

I Linå'la-ta OUR LIFE



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Administration on Developmental Disabilities Tri-Agency



MARCH is DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH



March is National Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Month. This is the month that various agencies and organizations come together to promote increased knowledge and understanding about developmental disabilities. This category of disabilities includes a broad range of physical and intellectual impairments that occur from birth up to the age of 21. Developmental disabilities may affect an individual's ability to learn, move, express themselves, and do activities of daily living.

Over the years, many opportunities have increased for people with DD. Attitudes towards people with developmental disabilities have also changed to a great degree. But our community can do more to increase opportunities and continue the improvement of attitudes about people with developmental challenges.

The Guam community, including parents and family members and the Guam Tri-Agency on DD comprised of the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council, Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center, and the University of Guam CEDDERS, are planning a series of events to increase awareness of DD. These groups cordially invite the general public to participate in these events (see schedule at right). We encourage everyone to attend!

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Events

Assistive Technology Fair

Micronesia Mall

Saturday, February, 25, 10:00am-2:00pm

Mass at Hagåtña

Cathedral Basilica, Hagåtña

Sunday, March 4, 9:30am

Proclamation Signing

Governor's Conference Room, Adelup

Monday, March 5, 10:45am

Assistive Technology Conference

Westin Resort Guam

Friday, March 9, 8:00am-3:00pm

DD Community Family Fun Fair

War in the Pacific Park, Asan

Saturday, March 24, 10:00am-3:00pm

For more information call Leone Rohr, Event Chair at 777-3262.

18TH ANNUAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FAIR & CONFERENCE



LIVING LIFE!

ENHANCING OUR QUALITY OF LIFE
THROUGH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

18th Annual Assistive Technology Fair

10:00AM-2:00PM, February 25, 2012 at Micronesia Mall

18th Annual Assistive Technology Conference

8:00AM-3:00PM, March 9, 2012 at Westin Resort Guam

To register, for more information, or to request
for reasonable accommodations, contact:
Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT)
Tel: 735-2490 TTY: 735-2491
Email: gsat@guamcedders.org



This conference is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration (Grant #H224A110053) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities, Tri-Agency: Guam Developmental Disabilities Council, Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research, and Service, and Guam Legal Services Corporation, with support from the Guam Division of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities.

New Vision, Guam!

By Kathleen A. Millhoff



New Vision, Guam! members and friends celebrated the Christmas season during a restaurant outing at the Island Sunrise Café in Talofofo.

Let's imagine for a moment that we're walking a familiar path, looking around, noting the scenery, making plans, giving little thought to the mechanics of our effort, when suddenly, we find ourselves in an unfamiliar locale. The sights, sounds, smells, even the air pressure feel alien. We quite suddenly do not know the language, the source of our next meal, where we'll sleep that night or who will befriend us. In fact, we know at some visceral level, that we could easily die and there would be no one to know nor note it.

As unlikely as such a scenario is, it describes in many aspects, what it's like for a fully functioning competent adult to suddenly find himself or herself blind. Without a guide or a chart, the world of blindness can indeed be daunting, terrifying. Couple this with the idea (held by many) that darkness and blindness are equal, and you have the recipe for trauma.

Yet, the educated, trained, prepared and confident blind person will be the first to tell you that there is nothing scary, confusing or dark about blindness. Blindness, in essence, when approached correctly, exists as little more than an inconvenience, a nuisance with which to negotiate the world in a pattern of alternative behaviors. Therefore, this story is about how to become the blind person in

the world of an inconvenience, rather than the lost and confused person in an alien shadow land.

New Vision, Guam! was formed by some blind people who knew some truths about blindness. The first of these truths is that it's just fine to use the word blind, as a noun, as a verb, as an adjective. The organization was formed with blindness in mind, as it truly is, not as it is perceived by others. It was born out of the need to serve, educate, train, inform, and raise awareness. It was nurtured with the beliefs that living a life of fulfillment for a blind person is about the same as living a life of fulfillment for a sighted person.

