

I Linå'la-ta OUR LIFE



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Administration on Developmental Disabilities Tri-Agency



Team Guam Rocks Honolulu! Estorian Lynn Tydingco



Team Guam members, comprised of Self-Advocates, agency representatives, and personal care attendants, represented our island during the Pacific Rim Conference and the ADD Self-Advocacy Summit held in Honolulu, Hawaii on March 26-29. Front Row (L-R): Lynn Tydingco, Molliann Campos, Paula Bontogon, Maria Bontogon, Elisa Cruz. Back Row (L-R): Lin Bontogon, Jerriann Cruz, Hank Parker, Andrew Tydingco, Clinton Mesa, Jacob Cruz, Ginger Porter, Lou Mesa, and Carol Cabiles.

A group of Guam self-advocates recently had a very special opportunity. At the invitation of the commissioner of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, they represented Guam at the Pacific Rim Conference and the ADD Self-Advocacy Summit held in Honolulu, Hawaii on March 26-29.

The Self-Advocates included Co-Lead Lynn Tydingco, Andrew Tydingco, Clinton Mesa, Molliann Campos, Maria Bontogon, Jacob Cruz, and Elisa Cruz. In addition, several professionals from disability-related agencies and three personal care attendants accompanied the Self-Advocates. This included Co-Lead Ginger Porter from

Guam CEDDERS, Hank Parker and Carol Cabiles from Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center, Maria Libria from the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council, Lou Mesa, Lynn Bontogon, and Jerriann Cruz.

Since January 2012, Team Guam began preparations for their travel arrangements, PowerPoint presentation required of all the state teams, and native costumes. A poster display was also developed so that attendees from the other Pacific jurisdictions could get a visual sense of the work Team Guam members have accomplished. Collaborative efforts and support from the Self-Advocates, the Tri-Agency representatives, and other disability network partners ensured the success of the events.

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Team Guam Rocks Honolulu! *...continued from page 1*

Team Guam rocked the summit with their presentation and networked with other Self-Advocacy teams, representatives from other agencies, and most importantly with the ADD Commissioner Sharon Lewis.

After the presentations, all of the state teams worked on their state plans and national recommendations. Team Guam's state plan consisted of the following:

- For Self-Advocates in Action (SiñA) to become the State Self-Advocacy organization.
- To establish SiñA Youth Chapters.
- To network with the CNMI.

National recommendations were:

- For the ADD Commissioner to host a nationally led discussion to remove the label "consumer" when addressing Individuals with Disabilities.
- For federal funding support for state self-advocacy organizations.

Self-advocates are guided by the motto, "Nothing about us without us," and SiñA's work has just begun. Guam's Self-Advocacy movement is keeping its momentum going by planning future collaboration with the other island teams "to spread the Self-Advocacy fire!"

After just a few days in March, Guam is now recognized both locally and nationally in the Self-Advocacy world.



Guam's table presentation provided good representation of self-advocacy activities, team spirit, and identity of the SiñA name, an acronym and symbol of the strength of self-advocacy.



The entire team of self-advocates backed presenters Elisa Cruz and Lynn Tydingco in telling Guam's Self-Advocacy story.



Team Guam bonded at a family style meal at Buca di Beppo after taking the opportunity to get there by transit. What a great start for the forthcoming days of the Summit! Left side: Lynn Tydingco, Ginger Porter, Rowena Tydingco, Jerriann Cruz, Carol Cabiles, Lou Mesa, & Clinton Mesa (partially hidden). Right side: Elisa Cruz, Jacob Cruz, Andrew Tydingco, Molliann Campos, Paula Bontogon, Lin Bontogon (partially hidden). (Not shown: Maria Bontogon)



Youth Reflections by *Maria Bontogon* Team Guam Member

There were moments that made me breathless in Hawaii.

All the speakers had stories of passion, ignited by their ultimate journey and dedicating their time and energy for advocacy. They helped me develop and opened my mind on skills of advocacy, a quest for full independence, integration, and civil rights.

Please allow me to mention some of the speakers that really inspired me. Drew Goldsmith is one. Being a teenager and a self-advocate, his use of technology through film, video, and animation caught my attention. I found his film and video funny and yet interesting, motivational, and educational. His advocacy campaign will surely capture more attention, support, and public awareness for people with special needs.

