

# I Linå'la-ta OUR LIFE



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Administration on Developmental Disabilities Tri-Agency



## Guam Celebrates 22<sup>nd</sup> ADA Anniversary! Estorian Lynn Tydingco



SiñA members gathered at the Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities conference room with government leaders to commemorate the 22nd Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26.

### July 26, 2012 marked the twenty second anniversary of the American with Disabilities Act.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for Persons with Disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services.

The Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities (DISID) hosted the celebration; in attendance were Acting Governor Ray Tenorio, Senator Adolfo Palacios, Senator Dennis Rodriguez, Government of Guam agencies leaders, ADA Compliance Officers, Disability Network Partners, SiñA: Self-Advocates in Action, CAPE, and persons with all types of Disabilities.

DISID Acting Director, Helena Kubo gave the welcoming remarks and the introduction of the guests. DEEC Manager, Zeni Natividad explained what the ADA

was, with a brief history and presentation of the updates regarding the first year anniversary of the reactivation of the ADA Compliance Officers within all of the Government of Guam agencies. There was an emphasis on the continued commitment to educate, enforce, and ensure the island's compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the ADA Compliance Officers, SiñA: Self-Advocates in Action, and New Vision Guam.

Special acknowledgement and presentation were given by the Acting Governor Tenorio, Senator Adolfo Palacios, Senator Dennis Rodriguez, and Guam Police Chief Fred Bordallo, Acting DISID Director Helena Kubo to the CAPE volunteers who assist the Guam Police Department with enforcement of the parking accessibility laws. CAPE Officer Ernie Rios of Dededo was recognized having issued more than 425 accessible parking citations to violators.

**Biba ADA! Biba Guam!**

# Voting Access Addressed During Primary Season

By Carol Cabiles & Carla Torres

Although voting is a fundamental human right and one of the most critical ways that individuals can influence governmental decision-making, individuals with disabilities on Guam don't always exercise this right. Not because they don't want to, but

because of accessibility issues. The process may not allow an individual with a disability to vote independently and cast a secret ballot. The Guam Legal Services Corporation Disability Law Center (GLSC-DLC) and the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) has been working

diligently with the Guam Election Commission (GEC) to find solutions to best meet the needs of voters with disabilities. Meetings with Maria Pangelinan, the commission's executive director, and her staff have been positive.

Being able to access your polling place from the parking lot to the voting booth without encountering any barriers along the way is what all voters want, unfortunately, not all our polling places are 100% accessible! GEC is well aware of this ongoing problem and has plans in the future to change these sites to other accessible locations.

Marking the ballot can also pose a problem for individuals who struggle with writing, reading, and seeing. If you need assistance in marking and casting your ballot, you can request assistance from precinct officials. You can also choose who will help you; your assistant can be a friend, family member, or caregiver. Curbside voting is also an option for voters, as well as




homebound voting and in-office voting; however, many individuals with disabilities feel that these processes still hinder their independence and dignity to cast a secret ballot.

Thus, it would be ideal for GEC to purchase an accessible voting machine such as the AutoMARK. This type of electronic voting machine would make the voting process accessible, as its key features include: a sip/puff tube for voters unable to use the touch screen or buttons; an audio function that allows voters with impaired

vision or reading disabilities to listen to choices; a zoom feature, which enables voters to increase the font size on screen; and a multiple-language capability that helps ensure all citizens in a diverse population can exercise their privilege to vote. The Commission is looking into other electronic

### Assistive Technology Tools

*Low-Tech items to Help Make the Voting Process Easier*

	<p><b>Magnifier</b> - A full page magnifier helps to increase the size of the print and allows for more of the page to be viewed at one time than a hand held magnifying glass.</p>
	<p><b>Signature Guide</b> - A signature guide helps individuals who are blind or who have low vision. The rectangular cut-out defines the parameter in which the signature must be contained. The guide could provide good color contrast with light-colored, white, or different colored paper.</p>
	<p><b>Voting Pocket Guide</b> - The Access to Voting Pocket Guide contains "Disability Etiquette Tips," "Practical Tips on Interacting with Voters who have Disabilities," a "Polling Place Quick Look Checklist," and "Communication Tips with a Deaf/Hard of Hearing Person" with useful signs for election day.</p>

voting machines and agrees that machines would increase voting accessibility tremendously, but just hasn't had the funds to make the purchase. They even explored borrowing the machines from our CNMI neighbors, but learned that they would not be compatible with our local tabulating machines because it does not provide a paper printout for a voter to verify the ballot accuracy. Even so, GEC is looking at the possibility to purchase machines before the next election year, provided they can secure the needed funds.