Initial responses to such words might range from the doubtful to the complete denial. Questions might include: "How can this be true?" "How can blind people function?" "Can blind people be happy contributing members of society?" "Isn't it scary to live in the dark?"

Questions such as these are so commonplace that most blind people need little time or effort to prepare answers. But if blindness is new, if it is feared, if it has never before been addressed, then New Vision, Guam! has the means to offer the necessary directions to take for finding solutions for dilemmas currently confronting many.

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Two Self-Advocates Serve on GRTA Board

Estorian Lynn Tydingco

On October 2011, the legislative hall was filled with numerous individuals with disabilities, government agency leaders, and others who provided testimonies and gathered in support of the nominations and appointments of Andrew Tydingco and Jason Cruz to serve on the Guam Regional Transit Authority (GRTA) Board.

Rudy Ignacio, Lisa Ogo, Tavita Faasuumalie, Frank “Kool Aid” Ungacta, Frank Hartin, DISID Director Ben Servino, and UOG Guam CEDDERS Consumer Leadership & Systems Change Initiative Area Coordinator Ginger Porter testified on behalf of the two self-advocates.

On January 10, 2012, both Andrew and Jason were sworn into office by Governor Eddie Calvo at the Adelup Conference Room.

Andrew and Jason are seasoned Paratransit riders. They will provide firsthand knowledge and experience as well as fresh perspectives regarding the operations



Andrew Tydingco (right) responds to questions by Senators while fellow nominee Jason Cruz (left) listens.

of the transportation services. They will be the voices for individuals with disabilities.

Congratulations Andrew and Jason!



Andrew Tydingco and Jason Cruz, nominees to the Guam Regional Transit Authority Board join their supporters for a photo after their confirmation hearing. Front row (L-R): Jesusino DeLiza, Ginger Porter, Rudy Ignacio, Benito Servino, DISID Director, Lynn Tydingco, and Roy Rosario. Back row (L-R): Frank “Kool Aid” Ungacta, Andrew Tydingco, Rowena Tydingco, Jason Cruz, Tavita Faasuumalie, and Frank Hartin.

CEDDERS and GRTA Collaboration Pays Off

By Ginger Porter

Collaborative efforts by Guam CEDDERS and the Guam Regional Transit Authority (GRTA) are paying off in federal dollars to help improve public transit services. Under the Veteran's Transportation and Community Livability Initiative, the Federal Transit Authority approved Guam's proposal for \$1.3 million in support of a One-Call, One-Click Center to coordinate and improve transportation options for veterans, military families, and the broader Guam community.

The grant will fund a web-based software system that will provide much needed technology for the system. With this system, there should be fewer reasons for a driver to miss a pick up point. Scheduling will be updated automatically, with the central dispatcher being able to also keep track of where drivers and vehicles are at any given time. The computer system will also collect information such as on-time performance, trip completions, notes for drivers, notes for dispatchers, trip billings, mileage, pre- and post-trip inspections, track vehicles expenses/maintenance, and can even schedule vehicle maintenance and driver training and coordination of trips between providers in the system.

These systems also record passenger information, such as residence location, contact numbers, ADA eligibility and Personal Care Assistant/door-to-door approvals, mobility devices, service time for boarding or alighting the bus, subscription service, and patterns of late cancellations and no-shows. The software systems feature semi-automated scheduling, increasing efficiencies and improving productivity. User communities have noted increased ridership and the ability to provide more trips and make the most of their limited resources. Guam anticipates achieving the same outcomes.

Rider access to reservations across partnering transportation is gained through a one-number call system. These systems can also provide automated calling to remind clients of their next day trip and to alert clients when the bus is approaching the pick up location. The addition of a web portal allows customers to enter ride requests on line.



Tavita Faasuumalie is a regular transit rider who looks forward to the planned system improvements.

Built-in report writing assists in the development of management reports for statistical and demographic reporting. What better way to find out how well we are utilizing all of the transportation resources integrated into the system such as public transit, senior transportation, community-based organizations, accessible van service, taxi partners and agency-based transport. Veterans will be a primary resource for personnel engaged in managing the mobility of riders.