Another speaker, Mr. Urban Miyares, a multi-disabled war veteran, shared a shocking, yet inspiring and amazing personal story. Although he has been through a really traumatic and tough life, he still had the courage to tackle any life challenges. He advocated for himself and was able to achieve a miraculous transition to enter in a competitive world.

Dr. Gloria Krahn lectured on public health and disability. She mentioned how public health has evolved and generated sufficient data to create future actions for real improvement in health care, health promotion programs, and policies impacting people with special needs.

Another interesting topic was addressed by speaker Kim Musheno. She discussed projects of national significance. She mentioned how Congress is reducing government programs and regulations. In my opinion, if Congress continues to make cuts to funding, such programs will dramatically affect the assistance and support, training and services critical to people with special needs. Collaboration is what we need to build partnerships in schools and our community; to express our opinion, feelings and needs; to be heard; and help educate the lawmakers to take action in order to enhance results.

One of the most important speakers, ADD Commissioner Sharon Lewis, discussed new federal initiatives and opportunities, which support people with disabilities to participate in employment, health, and education to help realize future dreams.

To sum it up, it was an ultimate learning time and a fun experience too. It was very productive and offered me ideas and information, more courage and interest to be a good self-advocate.

2012 Developmental Disabilities Month

Estorian Lynn Tydingco



Acting Governor Ray Tenorio signed a proclamation designating March as “Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month” on March 5. Self-Advocates, family members, and agency representatives attended the ceremony held at the Governor’s Complex Conference Room in Adelup.

The Guam Developmental Disabilities Council (GDDC) and the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Ad-Hoc Committee recently hosted a series of events to commemorate the 2012 Developmental Disabilities Month Celebration this past March.

A developmental disability is a severe, chronic disability that begins any time from birth through age 21 and is expected to last for a lifetime. Developmental disabilities may be cognitive, physical, or a combination of both. Approximately 5.4 million Americans have developmental disabilities.

A mass was celebrated and televised at the Agana Cathedral Basilica on March 4. Members of the GDDC participated in the ceremony. Representatives from the agencies and service providers were also in attendance in support of the event.

The DD Awareness Month proclamation signing was held on March 5 at Adelup with Acting Governor Ray Tenorio.

With the DD Awareness Ad-Hoc Committee taking the lead in the planning of the activities, members brainstormed and took a fresh approach and hosted a Family Fun Day on the Adelup grounds on March 24. The Guam Developmental Disabilities Council (GDDC),

in collaboration with Self-Advocates in Action (SiñA); Autism Community Together (ACT); Down Syndrome Association Guam (DSAG); Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities / Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DISID / DVR); Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center (GLSC-DLC); Guam CEDDERS; and the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS), joined forces and invited the disability community to participate in a fun-filled day with a variety of entertainment, great food, games, and an energetic Zumba presentation. Over 200 island residents and guests turned out for the festivities.

Un Dangkulo Na Si Yu’os Ma’ase goes to the youth band, Yellow Led, Hale I’ Taotaota Dance Group, Maylynn Fejeran, and Ray Barcinas for sharing their talent with us!!

Special thanks to all who made this event a most memorable one!

The 2012 DD Awareness AD-Hoc Committee was comprised of Chairperson Leone Rohr, Andrew Tydingco, Carol Darlow, Ligaya “Jeng” Magana, Ana Kilroy, Ben Servino, Ray “Sal” Salas, GDDC Chairperson Lynn Tydingco, GDDC Executive Director Rosanne Ada, Marie Libria, Marie Luarca, and Rebecca Eclavea.

Opening Doors: An Apple in My Day Keeps the Blues Away

By Cecilia "Lee" Cruz

I am an iPod Touch user who is blind and this is my story. In my first years as a computer user in the mid-1980's, I was a faithful Apple Mac user. "Point and click" was my motto. My progressive loss of eyesight forced me to transition to the PC world to gain accessibility through voice and large print. Mac's weren't where it was at back in the day. Things have changed. As all the buzz is about the New iPad 3rd Generation and the iPhone 4S, I now know I don't have to just sit in the sidelines and watch everyone else optimize all that new technology engages.