Since major changes, such as relocating polling sites and purchasing accessible electronic voting machines are not feasible for the 2012 elections, GLSC-DLC and GSAT have provided GEC other solutions. One of them is a low tech Assistive Technology (AT) tool

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kit which could be offered to voters who may need assistance. These kits include eight different items that assist individuals with disabilities in the voting process. These items include ergonomic pencil grips, magnifying sheets, signature guides, communication boards, a dry erase white board, an Access to Voting Pocket Guide, and a brochure on Serving Voters with Disabilities. A total of fifty-eight (58) AT kits have been provided to GEC to ensure that each precinct has an adequate supply to offer their voters. Three (3) additional kits were also given to the Palau Election Commission at a recent Guam visit.

Additionally, GLSC-DLC and GSAT, together with Guam's self-advocacy organization SiñA, have participated in precinct officials training seminars held this entire month. These 3-hour training sessions have included a half-hour presentation on appropriate ways to assist voters with disabilities; identifying barriers at the polling sites, and the benefits of the low-tech AT toolkits. Because precinct workers play a large role in helping voters with

disabilities, our goal was to educate and train them on how to be an accessible precinct worker. So far, over 200 precinct officials have been trained and the feedback has been very positive.

Despite the barriers present at some of our polling locations, GLSC-DLC and GSAT urge you to continue to take part in your civic duty and exercise your right to vote, by yourself or with help. If you experience difficulties accessing and exercising your right to vote as a result of your disability and you wish to file a complaint, please contact: GLSC-DLC at 477-9811.

People with disabilities have the same voting right as any other citizen. However, individuals with disabilities under guardianship or living in residential facilities are often uncertain about their voting rights. Only a court can remove your right to vote. **So, exercise your right, register, and vote in the November election! Be seen at the polls!**

## Accessibility Is A Journey! Keep Asking, Keep Checking

By Cecilia "Lee" Cruz

**As First Hawaiian Bank (FHB) Maite Branch Service Manager Evan Segura reminded me, I have been banking with them for more than 30 years.** One

of the first checks I wrote was for my tuition at the University of Hawaii at Manoa; my check, my mother's money. As my visual acuity and field of vision gradually decreased, FHB was there to show me large print, high contrast, embossed checks. I still remember only using the ATM's on the outside of the Kapiolani Branch because my roomies and I, being island newbies, thought it was an outdoor walk-up bank. I also remember having my six-year-old niece reading the screen prompts to me on ATM's when I was no longer able to see the screen. She is now a traffic engineer, married and with three lovely children.

So, imagine the joy felt as I demonstrated to Evan the audio accessibility of their Maite Branch ATM. I had asked many times in the past if they had any accessibility features for the blind on their ATM. After a while, I stopped asking because the answer was that they didn't. It was happenstance that while doing my general banking I had asked Teller Kryisia Flores to help me use the ATM. We found an earphone jack. I plugged



in and was greeted with the most friendly, patient voice explaining the orientation of the ATM. We called Evan to share the news.

Like old friends, we laughed with glee at the discovery. Good news needs to be shared, and so I'm sharing it with you. Had I not asked, had they not listened, I'd still be asking friends and family to help me with ATM transactions. I'll still call friends and family, but for other reasons like lunch maybe. Nice to know they would help.

Nice to know I can do it myself if I so choose. Lovely. Absolutely lovely.

Don't give up. Keep asking, keep checking. One day you'll be pleasantly surprised.



