

# I Linå'la-ta OUR LIFE



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Administration on Intellectual Developmental Disabilities Tri-Agency



## Guam Celebrates DD Awareness Month Estorlan Lynn Tydingco



Members, staff, family, and friends of the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council, Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center, and Guam CEDDERS joined Ray Tenorio, Acting Governor of Guam, (standing center, with tie), on March 4th to commemorate the signing of the proclamation designating the month of March 2013 as "Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month." Also joining the group was Aline Yamashita, Ph.D., Senator, 32nd Guam Legislature.

**The Guam Developmental Disabilities Council (GDDC) celebrated Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Month** by hosting and facilitating a series of activities during the month of March.

Activities started off on Sunday, March 3rd, with Archbishop Anthony Apuron celebrating Mass at the Agana Cathedral Basilica in honor of DD Awareness Month. The next day, Acting Governor Ray Tenorio signed a proclamation, declaring March as "Developmental Disability Awareness Month."

To increase public awareness of issues relating to developmental disabilities, the GDDC hosted a policy maker and community awareness session on March 8th at the Guam Legislative Session Hall. The GDDC, University of Guam CEDDERS, Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center (GLSC-DLC), the Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities (DISID), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and SiñA: Self-Advocates in Action, provided informative summaries regarding developmental disabilities, the history and function of each of the participating agencies

and organizations. The session concluded with disability sensitivity training.

As part of the DD awareness activities, and in keeping with the objectives of its State Plan, the DD Council requested that the 32nd Guam Legislature sponsor a resolution designating SiñA as the State Self-Advocacy Organization. Representatives from the Tri-Agency, comprised of the GDDC, Guam CEDDERS, and GLSC-DLC, DISID/DVR leaders, and members of SiñA, provided testimony in favor of the resolution. This resolution was later passed and presented to the Governor during a ceremony held on April 9 at the Governor's Conference Room.

A community outreach event, to build greater general public awareness of issues relating to DD was held on March 26th at the Agana Shopping Center.

The month's festivities concluded with a GDDC Family Fun Day held at the Adelup grounds on March 30. The GDDC, in collaboration with all the disability partners, spearheaded this activity and topped off the celebration with food, dancing, Zumba, and a variety of entertainment. A great time was had by all!

## Guam Celebrates DD Awareness Month



(Top Left Photo): Guam Developmental Disabilities Council members and staff joined Archbishop Anthony S. Apuron during the celebrating of mass on March 3rd, to commemorate “Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month 2013.”



(Top Right Photo): Moses Puas, Guam Developmental Disabilities Council (GDDC) member (seated) and (L-R) Harold Parker, Executive Director, Guam Legal Services Disability Law Center; Erlinda Tydingco, Chairperson, GDDC; Andrew Tydingco, GDDC member; and Rosanne Ada, Executive Director, GDDC, pose for a quick photo during the DD Awareness Family Fun Picnic held on March 20 at the Adelup grounds.



(Right Photo): Candace Perry, Self-Advocate; Erlinda Tydingco, GDDC Chairperson; Rosanne Ada, GDDC Executive Director; and Josie Cortez, GDDC Secretary, manned the GDDC Display Table during the GSAT Assistive Technology Conference held on March 16 at the Westin Resort Guam.

## SiñA Becomes Guam’s State Self-Advocacy Agency



A Guam Legislative Resolution, sponsored by Senator Dennis Rodriguez, Jr., with support from Senator Aline Yamashita and Senator Brant McCreadie, requesting that the Governor of Guam designate the SiñA (Self-Advocates in Action) organization as the “State Self Advocacy Organization” was presented to Governor Eddie Calvo (Front row, standing at center) during a presentation ceremony on April 9 at the Governor’s Complex in Adelup. Approximately 20 members and supporters of SiñA attended the ceremony.



## Other DD Awareness Month Activities



Senator Aline Yamashita, Ph.D., presented the organizers of the 19th Annual Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) Assistive Technology Conference with a legislative resolution during the Conference held on March 16 at the Westin Resort Guam. The resolution congratulated the organizers on their sustained efforts in promoting assistive technology over the past 19 years. Attending the presentation were (seated, L-R) Evelyn Duenas, GDDC Second Vice-Chair; and Josie Cortez, GDDC Secretary. (Standing, L-R) Senator Yamashita, Rosanne Ada, Executive Director, GDDC; Dawn Maka, Director, Guam Center for Independent Living; Harold Parker, J.D., Executive Director, Guam Legal Services, Disability Law Center; Heidi San Nicolas, Ph.D., Director, Guam CEDDERS; Lou Mesa, Chairperson, State Rehabilitation Council; Carla Torres, Guam CEDDERS Assistive Technology Specialist; and Barbara Johnson, GSAT Advisory Committee Member.



The Down Syndrome Association of Guam (DSAG) celebrated "World Syndrome Day" aka "Trisomy 21" on March 21, 2013 at Agana Shopping Center. Over 100 community members participated in the event including individuals with disabilities, families, friends, service providers, and others.