The sounds of waterfalls, beaches, streams, and the chants of a monastery are all at my fingertips; all with the use of a palm-sized electronic device called the Apple iPod Touch, 4th Generation 32GB, a wireless internet connection and an app called Quick Sleep. Total cost, \$299.00 plus the \$.99 app; total value, priceless.

What does the technology give me access to? In the first two days of learning how to search for and acquire apps on my own, I have been able to read local, U.S., and international daily news; create a relaxing audio environment to lull me to sleep at night and to spark my creative writing energy in the morning; to have audio access to a guitar and ukulele tuner; to conveniently check my email; do a bit of recreational and home essential shopping; take documentary photos; identify paper money, and so much more.

In the days to come, I look forward to having a voice access bar code scanner to identify grocery products, how much it costs, and nutritional information; to learning voice dictation so I can write stories, letters, and email on the go; to set charming sound time alarms; to locate where I am by street and direction; and to create a visual library to assist paratransit drivers identify places I travel to by bus. If I were a Facebooker, I would add Facebook to the list. I'll leave that endeavor to other brave souls.

The hardware that houses the technology fits in the palm of my hand and easily stores in my pocket. The operating system and the apps, or applications, are the interpretative means through which the device can be used to carry out practical, essential, or fun functions that have instantly enhanced the quality of my life.

True enough, learning and accepting the technology was a journey that started about a year ago. I had heard about the technology from K-57's News Talk radio show host Ray Gibson on Kim Komando, their regular program about everything digital.



Leah Abelon (right), GSAT Center Assistant, helps Cecilia Cruz (left) tune her ukulele using an app on the iPod Touch.

I was happy to learn that Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) would soon have it for loan through their loan library program. Thanks to the optimism, patience, and diligence of the GSAT staff, in particular Leah Abelon, an iPod Touch user herself, we, in the island's blind community, were able to be gently introduced to the technology.

Through one of the AT Buffet activities that was organized by members of New Vision, Guam! and conducted at GSAT by Leah, several members of the island's blind community were able to get a hands-on demonstration of the iPod Touch with its Voice Over accessibility feature. That was my first step in this journey toward accessing popular technology devices and the world of opportunities to which they opened the door.

If you haven't visited GSAT in a while, make an appointment to stop by and visit them. Their inventory and know-how continues to expand. Their doors are always open and their enthusiasm about accessible technology is encouraging. Bring to this winning combination your initiative, persistence, and willingness to learn and share something new. Come along on the journey. A single step could lead you to exciting new places you never imagined before!

For more information on assistive technologies for individuals who have visual impairments email us at newvisionguam@gmail.com.

Dollars and Sense: Making Changes That Count

By Cecilia "Lee" Cruz



Members of New Vision Guam! pose with Bank of Guam representatives. L-R standing: Pauline Adawag, Bank of Guam representative, Keith Rabago, Gerard Cruz, Cecilia "Lee" Cruz, John & Evelyn Kimmons, Jesusinio "Bon" Dellizo, Lisa Ogo, Rodney Calimlim, Olimpio "Oli" Mueden, Jennifer Fa'asualie, Paul Rabago, and Jesse Fejeran. Seated L-R: Jennifer Sanchez, Bank of Guam representative, Frank "Kool Aid" & Gloria Ungacta, Tracy Fejeran, Kathy Millhoff and friend.

Bank of Guam Celebrates 40 Years of Service by partnering with New Vision, Guam! New Vision, Guam! is the island's support, education, and advocacy organization by, of, and for the blind.

How do you bank when you can't see what you're doing? That was the basic question asked and answered by New Vision, Guam! (NVG!) at its March 17 informational meeting at the Hågatña headquarters of the Bank of Guam (BOG).

Bank representatives Pauline Adawag and Jennifer Sanchez openly engaged in conversations with members of the island's blind community and their families. The focus was on learning how to provide more accessible bank services and products. Audio and tactile access to ATM's; accessible statements; appropriate ways to greet and assist blind customers; and telephone banking services were among the many topics discussed.