# Advocacy Leads to Bookshare.org By Maria Bontogon

**If you think it's hard studying and shooting for those straight A's because you lack resources to keep up with the classroom lessons, you bet it is...been there!** Lack of resources and information

for quality services to achieve independent living and integration are pretty typical concerns for people with special needs. Often, we, or even parents, do not know who to go to for basic education resources and information about services. But you have all the right to advocate for yourself or someone else, although the advocacy process is a long winding road. My point is...you are not alone in the process!

I am an advocate too, as well as my parents. In truth, if my parents had decided to disengage from their role as my advocacy partners, perhaps I wouldn't be writing this article at all! I could have ended up just sitting at home, wasting my time, and doing nothing! Things are so different now because my parents did not disengage. I am now benefiting from new resources and services.

The overall availability of resources and services I rightfully needed from special education has been changed and strengthened with the help of Attorney Matt Wolff and Ms. Michelle Cruz of Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center as well as Assistive Technology people like Ms. Carla Torres and Christine Rosario. The vital role these individuals played in my life means the world to me. I am grateful for professional people like them.

Carla and Christine worked hard to restore the functionality of the notetaker. The notetaker is like a mini computer assisting me to accomplish multi-tasks from school to personal assistance, diminishing the need for personal assistance. Isn't it amazing what technology can do as it continues to unfold and becomes accessible? Before, little did I know that this equipment would be my best buddy and constant companion day or night, rain or shine. With it, I can reach far and establish something for myself.

Whoever said specialized formatted books or materials cannot be available for use by someone with special needs because of lack of funding? Ever heard of BookShare? It's a non-profit, online community that allows people with diverse needs, specifically print disabilities, to legally use or share books, while meeting the requirements of the relevant section of copyright law of the US. Provided you've established a BookShare account and your available PC has the right

zip software or program, you are set. Whether it be a book, magazine, or newspaper needed for school or leisure time, thousands of these can be accessed with ease from their library. Definitely, it is your choice; if you prefer, you can even choose an edge-of-your-seat kind of novel and story.

Hopping onto BookShare's website is one of my favorite choices. This summer, they launched "BookShare's express summer reading contest" for

students and out-of-school bona fide people with special needs. Participants benefitted from reading, not to mention learning. And get this, to add fun and excitement, they added cool prizes that charmed you into joining. Books could be downloaded in your choice of various formats — daisy (for audio), MP3, and BRF. Their books could ultimately take you on a journey around the world, into mythical places, and even into outer space. You could feel the story come to life — that is, if you were literally engaged with the characters. Various book categories are available, whether you're a techno or sci-fi buff.

Getting books from their site is as easy as 1, 2, 3 ... kind of like going to the library in the comfort of your own home. Since I have a personal account, I joined their contest. Why not? Aside from learning... hey, prizes were waiting, who knows! However, win or not, I can't express enough the benefits I'm getting from it — plus occupying my summer time wisely. So, what more can you ask for from BookShare? Come on, meet them on the web — [bookshare.org](http://bookshare.org). I know, with the right advocacy, the world is yours!



# You made Siña Ta Kanta Happen

By Maria Bontogon



Left photo: Molliann Campos plays her ukulele and sings at the Siña Ta Kanta concert. Right photo: Maria Bontogon (sitting) plays keyboard while Rebecca Eclavea (standing) sings.

**July 14 was not just another night at The Elks Club in Agaña Heights.** It was not only a night time destination for happy people, who were ready to sing and dance, but rather a big night for the Siña ta Kanta (We Can Sing) concert. Concert-goers, including family, friends, and neighbors, showed up with cheery faces and warm hearts and showed their great love and support to the cause of SiñA: Self-Advocates In Action.

Elisa Cruz, concert coordinator, opened the evening festivities with welcoming words, sharing the purpose of the event—to raise funds to support SiñA representatives planning to attend the annual Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) conference scheduled to take place at the end of August in St. Paul, Minnesota. This year's theme is "Fairness" — a foundation for human rights. Fairness means free of injustice. This conference aims to be another powerful way to strengthen collective advocacy and will provide a framework and tools for self-advocates to delve into the heart of the long struggle for disability rights and integration. A conference of this nature will effectively offer people with diverse needs collaborative, emotional, and educational support, which is paramount to truly having partnerships when meeting special needs; if not the whole world's ... at least a part of it.