Vicky Perez (right foreground) and Natasha Calderon (left foreground) were role playing how to handle aggressive behavior while Candice Perry (left background), workshop helper, and Julie Cruz (right background) observe during a Self-Advocacy Workshop held on April 27 at House 26, Dean's Circle, University of Guam.



### The SuperFriends Show

**Station:** K57 AM

**Time:** Every 2nd and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 12pm until 1 pm.

**Hosts:** Erlinda "Lynn" Tydingco and Andrew Tydingco.



# Presenting...Gian Magana!

Estorian Lynn Tydingco

Gian Magana is a multi-talented 17 year old junior attending John F. Kennedy High School. Gian loves math and art. His hobbies include making videos and posting them on YouTube, hanging with friends, eating at McDonalds, socializing on Facebook, and dancing. He is active in Guam's Special Olympics.

Gian is an exceptional youth, who is on the Autism spectrum. With the love and support of his father Pete, his mother Jeng, his sister Kariz, ACT: Autism Community Together, the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council,

and SiñA: Self-Advocates in Action, he has learned to embrace his disability and to educate and promote Self-Advocacy and disability awareness to his peers and the island community.

Gian's latest accomplishments include winning first place at a Poetry Slam with a poem regarding his disability. He is the Board Secretary of JFK's SiñA Youth Chapter. He also was recently appointed as a member of the University of Guam CEDDERS Advisory Council. Gian plans to pursue his post secondary education at the University of Guam.



Gian Magana's family celebrate his winning the Poetry Slam competition. (L-R): Pedro Magana, father; Jeng Magana, mother; Gian; and Kariz Magana, sister.



A proud Special Olympian, Gian (third from left), carries the John F. Kennedy High School banner during the opening ceremonies of the track and field events held in March.



A high school junior, Gian enjoys engaging in the latest dance craze, "Oppa Gangnam Style."

# Poetry Slam: People with Disabilities by Gian Magana

People with disabilities  
 People with disabilities  
 You see them at school, at the hallway,  
 At the library, at the cafeteria  
 they can be your classmate, your neighbor, your  
 colleague

I am one of them...  
 (step forward, look at audience)  
 ...I have Autism

What is Autism?  
 It is a developmental disability  
 that affects my social communication and behavior

People don't understand  
 do they care to understand?

While I was with my therapist learning how to speak,  
 my peers were out there playing hide and seek.  
 upon walking through the doors of middle school, some  
 people called me names  
 from retard, to troublemaker,  
 to naughty boy, or even stupid, like it was all games  
 Oh, man! That hurts!

I tried hard to be "in"  
 you know, doing what they do  
 but I felt like I was still in the shadow, a victim of  
 discrimination,  
 that led to oppression, manipulation, depression,  
 retaliation, deep down inside of me  
 I knew the only thing that can save me was determination

But hey, do you know? I'll be the first one to answer  
 when the teacher asks a question  
 I need to prove myself out there that  
 I am not dumb, I am not dumb  
 I let the doors of hope open for admission

Countless golds I won, from the Special Olympics events  
 Capoeira moves, I can bring on the dance floor,

Turning a blank page on the computer screen, into  
 beautiful 3-D designs of buildings and  
 airplanes, is my passion, and ... (pause)

Oppa Gangnam Style  
 Doesn't that call for a celebration?

Everyone is gifted  
 Don't take your talent for granted  
 As my mentors said  
 "Focus on your abilities and  
 not on your disabilities."

People with disabilities are human beings  
 this is why I stand on this stage today  
 We want respect, we want inclusion  
 This is why I cry out to you this way  
 We want to be treated equally  
 This is why my voice is echoing in this room,  
 which I hope echoes in your hearts

Instead of staying on the ground, sobbing out my painful  
 experiences, I decided to spread awareness about  
 disabilities and to gain self-respect  
 to share the gifts that God has given me,  
 to stand and be an advocate, I will not neglect

Nothing can stop me from being who I am  
 though the world has blinded the eyes of people around  
 me, you will still hear the boom when my bowling  
 ball rolls on the floor, striking pins, JFK will still see me  
 roaming around, striving for that day when I earn my  
 diploma on stage and enter my dream career,

I will be dancing through my milestones in life.  
 Do you want to be a part of it?

I am just like you equally made by our Creator. I will end  
 with one question: Who got the talent? I got the talent, so  
 do you...Thank you

**Go to YouTube to view Gian performing his poem during a  
 recent Poetry Slam Competition. Search "Gian Magana."**

# Is it me or my Condition?

by Rebecca Eclavea



Rebecca Eclavea

We have all heard of a crazy family member, that goofy daredevil friend, someone completely "off."

Do you know the extent of their "off-ness", the peculiarity that seems soaked to their

being? I am that crazy family member, the peculiarity of society. I am Bipolar. "Bipolar disorder, formerly called manic depression, is a mental illness that causes people to have episodes of severe high and low moods. People who have this illness switch from feeling overly happy and energized to feeling very sad and vice versa. Because of the highs and the lows -- or two poles of mood -- the condition is referred to as "bipolar disorder" (webmd.com). In between episodes of mood swings, a person may experience normal moods. Dealing with my condition is like a figurative cross to bear. The cross of the in-betweens: wellness or insanity. I am considered a deviant to society. My bipolarity affects virtually all aspects of my life: my place in society, my emotions, confidence and relationships.

