upward to assist the user to move from a sitting to an "almost" standing position.

A local individual, who is recovering from a broken hip, was fortunate to find and purchase this chair locally about two months ago and absolutely loves it! While somewhat on the pricey side at around \$800, having the chair has improved his quality of life by allowing him to get out of a chair without assistance and pain.

If cost is an issue, the "comfort life" chair would be an excellent device to finance through the Guam Options for Alternative Loans for Assistive Technology (GOAL-AT) Program. You may also contact Carla Torres for more information on this chair and the loan program.



DDC Members Are Sworn In By Governor Camacho



Guam Developmental Disabilities Council members were appointed and sworn in by Governor Felix Camacho to serve two-year terms on September 9 at the Hilton Guam Resort & Spa. Members pose here with DD Council staff. (*Front row, L-R*) Marie Tedtaotao-Libria, DDC Program Coordinator, Evelyn Duenas, Josephine Cortez, Claire Duenas, Ana Marie Kilroy. (*back row, L-R*) Ella Cruz, Raymond Salas, Rosanne Ada, Esther Arca, Ma. Theresa Arcangel, Joseph Manibusan, May Camacho, Teresita Fejarang, Guam CEDDERS representative, Benny Pinaula, Governor, Erlinda Tydingco, Andrew Tydingco, Noel Lazaga, John Cruz, June Perez, & Kristina Perez, DDC Program Coordinator.

Guam DD Council Officers Elected for 2009-11



The Guam Developmental Disabilities Council is pleased to announce the results of the 2009 Election of Officers held on October 14. (*Seated, L-R*) Josephine Cortez, Secretary, & Evelyn Duenas, Chairperson. (*Standing, L-R*) Raymond Salas, 2nd Vice Chairperson & Esther Arca, 1st Vice Chairperson. The newly elected officers will serve a term of two years.

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:

8:30 am - 12 Noon, Saturdays, February 6 & 20, 2010

GSAT, House 19, Dean Circle, University of Guam

For more information, contact Ginger Porter at 735-2478 or email at ginger.porter@guamcedders.org.



Upcoming Events

DECEMBER

- **Dec 4—Guam CEDDERS Advisory Council Meeting**, GSAT Training Center, House 19 Dean Circle, UOG, 3:30—5:00 pm
- **Dec 16—Guam DD Council Training Workshop**, Guam Hilton Resort, Gallery, 8:30 am—2:30 pm
- **Dec 24—Family Support 360 Advisory Council Meeting**, GSAT Training Center, House 19 Dean Circle, UOG, 4:00 pm
- **Dec 30—DD Council Executive Committee Meeting**, 130 University Drive, Castle Mall, Suite 17, Mangilao, 10:00 am

JANUARY

- **Jan 13, Guam DD Council General Membership Meeting**, Holiday Resort & Spa, 11:00 am—2:00 pm

FEBRUARY

- **Feb 6 & 20—Self-Advocacy Training**
- **Feb 24 —DD Council Executive Committee Meeting**, 130 University Drive, Castle Mall, Suite 17, Mangilao, 10:00 am

MARCH

- **Mar 5—Guam CEDDERS Advisory Council Meeting**, GSAT Training Center, House 19 Dean Circle, UOG, 3:30—5:00 pm
- **Mar 10—Guam DD Council General Membership Meeting**, Holiday Resort & Spa, 11:00 am—2:00 pm
- **Mar 25—Family Support 360 Advisory Council Meeting**, GSAT Training Center, House 19 Dean Circle, UOG, 4:00 pm



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