The lively evening was full of the hottest songs and beat, both current and retro ... and rad. A big thanks go to the Tropic Tunz Band, which shared their amazing live performance, as well as to the other singers who contributed their stunning talents, while others showed their moves on the dance floor.

And you think SiñA members would let the funfilled night pass without showcasing our very

own talents? No, no, no! If others can do it, why can't we? Eyebrow-raising performances like playing keyboard, slack-key uke, and singing were only some of our talents on display that evening. I played the keyboard while singing with Rebecca Eclavea. Molliann Campos played a wonderful beat with her uke.

While the evening menu ranged from sumptuous food to tender, juicy appetizers, imaginative soups, and more, ... refreshing cool beverages and cocktails were available at the bar, upon presentation of the blue ticket (which served as a raffle entry also). Tickets were available at the entrance for purchase, which were nicely and smoothly handled by Evelyn Duenas and Jean Quitugua.

What's more...the raffle drawing was one of the most awaited moments. This, without a doubt, added fun and excitement to that evening. Jake Cruz, one of the emcees of the night, called the lucky numbers one by one and prizes were handed out with the help of Lou Mesa and my mom. Speaking of "lucky," Ms. Carol Cables was one of the lucky ladies who won lots of cool prizes. Our congratulations and thank you for your support too, Ms. Carol!

We missed Ginger Porter, Lynn and Andrew Tydingco that night, as well as others. Ginger happened to be off- island. Lynn and Andrew weren't able to attend as Andrew was sick. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family, Andrew. May you get well soon!

Our great appreciation and thanks goes to all the advocates, generous people, and sponsors who joined us, donated prizes, time, and efforts which made that evening superb. No task is too big when done together by all. The story of **Siña ta Kanta** started in the Elks Club ... and ends in your hearts!

# Workplace Accommodation Makes a Difference By Carla Torres



*Maria Pineda, an employee at Guam's Naval Hospital, sits at her desk in front of her accessible workstation.*

**In order to effectively perform their jobs, all employees need the right tools and the right work environment.** For some individuals with disabilities, the right tools and the right environment might come through reasonable accommodations. "Reasonable accommodations", as required by the American with Disabilities Act, are modifications or adjustments to jobs, work environments, or workplace policies that enable qualified employees with disabilities to perform the fundamental duties of their jobs. Moreover, these accommodations provide individuals equal access to benefits available to employees without disabilities. Many times, reasonable accommodations come by way of assistive technology.

For Maria Pineda, reasonable accommodations and assistive technology are helping her maintain productivity and efficiency on the job. At the young age of 21, Maria Pineda was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa. Retinitis pigmentosa is an inherited, degenerative eye disease that causes severe vision impairment and blindness. Individuals who are affected will experience one or more of the following symptoms: night blindness, tunnel vision (no peripheral vision), peripheral vision (no central vision), latticework vision, version to glare, slow adjustment from dark to light environments and vice versa, blurring of vision, poor color separation, and extreme tiredness.

The initial diagnosis did not warrant any accommodations. In fact, this remained the case for the first 10 years of working for the federal government. However, because retinitis pigmentosa is degenerative, it was only a matter of time for change to occur. In 1999, when employed by the Air Force, Maria's vision worsened, and she was provided with a visual aid as a reasonable accommodation. She was given a CCTV, a closed-circuit television, which uses a video camera to project a magnified image onto a TV screen. This was sufficient for Maria for a while until her vision took another dip.

In 2003, working at the Naval Hospital, Maria needed magnification for her computer screen. She continued to use the CCTV for printed materials and accessed the built-in magnifier on her computer's operating system. About a year ago, this system was no longer providing Maria the support she needed. Her vision had deteriorated greatly. She now required greater magnification and text-to-speech access. So last year, with the help of her human resources manager and the Department of Defense's Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program, Maria was provided with a screen reader/magnifier software program called Zoomtext and a 30 inch monitor. The program was installed in her computer but it stayed there for months unused as she didn't receive the needed training. Remote training was offered to her, but was insufficient

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# Pripåra Hao

GUAM CEDDERS

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### I'm Prepared! I've made my Emergency Plan.

