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Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Tri-Agency



Policy Makers Hear Updates from Advocates on Guam's Disability Agenda



Participants of the "Update from Advocates on Guam's Disability Agenda Forum" held on December 3, pose for a group photo in the atrium of the Eugenia and Jesus Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building, University of Guam.

"Small but mighty!" Those were the words of Lynn Tydingco, Self-Advocate and Guam CEDDERS Advisory

Council Chairperson, that described the self-advocate presenter group for the "Update from Advocates on Guam's Disability Agenda Forum" held on December 3 at the Eugenia and Jesus Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building, University of Guam.

Thirty-seven policy maker participants, including senators and legislative staff, the Guam Washington Delegate's Office staff, agency directors and representatives, and self-advocates, convened to listen to the concerns expressed by self-advocates and their family members on systemic issues, funding, and the frustrations of day-to-day living that are a result of insufficient support. Information obtained from a forum held this past May prioritized the following areas as the

top ranking concerns of individuals with disabilities and their families: 1) Employment, 2) Transportation, 3) Housing, and 4) Quality Assurance.

Chairperson Tydingco opened the session eloquently with a snapshot of self-advocacy growth and development within the Guam community and the importance of inviting individuals with disabilities to the planning table for governmental services. Testimony on employment issues recognized the persistent problem of discrimination that persons with disabilities still face. Much emphasis was placed on the government's need to be proactive in providing employment opportunity through renewed commitment to the 2% law and re-introduction of the 700-hour program. These programs, which provided individuals with disabilities with career paths, have eroded over the years, leading to a loss of positive role models for others with disabilities.

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Policy Maker Hear Updates...continued



Ginger Porter, Guam CEDDERS faculty, provided support to Self-Advocates during a planning meeting in preparation for the policymaker orientation. Clockwise from left: Ginger; Kirsten Bamba, Interpreter; Melanie Ebuén; Tina Artero; Evelyn Duenas and Victor Tuquero.



Clifford Wooten, Self-Advocate (right), mangin's Senator Benjamin Cruz (center), to show respect while Senator Aline Yamashita, Ph.D., and Hank Parker, JD, Executive Director of Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center (back) look on.



Lynn Tydingco, Guam CEDDERS Advisory Council Chairperson (standing at podium), facilitates the "Update from Advocates on Guam's Disability Agenda Forum."

Transportation issues focused on limited funding that affects service quality in areas of scheduled routes, hours of service, frequency of service, and insufficient manpower. Customer service quality, operations supervision, call-scheduling center operations, and quality communications topped the list of contracted provider concerns. A major recommendation was provided to streamline the paratransit eligibility process, one that self-advocates see as being cumbersome and inefficient.

Housing issues were addressed with GHURA Director Michael Duenas, who responded with information on the progress of new housing that includes accessible units that meet ADA and Federal Housing requirements. Self-advocates recognized the progress but requested improved communication and accommodation in the application process and action on older units that require retrofitting to meet accessibility needs of residents with disabilities.

Several topics were addressed under the Quality Assurance area. The benefits of Individualized Budgeting and the potential for a local funding match

for sustainability of the small program was provided in testimony by Evelyn Duenas. Lou Mendiola spoke of the need for the development of long-term services and supports for families with adult children as well as the need for augmented program options for services to maintain these individuals in community-based settings. Closing out the session was Melanie Ebuén, who emphasized the need for better communication systems for individuals who are deaf and using American Sign Language as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Through her own experiences, she pointed out the critical need in medical services, where technical terms are difficult to understand without access to interpreter services. This topic met the attention of representatives of Guam Memorial Hospital, and they further delved into the issue in conversations held at the close of the forum.

"Small but mighty" was an appropriate description for the event, organized and delivered by self-advocates with the support of Guam CEDDERS. Self-advocacy and leadership within the disability community is growing and was recognized with applause by those attending. Congratulations, self-advocates!

The Challenges of Transition

By Carol Darlow

How can it be that time has passed so quickly and we are now planning the transition to high school?

And we have the same feelings of uncertainty and anxiety as when we first began this journey years ago when Kira entered kindergarten.

Because I had little understanding of post-secondary transition from school to life after high school for students with disabilities, I learned about the process and now I'm able to contribute to her transition planning and help other parents learn about this process.