Participants Lisa Ogo, Frank "Kool Aid" Ungacta, and Lee Cruz did a bit of role playing with Pauline and Jennifer as they approached the simulated bank counter with individualized scenarios concerning banking. Electronic devices, which could read and give audio identification of dollar bills, were demonstrated by Gerard Cruz and Jesse Fejeran. The goal of the meeting was to achieve a higher level of comfort and confidence by participants to be able to bank more independently.

The iBill money identifier that was demonstrated was made available to NVG! through the loan library of the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT). The LookTel money identification app that was demonstrated on Gerard's iPod Touch 4th Generation, was introduced to him several months ago by GSAT AT assistant, Leah Abelon. Participants and bank representatives were directed to GSAT for a full range of information on assistive technology.

"I was happy to learn that all Bank of Guam branches, with the exception of two, stay open until 5:00pm every weekday, and that I can transfer money between my accounts by simply applying for their telephone service..." Lee said, "... It makes banking so much easier."

Since the meeting, Pauline, Jennifer and other BOG representatives have followed up with telephone calls and email to continue the dialogue started with NVG! to better define how BOG can more effectively serve the banking needs of the blind and low vision community of Guam.

For more information about future activities of New Vision, Guam! or about blindness related issues and concerns, call 456-3793 or send an email to newvisionguam@gmail.com. For more information about assistive technology for your individualized needs, call 735-2490 or send an email to carla.torres@guamcedders.org.

Happy First Anniversary to the SuperFriends Show!

Estorian Lynn Tydingco



Super Friends Show hosts Lynn Tydingco (left) and Andrew Tydingco (right) do their thing!

Friends—how many of us have them? Friends—the ones we can depend on?” “Hafa Adai Guam and welcome to the SuperFriends Show!!!” One year ago, the SuperFriends Show was unleashed on the News Talk K57 airwaves!

My brother Andrew Tydingco and I co-host the radio show regarding Individuals with Disabilities and issues that concern us. We invite our peers (individuals with disabilities) to share their stories, government agencies, and service providers to educate and promote awareness regarding the products and services that are available and beneficial to the community of persons with disabilities and their families.

We promote Self-Advocacy! We encourage our listeners to venture out of their comfort zones and be **ACTIVE, ASSERTIVE, INTEGRATED, and INCLUDED** in our island community.

We provide peer support and mentoring. We have helped individuals recognize their self worth and that they do have reasons to live. This is one of the most rewarding aspects of our show!

Our audience base is beyond local. We receive calls from Arizona, California, Nevada, Texas, and Washington.

We are very proud and honored to be a part of the Sorensen Media Group Family. We thank our families, peers, and collaborative partners in the disability realm for the continued love and support. We will be your avenue on the airwaves!

BIBA SuperFriends!!!

Si Lynn & Andrew Tydingco



(L-R): Maria Bontogon, a student at Simon Sanchez High School, and Jacob Cruz, both members of the Self-Advocacy Summit Team, join Ginger Porter in speaking out about their Summit experiences.



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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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DD Awareness Month Family Fun Day Celebration



Hale I Taotaota Dance Group members got audience participation during their final number during the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Family Fun Day celebration held on March 24 at the Governor's Complex in Adelup. (See page 4 for story.)



The youth band, Yellow Led, receives thanks for their music & community service.

Upcoming Events

MAY 2012

May 11 Guma' Mami: Maila Halom Community Homes Open House, 1pm - 4pm, 105 & 115 Hibiscus Street, Mangilao. Call 477-1505 for more information.

May 18 Guma' Mami: "Growing Our Own" Celebration, 1pm - 4pm, 105 & 115 Hibiscus Street, Mangilao. Call 477-1505 for more information.

May 25 Guma' Mami: 13th Creative Spirits Art Exhibit and Silent Auction, 6pm - 9pm, Infinity Gallery, Upper Tumon. Call 477-1505 for more information.

May 31 Guma' Mami: General Membership Meeting Resolution, 4pm, Sinajana Community Center. Call 477-1505 for more information.

Guma' Mami Celebrating 31 Years of Service



Community supporters of Guma' Mami, Inc. gather for the proclamation signing by Ray Tenorio, acting Governor of Guam, to commemorate the 31 years of service provided to individuals with disabilities. For more information on Guma' Mami, Inc.'s festivities for the month, see "Upcoming Events" above.