- ☒ I know what I need help with.
- ☒ I have family & friends in my support network.
- ☒ My family & friends have my plan.
- ☒ My family & friends know how to assist me.
- ☒ I have a list of Emergency Contacts
- ☒ My medicines & information are listed.
- ☒ My medical providers are listed.
- ☒ I have a communication plan.
- ☒ I have a back up power source for my chair.
- ☒ I have a GO-KIT to meet my special needs.

For more information go to:

[www.guamcedders.org/priparahao](http://www.guamcedders.org/priparahao)



## Dates to Remember:

### Sep 22 - Self-Advocacy Conference

8am -5pm, Guam Marriott Resort and Spa.  
Call 735-2478 for more information.

### Sep 29 - Guam Department of Homeland Security: Pledge to Prepare Fair

Agana Shopping Center. Call 735-2478 for more information.

### Sep 29 - Self-Advocacy Workshop

10:00am - 2:30pm, Hs. 19 Dean's Circle, UOG.  
Call 735-2478 for more information.

### Oct 6 - Self-Advocacy Workshop

10:00am-2:30pm, Hs. 19 Dean's Circle, UOG.  
Call 735-2478 for more information.

### Oct 20 - Self-Advocacy Workshop

9:30am-2:30pm, Hs. 19 Dean's Circle, UOG.  
Call 735-2478 for more information.

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and unsuccessful. She needed someone on site to help her learn how to use the program and assess its interfacing capabilities with the other applications and programs specific to her job.

Ms. Veronica Camacho, the human resources manager for the Naval Hospital, contacted the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT). Carla Torres, the Assistive Technology Professional at GSAT, has been working with Maria since then.

In her own words Maria writes:

*Carla is "Awesome", Zoom Text is "Incredible". I thought I had to retire because of my low vision, but I'm very grateful to have met Carla. Ms. Veronica Camacho introduced Carla to me. I went to Ms. Camacho to seek other options for accommodations. I'm grateful that she went beyond her call of duty. Carla is a true asset to UOG (GSAT). She is very professional, efficient, knowledgeable, and intelligent! With Carla demonstrating what Zoom Text is all about and how I can apply it, I now have a different outlook on the work force. Now that I know how to apply the keyboard commands, I am gaining back my confidence and efficiency. Thank you Carla for helping me accomplish some of the tasks that I was not able to accomplish before.*

Maria has worked for the federal government now for 23 years. With reasonable accommodations, assistive technology, and an awesome positive spirit of adapting and pressing on, things are looking like she has many more years to come... if she chooses, of course.



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Comments may be sent to:

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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](mailto:margie.johnson@guamcedders.org) for more information.

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## **The Programs for Protection and Advocacy for Individual Rights (PAIR) and Developmental Disabilities (PADD)**



with Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center  
(GLSC-DLC) will be holding a

### **Public Input Session on Proposed Goals and Objectives for FY2013**

Saturday, September 15, 2012 11:00a.m. to 12:00p.m.  
at Somnak Ballroom, Westin Hotel, Tumon

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

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

GLSC-DLC

Telephone no. 477-9811, TDD/TTY:477-3416

Written comments will be accepted until September 21, 2012 at  
113 Bradley Place, Anigua or via email at [information@guamlsc.org](mailto:information@guamlsc.org)

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## **The Program for Protection and Advocacy for Individual with Mental Illness (PAIMI)**



with Guam Legal Services Corporation Disability Law Center  
(GLSC-DLC) will be holding a

### **Public Input Session on Proposed Goals and Objectives for FY2013**

Saturday, September 15, 2012 12:00p.m. to 1:00p.m.  
at Somnak Ballroom, Westin Hotel, Tumon

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

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

GLSC-DLC

Telephone no. 477-9811, TDD/TTY:477-3416

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