One million dollars of funding is targeted towards the development of a permanent home for a Dispatch and Scheduling Center within GRTA offices. This is to be located in the proposed DISID Community Resource Center, located across from JFK High School. This will be the GRTA hub alongside other community resources.

It's an ambitious project for 18 months, but one that is greatly needed. The door to opportunity has been opened. Now it is time to get things going!

Carla Torres, CEDDERS AT Specialist, Earns Certification



Carla C. Torres, MEd, ATP

Guam CEDDERS is pleased to announce that Carla Torres, MEd, ATP, Assistive Technology Specialist, received her Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) certification on December 12, 2011. This important credential is given by the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology

Society of North America (RESNA) to individuals who demonstrate competency in the field through a written examination. To be eligible to take the exam, one must meet the minimum education requirement and have a minimum number of years of direct experience in providing assistive technology services.

What does having an individual on Guam with the "Assistive Technology Professional" title mean to the

residents of Guam? It means that island citizens may go to a qualified person at the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) Center who can help them decide what type of assistive technology can best help them perform activities of daily learning. It means that residents can get professional assistance in figuring out the different types of technology that is available to help them in school, work, and even in recreational activities. It means this ATP with specialized knowledge and skills can assist customers with choosing equipment that can help improve their overall quality of life.

This special certification, added to Carla's expertise as a Special Education teacher and the Guam CEDDERS staff member who has overseen the operation of the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) for the past three years, increases her skills and capabilities in providing valuable consultative services to the residents of Guam and the region. ***Congratulations Carla!***

For more information on Assistive Technology contact GSAT at 735-2490/1.

AT Device Lending Program Makes a Difference By Carla Torres

Vedalema S. Valencia is a married mother of three, who is currently running her own graphic design business. While in elementary school, at the age of 8 or 9, she was diagnosed with a learning disability, which has made running her business and getting a college degree a struggle. Last year she attended a workshop where she first heard of Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) and the services they provide. She visited the GSAT office to get more information, which resulted in a device demonstration of three different AT devices and then a 30-day device loan of the Livescribe Smartpen, a pen that records everything a person writes and hears so they'll never miss a word.

"I use this device when I have meetings or important lectures for college classes or other workshops. I am able to write down important pointers and then go back and listen later in the day and take better notes."



Vedalema Valencia uses the Livescribe Smartpen to help her in her college classes. She was able to try out this assistive technology device to ensure that it would meet her needs through the GSAT AT Device Lending Program.

Vedalema is now able to manage her company more efficiently and keep up with her college classes. "Thank you very much GSAT for making things happen for people like me that need the extra help." For more information on the AT Device Lending Program contact GSAT at 735-2490/1.

New Vision, Guam! ...continued from page 3

New Vision, Guam! likewise welcomes blind people who have lived all their lives with blindness. It welcomes parents, family members, coworkers, neighbors, friends and colleagues of blind people. It seeks answers if none are immediately apparent; it reaches out to agencies, medical institutions, educational facilities and all stakeholders in a thriving society.

A blindness related organization of, by, and for the blind? Yes, for who, among all the well-meaning people we know, would be better able to answer questions, locate resources, relate to experiences, and share concerns than another blind person? And, it quite naturally follows that all in that network, blind or sighted, make the formula work.

All are welcome to participate in the journey of New Vision, Guam! Contributions of time, energy, and

resources are needed to be sure, but involvement by anyone with a concern about blindness and the role it plays in our lives is valued and cherished.

In conclusion, imagine again you have just been transported to a strange new land where languages, images and customs mean nothing to you. But this time, imagine that just ahead of you there is a group of smiling friends waiting to usher you through the pathways of your new life.

And instead of being confused, you are able to sigh with some relief that you're not alone, and that in fact no one else seems worried or wearied by something you once thought to be terrifying. That's the role of New Vision, Guam! It's the charter, the promise, the vista, the perspective, the arena. For information call: 456-0400 or 456-3793.

