

I Linå'la-ta OUR LIFE



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Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Tri-Agency



Know What You Need? SAY IT! By Trish Billen



Dr. Theresa Garate (standing left), gets into the emotion of conveying thoughts and needs for effective use of self-advocacy; a message delivered to students, family members and service providers during the Self-Advocacy Conference on September 27. Standing to her right is Jeannie Hollis, Sign Language interpreter.

The Self-Advocacy Conference: The Path to Speaking Up, was held on September 27th at the Hyatt Regency in Tumon. This event was by invitation only, targeting students with developmental disabilities, some of whom are self-advocates, along with their parents and caregivers. Sponsored by the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council, also in attendance were service providers from various agencies such as Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center, Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Guam CEDDERS.

The main presenter, Dr. Teresa Garate, President and Chief Executive Officer of Neumann Family Services in Chicago, Illinois, shared tools that could help individuals become self-advocates. Participants had the opportunity to share and demonstrate situations where other people made decisions for and without them, and when the

decisions that were made did not best fit their needs. Self-advocacy helps you get the outcome that you need to succeed in this world.

The conference started off with a large group plenary presentation on the fundamentals of Self-Advocacy. Afterwards, Dr. Garate conducted two breakout sessions, where she met first with the service providers and then the students along with their families and caregivers. Dr. Garate provided questions for individual and group activities that helped guide a good mixture of discussions among students, parents, caregivers, and service providers. Some of the topics generated in the discussions were on types of self-advocacy, factors that affect self-advocacy, and the participants' roles and responsibilities as leaders. Participants also engaged in self-advocacy building activities to help build their skills. These activities sparked humorous role playing and group interactions.

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Know What You Need? SAY IT! continued from cover

Dr. Garate's take away message to students, parents and caregivers was that even though there are experts to assist people with developmental disabilities to succeed, the best and most reliable expert on the individual is often themselves. After all, no one knows you better than yourself. Speaking up for yourself is easier than you think. Start small, advised Dr. Garate. The key is to make yourself heard however way you can.

This message struck home with several students, one of whom began a conversation about his need for more visual accommodations to understand information in several of his regular classes. The student shared that

he gained a new set of self-advocacy tools to help him speak for himself at his Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting. At this point, a Consulting Resource Teacher from the Department of Education began to coach the student and his mother about words to use at his upcoming meeting. With short, repeated, on-the-spot practice on stating his disability and his need for visual accommodations, the student and his parent left the conference with the confidence of being able to express the supports that he needs to his IEP team. The conference was beneficial for all involved and as indicated in the conference title, will help them on their "path to speaking up."



Participants engage in round table responses to situations provided by Dr. Garate.



Self-advocacy in Action! A participant responds to the call to voice his opinion.



Assistive technology displays, information on Emergency Preparedness, Legal, and other services drew the interest of participants to display tables during breaks.

Be a Person Who Makes a Difference

By Maria Bontogon

"Alms, alms. . . give me a piece of bread, spare me your mercy!" asked a man so weak and hungry. Surely your heart would melt away if you were to witness this pitiful situation. Such a negative situation reflects not only on the beggar, but on the community as well. No one would like to find themselves in this mess. That's why young or old, black or white, diverse culture or not, with or without disability— everybody should aim for education and work hard to reach their dreams and goals. We might be living in a small island community, but we're like a big family, we need to reach out and relate to one another. Are you ready to assist and set aside your "dilly-dally," procrastination, and ego to make a difference in people's lives?

I've set foot in higher education, aiming to be a useful, productive citizen and to be of help to others someday. Students who see me might be asking themselves, "What the heck is she doing in college? How can she manage to learn and cope?" This is how— I count my blessings everyday! I have a God-given brain that I can use to help me cope with whatever I am lacking. College requires long study hours, extensive reading and time management to make it worth every penny I paid for tuition. Assistive Technology (AT) can assist me in coping with the challenges. I've applied to a local agency and was approved to receive the AT that will assist me in obtaining higher education, which will help me to acquire the knowledge, skills and training critical to ensure and realistically access the employment world.

I was expecting my request for AT to be processed in a timely manner. While waiting, my college life started. I go from one class to another, using the Orientation & Mobility training taught to me by Ms. Diane Artero. At the start of the fall semester, I e-mailed my professors, who were very welcoming and eager to assist, to inform them of my situation. One by one, I personally hand-delivered the accommodation letter describing needed services and accessibility agreed and approved by UOG's ADA office.

After discussing how AT assists me in performing my tasks, one of my professors commented: "Do whatever magic you need to do, just let me know

how I can assist you." Repeatedly, I have followed up for the requested AT. Unfortunately, to this date more than four agonizing months have passed, and yet the status of the assistive technology is still in limbo.

Due to this, I often ask myself, "Can I make it and achieve a good future in life? How am I to perform tasks without AT?" What made the availability of the AT long-delayed? It is so sad. . . do we need to wait for something to happen in order to learn a lesson?