When Kira entered middle school, I began inquiring about transition planning and preparing for the move to high school. Transition planning starts at age 14 or earlier if needed. Parents need to request the services of a transition teacher if this has not already been done at age 14. It is followed by a series of student assessments, student interview, parent interview, and the preparation of a plan which includes planning courses of study for the high school years, establishing goals for employment, post-secondary education or training, and for independent living. Then there's planning various activities to support the plan. Also at this time it's important that parents

consider if more time will be needed in high school to prepare the student for work, further schooling, or training programs. IDEA provides for extended years in high school (through age 21) if needed for this preparation.

For us, because there is a need for a smaller school environment that also facilitates independence, there are field trips to several schools to determine which can meet Kira's needs for an environment that promotes independent functioning and best addresses her sensory issues of sound sensitivity and large crowds.

After years of having a 1:1 aide she will hopefully attain independent functioning at school. To prepare for this change, we have written goals the past few years to promote independent functioning, organizational skills, social interaction, learning to self-advocate for her needs, as well as providing for tutorial assistance to promote academic success.

And now, hopefully we're all ready for Kira to achieve her dreams and to take her place in society. But.....we have just begun the challenge of the last part of this school journey, high school!



Guam's Self-Advocates Rock the SABE Conference

Estorian Lynn Tydingco



SABE Opening Ceremony. (Left to right): Monie Manalo, CNMI VOICES Board Secretary, Marie Libria, GDDC Program Coordinator, SiñA Board Member-At-Large Stephen Madarang, SiñA President Lynn Tydingco, and SiñA Vice President Andrew Tydingco

Three Self-Advocates represented Guam at the SABE: Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered Conference in October 2014. Approximately 900 Self-Advocates from the 50 states and six territories gathered to bond, network, and provide status updates on the Self-Advocacy movement across the nation. Self-Advocates also united and addressed disability issues and concerns that affect the integration, inclusion, and independence of Persons With Disabilities.

This year's theme was "The Sooner We Are Equal, The Better!" Three of SiñA: Self-Advocates in Action Board Members and Self-Advocacy Workshop facilitators, President Lynn Tydingco; Vice President Andrew Tydingco, and Member-At-Large Stephen Madarang facilitated a break out session entitled "Ensuring Equality Through Networking."

The hour and fifteen minute presentation began with the Guam hymn followed by Andrew sharing how a group of persons with disabilities came together during a Self-Advocacy Workshop facilitated by Ginger Porter

from the University of Guam CEDDERS. After acquiring the knowledge, tools, and skills of Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination, the Self-Advocates began to address common issues and concerns in an assertive manner, networked, and collaborated with island policymakers, agency leaders, service providers, and other disability organizations. The goal was to ensure that we had an ever-so-important voice and seat at the table to ensure equality and accessibility for persons with disabilities. This workshop and movement was also supported by the other two organizations of the Tri-Agency, the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council, and Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center, as well as the Division of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities.

Stephen told his story about how he was an active and strong advocate for Andrew and Lynn, and then many years later he acquired multiple disabilities. To Stephen and his family's advantage, his support and exposure to the disability world was beneficial with his transition from Advocate to Self-Advocate.



SABLE Region 2 Representatives. Region 2 includes Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, and Nevada. SiñA was invited to be a partner in Arizona's Self-Advocacy Project.

Lynn's portion of the presentation focused on the progress and achievements in Guam's Self-Advocacy movement through networking. Some of the highlights were:

- The establishment of the nonprofit 501c3 Self-Advocacy organization SiñA: Self-Advocates in Action
- SiñA: Self-Advocates in Action was designated as the State Recognized Self-Advocacy organization by a Governor's Executive Order.
- Self-Advocates were trained and now facilitate the Self-Advocacy Workshops
- Self-Advocates take an active role on boards and councils
- Self-Advocates develop leadership skills and become leaders.
- SiñA established Youth Chapters and fostered Youth Leaders.
- Trained Self-Advocates and potential leaders, and assisted in the development of the Self-Advocacy movement in the CNMI.
- Facilitated continuous disability sensitivity and awareness efforts.
- Established good rapport and collaborated with policymakers, agency leaders, and service providers.
- Continue to educate and empower persons with disabilities to be Self-Advocates.
- Continue to provide peer-to-peer mentoring.
- Promote and support Self-Advocates to become independent, included, and integrated into society.