Imagine being a relatively normal 15 year old. I was a parent's Ideal First Born: all honors classes, involved in drama and speech, considerate with a bright future. Now imagine five months after that 15th birthday, and imagine her life falling to pieces, no matter how much her parents tried to prevent it. It has been so long since I was diagnosed, when normality is mentioned to me, I scoff. "Normal" is a concept or a philosophy to those who cannot think for themselves, understand their inner being. Society views those with my disability as criminals, or unproductive, because their disability consumes them, torturous enough to not partake in life; and in extension, the society we live in. The plea bargain in any case is usually "bipolar," or "schizophrenia". Even if they are "crazy", we are all capable, disabled or not, of understanding morals and practicing them.

Then there are the creative geniuses: Mark Twain, Van Gogh, Virginia

Woolf- all are great artists, god-like in their talent. In modern day, there is Ben Stiller, Carrie Fisher, Jim Carrey and multiple other famous individuals making their mark in entertainment through their slightly peculiar self-marketing.

But me? What am I to society? I am not an actress, nor famous, perhaps not spectacular at all. I exist within swing-swing moods, and self-reflection; reflecting, to ponder the moments. We are all crazy. Some of us are better at hiding it. It doesn't matter if you have a label, practically screaming, "Judge me" or if you are fighting the crazy yourself. Society views me and those with my condition as deviants. Sometimes, I am happy to stand out. Other times, I wish to hide in a sort of invisibility cloak, scared of the world's judgment.

I want to think its my condition that makes me a "deviant," that it makes me stand out in a world of stereotypes and pretend normal people, but, it's not. It's my offbeat nature, my peculiarity that scares people who are frightened of those who are deemed "different." The only difference that separates me from "them" is that I'm more aware of my emotions, that trigger monumental despair or unnatural glee. The only difference that separates individuals with disabilities is that we know ourselves more than "normal people" can ever have the chance to. My disability doesn't make me different, it makes me human.



The Guam Developmental Disabilities Council (GDDC) held a New Member Orientation on April 11, 2013 at the GDDC Conference Room. Participating were (L-R) Maylynn Fejeran, Rebecca Eclavea, & Rosanne Ada, Executive Director. Not pictured Lourdes Bitanga, Catholic Social Services.





# TRANSITION PLANNING WORKBOOK

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## New Apps Share Accessibility Information by Ginger Porter

Would you like to rate the accessibility of the places you go...the market, a drugstore, a medical clinic, a theater, a law office, a hotel, or a restaurant? New online tools are out there to help you and our fellow islanders rate local places and businesses on their accessibility and then share the news!

AXSMap and Access Together are U.S. based sites that are easy to use. You can conduct local ratings on the spot with several easy to answer prompts. Access Together breaks down the accommodations based on disability type: Wheelchairs & Mobility, Blind & Visually Impaired, Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Sensory, and Seniors, providing useful information for specific needs.

## Accessibility Websites

[www.accesstogether.org](http://www.accesstogether.org)

[www.axsmap.com](http://www.axsmap.com)

[www.accessibleworld.org](http://www.accessibleworld.org)

[www.accessadvisr.net](http://www.accessadvisr.net)

Traveling to other countries and want to know about their access? Try Accessible World for good reviews of services. How about public transportation services to various destinations? Check out Access Advisr. It provides the most comprehensive information about accessibility on public transportation and also includes lodging, dining, arts, entertainment, retail stores, and other transportation facilities. U.S. public transportation is currently being integrated into the website and accompanying smartphone apps.

If you have a smart phone, an iPad, an android tablet, or computer access to the web, you can log on to any of these sites and start rating...and start dreaming about accessible places to go.



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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 Månha Project - Deaf Community Day Camp

**Monday, June 10 to Friday, June 14 from 9am to 4pm**

Week long deaf camp for campers ages 4 to 18  
(Older deaf adults interested in volunteering are welcome to apply).

**Saturday June 15 from 10am to 2pm**

Workshop for parents/professionals working with deaf youth and a Deaf Fiesta Fest for the kids to demonstrate their art/performances/things they learned.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing people, relatives of deaf people, and friends of deaf people are encouraged to sign up.

If you want to sign up your deaf/hard of hearing child or want to get involved in the camp, please don't hesitate to call us at **646-6601** or email us at **guam.deaf@gmail.com** or **heather.zimmerman@gallaudet.edu** (camp director).

## Autism Awareness Month Activities Engage Public



A crowd gathers to watch one of the student performances during the Autism Awareness Month Outreach Event held on April 14 at the Agana Shopping Center.



Shawn Wessling, a high school student (center), demonstrates his cooking skills during the Autism Awareness Month Outreach Event.