"We all have failures or obstacles. But be dreaded not, life's journey is still at its best. Take a risk, be ready to get scared, embarrassed, or hurt, for at the end of the road, no life's trouble can wear you out."

- Maria Bontogon, Self-Advocate



GOAL-AT Meeting Needs...Fast!

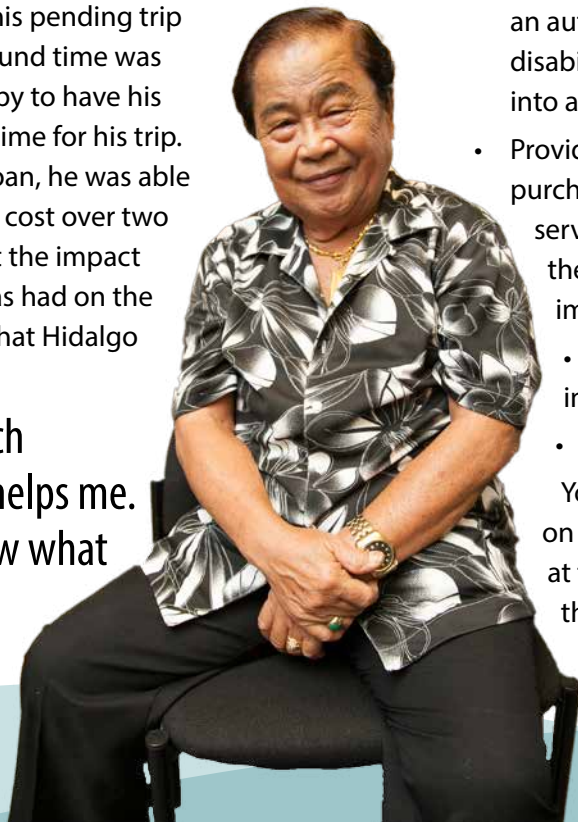
Hidalgo G. Mupas was experiencing poor speech discrimination and was diagnosed with a significant hearing loss in both ears. At 85 years old, Hidalgo didn't want to slow down. Without an amplification device to address the hearing loss, Hidalgo would continue to struggle communicatively in all environments, including quiet, one-to-one conversations. He had his hearing evaluated by Audiological Associates, who provided him with information about the GOAL-AT Loan Program and referred him to Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT). Hidalgo was prescribed 2 hearing aids to address his hearing loss. There was no doubt that these devices would greatly impact his quality of life, but not without a hefty price. The hearing aids cost \$2,750.

On May 26, 2014, Hidalgo, came to GSAT seeking assistance with funding for a hearing aid and applied for a GOAL-AT loan. There was urgency to his request as he was scheduled to leave for the Philippines the following week. His completed application was reviewed by the Loan Review Committee just four days later on May 30 and was serviced the same day!

It isn't always the case that applications are received and serviced the same week; however, the GOAL-AT Loan Program strives to meet individuals' needs. For

Mr. Hidalgo Mupas and his pending trip off-island, a fast turn-around time was a need. He was very happy to have his hearing restored and in time for his trip. Moreover, through the loan, he was able to stretch out the \$2,750 cost over two years. When asked about the impact the GOAL-AT Program has had on the quality of life, this was what Hidalgo had to say:

“When I go to church meetings, it really helps me. Before, I didn't know what was going on.”



GOAL-AT is a federally funded program that provides affordable financial loans to persons with disabilities for the purchase of assistive technology devices and services and for home modifications aimed at increasing accessibility to the home. Interest rates on these loans are currently 2.125% and have not gone higher than 2.25% since the inception of the program in 2004.

If you are a person with a disability, a family member, or an authorized representative of an individual with a disability, you may be able to get an affordable financial loan to purchase any of the following types of Assistive Technology:

- Hearing Aids & Listening Devices
- Wheelchairs or Scooters
- Home modifications
- Lifts and vehicle modifications
- Computers, computer software, and accessories
- Communication devices
- Devices to aid in learning, recreational, and daily living activities

To qualify for GOAL-AT, you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a Guam resident who is at least 18 years old
- Be a person with a disability, a family member, or an authorized representative for a person with a disability who is legally and financially able to enter into a contract for a loan
- Provide assurance that the loan will be used to purchase assistive technology devices and/or services, and/or home modifications and that these purchases will have a direct and positive impact on the disability
 - Provide quotations for equipment from intended vendor(s)
 - Demonstrate ability to repay the loan.

You can download the GOAL-AT application on the GSAT website at www.gsatcedders.org, at the Bank of Guam locations, or you can call the GSAT office at 735-2490/1. If you have any questions or need assistance completing the application, the GOAL-AT staff is available to guide you in the loan application process.