Transit Talk By Ginger Porter

Your GRTA Board recently approved a few policy changes to make sure the transit system does not

violate your Civil Rights. Effective January 31, 2012, the following three policies were put into effect:

1) Origin to Destination Service: It is the responsibility of the transit provider to go beyond curb-to curb pickup service if it is determined that the passenger needs it to access the service.

2) Hours of Para-transit Service: The hours of paratransit service must be the same as the fixed route service. Transit may schedule rides up until the last pickup window of fixed route service. This means you can now be scheduled between 10:30-11:28 am and 6:30 -7:28 pm, allowing more flexibility in getting rides.

3) Scheduled Ride Cancellation: It is the rider's responsibility to cancel trips. Transit services may NOT cancel your scheduled rides.

You will have opportunity to provide input on other draft policies such as Subscription Service, No Shows, and A Responsible Rider Program. These draft policies will be on the Siña agenda for Saturday, February 11, 10am at the Guam System for Assistive Technology Center. Other dates and venues for public input will be announced. Stay tuned Tuesdays at noon on AM Radio K57 for the Super Friends Show for more updates.



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Alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print, audio tapes, or electronic file) of **I Linå'lå-ta** will be made available upon request. Please contact Margaret Johnson at 735-2477 (v) or 734-6531 (TTY), or email: margie.johnson@guamcedders.org for more information.

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2011 Special Olympics Bowling Tournament

Estorian Lynn Tydingco

The Special Olympics Guam Committee and the Unity Corporation hosted the Special Olympics Annual Bowling Tournament on October 22, 2011, at Central Lanes. With about one hundred bowlers, numerous volunteers, and the support of family and friends, the venue was filled to capacity.

The national anthem was performed by the Special Olympics Chairperson, Marlon Molinos and the Guam Hymn was sung by a Special Olympics volunteer, Donovan.

The bowlers had been practicing for eight weeks in preparation for their big event.

After the tournament there was an awards ceremony by the Special Olympics Guam Committee and several island dignitaries. Local businesses sponsored refreshments and entertainment was provided by SiñA: Self-Advocates in Action members, disc jockeys, Andrew Tydingco and Roy Rosario.

Congratulations to all the Super Bowlers!!

The Special Olympics Guam Committee hosts events every quarter. The next event will be the Special Olympics Construction Rodeo on February 25, at the Guam Raceway Park in Yigo. For more information please contact Marlon Molinos at 486-4662.



Kira Darlow (center) proudly displays the first place trophy she earned during the Special Olympics competition.



Event winners Josie Cortez (foreground) and Quintin San Nicolas (on podium) are all smiles as they are applauded for earning their trophies during the Special Olympics.

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY 2012

Feb 25 18th Annual Assistive Technology Fair, 10am - 2pm, Micronesia Mall. Call 735-2490/1 for more information.

MARCH 2012

See page one for DD Awareness Month Calendar of Events

Mar 3 & 10 Understanding the Early Intervention Process Parent Training, "Procedural Safeguards" 8am - 11:30am. Call 735-2466 or 300-1322 for more information.

Mar 9 18th Annual Assistive Technology Conference, 10am - 2pm, Westin Resort Guam. Call 735-2490/1 for more information.

Mar 17 Understanding the Early Intervention Process Parent Training, "Transition from Part C to Part B" 8am - 11:30am. Call 735-2466 or 300-1322 for more information.

Mar 24 Understanding the Early Intervention Process Parent Training, "Early Childhood Outcomes" 8am - 11:30am. Call 735-2466 or 300-1322 for more information.

Mar 24 Developmental Disabilities Community Family Fun Fair, War in the Pacific Park, Asan, 10am - 3pm. Call Leone Rohr, Event Chair at 777-3262 for more information.

APRIL & MAY 2012

Apr 14 Autism Awareness Fair, 10am - 2pm, Agaña Shopping Center, Center Court, Call 472-5952 for more information.

April 14, 21 & May 5 Self-Advocacy Workshop Series. Call Ginger Porter at 735-2478 or email her at ginger.porter@guamcedders.org for more information.