Guam CEDDERS Advisory Council Elects New Officers



Left to right: Leone Rohr, Parent Representative; Rosanne Ada, Executive Director, Guam Developmental Disabilities Council; Linda Rodriguez, Administrator, Bureau of Social Services Administration; Marcelene Santos, J.D., Guam Public Guardian; Gian Magana, Vice Chairperson; Maria Bontogon, Self-Advocate; Erlinda Tydingco, Chairperson; Harold Parker, Esq., Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center; Josie Guerrero, Parent Representative; Ben Servino, Director, Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities.



Erlinda Tydingco (right) was re-elected chairperson and Gian Magana (left) was chosen as Vice Chairperson during the September 3rd Guam CEDDERS Advisory Council quarterly meeting.



Ben Servino, Director, Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities (center) reviews the *Tellai* newsletter during the September Guam CEDDERS Advisory Council meeting.

VOTING NEWS!

You have the right to...

- VOTE
- Access your polling place
- Cast a secret ballot
- Request assistance marking and casting your ballot
- Cast an absentee ballot

General Election Tuesday, November 4th

At every polling place, there is an Assistive Technology Kit filled with some low-tech items that can help make your voting process easier.

Some items included are:



Dry-Erase White Board



Full Page Magnifier

YOU choose who will help you!!

Your assistant **CAN** be a...

Precinct Official

Friend

Family Member

Caregiver

Assisted Living Provider

Facility Staff Person

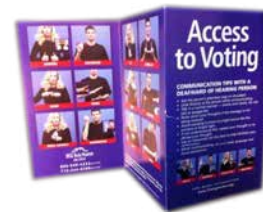
Almost Anyone Else!!



Signature Guide



Communication Board



Access to Voting Pocket Guide

If your polling place is **NOT accessible**,
Immediately call the Guam Election Commission:

477-9791



GUAM LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
DISABILITY LAW CENTER

If you experience difficulties accessing and exercising your right to vote as a result of your disability, you may file a complaint with Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center.

Telephone: 477-9811

TDD/TTY: 477-3416

information@guamlsc.org

Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center

Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (PADD) Advisory Council

WANTS YOU!!!



"Changing the World Always Needs Volunteers"

Hafa Adai! We need individuals with developmental disabilities, family members and professionals to join us! High school and college students welcome!

As council members, you will have the opportunity to guide the PADD program in assisting and advocating for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Sign up today!

For more information, contact Carol Cabiles at (671) 477-9811 or via email at carol.cabiles@guamlsc.org.

What: GLSC-DLC PADD
Advisory Council Meetings

When: Quarterly

Where: Sinajana Senior Center
(Subject to change)

U.S. Department of Justice Announces New Resource Regarding Rights of Voters with Disabilities

The U.S. Justice Department recently announced the availability of a new technical assistance publication regarding federal laws that protect the rights of voters with disabilities. The publication, "The Americans with Disabilities Act & Other Federal Laws Protecting the Rights of Voters with Disabilities," is intended to help election officials, poll workers and voters understand how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal laws ensure equality in the voting process for people with disabilities. The Federal laws covered in this document include the ADA, the Voting Rights Act, the National Voter Registration Act and the Help America Vote Act.

The publication is available at:
www.ada.gov/ada_voting/ada_voting_ta.htm



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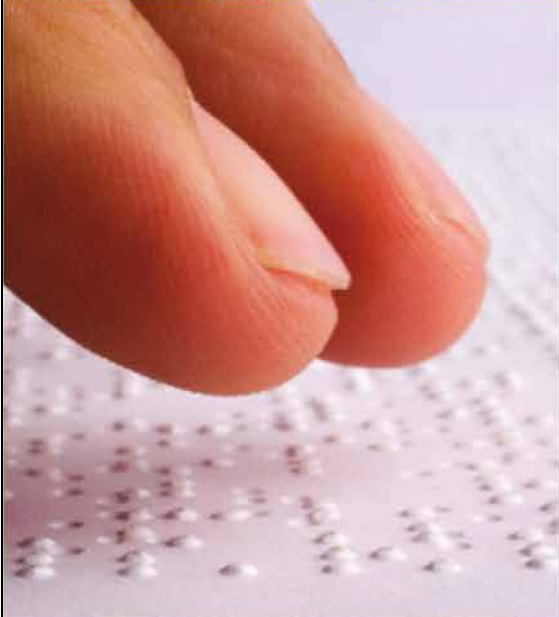
Alternative formats (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tapes, or electronic file) of *Linå'lå-ta* will be made available upon request. Please contact Margaret Johnson at 735-2477 (v) or 734-6531 (TTY), or email: margie.johnson@guamcedders.org for more information.

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Are you an individual who is entitled to **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)** based on disability or blindness?

Are you interested in returning to work or experiencing a barrier to employment?



The Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) Program

at Guam Legal Services Corporation— Disability Law Center may be able to provide you with advocacy related to accommodations in the workplace, employment discrimination, need for assistive technology, or other services related to securing or regaining employment.



For more information, please contact
**GUAM LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
DISABILITY LAW CENTER (GLSC—DLC)**
at 477-9811/2

or visit our website at www.lawhelp.org



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