SABLE Teresa Moore and Andrew Tydingco take to the dance floor.

During the opening ceremony, Self-Advocates from Guam were recognized as we proudly held our Guam flag. We were joined by Marie Libria representing the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council and Monica Manalo, a board member from the CNMI's Self-Advocacy organization, The Voices of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas.

Team Guam made a great impact at the conference. We shared our experiences and what has worked for us. Representatives from some states could not believe that we are in direct contact and work with our policymakers and disability leaders. They have to deal with administrative staff.

The leaders of the People First Movement in Oklahoma City have invited Andrew, Stephen, and me to participate in their Self-Advocacy Conference in 2015.

Topping off the conference activities was a formal dinner, election of SABLE Officers, and a dance party where everyone and their Assistive Technology got their dance on!

Attending and presenting at the conference was a valuable experience and has opened up the doors to many potential partnerships and opportunities. We have definitely expanded our Self-Advocacy Family!

Self-Advocates in Action Guam is considered as being one of the organizations in the forefront of the nation's Self-Advocacy movement. SABLE 2016 SiñA will be there! Biba Self-Advocacy! Biba SiñA! Biba!

My Work Experience at Payless Supermarkets By Gian Magana



Gian's enthusiasm for his job is shown in his big smile.



Dededo Pay-Less is always busy with customers, which Gian enjoys.



Gian hands a shopper her bagged groceries with a smile.

“Hafa Adai, welcome to Dededo Payless!” This is my greeting to my customers when they come into our store. I started greeting people since I first started working in October. After a few days, a head cashier assigned me to also greet customers near the door when there’s not a lot of customers in the front paying for their groceries. Fellow baggers, cashiers, and head cashiers also praised me for giving good customer service just for greeting people.

Aside from being a bagger and a greeter, I also carry out groceries; I also help people who are elderly, those who may have disabilities, and also pregnant women as well.

The reason I applied to work at Payless Supermarkets is because I need to work for a living and also to help to improve my communication skills. When I first applied at Payless back in July, I didn’t get the job right away. I took a cashier’s test, it was easy and it only covered basic calculating. The passing cutoff is less than two mistakes — I actually got five so I failed the test.

Christmas season is one of the busiest time of the year — it was hectic. I decided to work on Christmas Day. I like to work on busy days such as Food Stamp Week and New Years Day.

Sometimes I ride the Paratransit to take the bus to Payless in Dededo around 8:45 A.M. I feel that the bus transit and the Paratransit are far below expectations. I wish another Dispatcher would run the Online Booking and also have another dispatcher run a second shift after 5 P.M. because having this feature would make the Paratransit better. They used to allow reservations two weeks in advance, but they really cut it down to two days. Which only makes the reliance of booking stricter.

Since I’ve started working at Payless Supermarkets in Dededo, I made a lot of friends and acquaintances with fellow employees.

When I greet the customer when they leave the store, this is what I say...

“Thank you for shopping at Payless, have a nice day!”



Providing Training,
Advocacy, and Support

SAVE THE DATE!

Parent and Student Training

Post-Secondary Transition

"Choosing My Path"

For Middle and High School Students with an IEP and their Parents

Get ready for the Next Steps in Your Child's Future

When: Saturday, February 28, 2015, 8:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Where: Tamuning Senior Citizen's Center

Make plans now to join us:

Register by emailing pepguam@gmail.com

or calling Carol Darlow at 727-2535 to ensure materials are reserved for you.

Email: pepguam@gmail.com | Website: www.peptalkdisabilities.com | Facebook: [Facebook.com/PEPTalkDisabilities](https://www.facebook.com/PEPTalkDisabilities)

SAVE THE DATES!



21st Annual GSAT Assistive Technology Conference & Fair: *Making it Work!*

GSAT Assistive Technology Fair

March 7, 2015

10AM - 2PM, Micronesia Mall Center Court

GSAT Assistive Technology Conference

March 27, 2015

8AM - 4PM, Venue TBA

- Featuring Assistive Technology Devices, Community Access Updates, Success Stories, and Hands-On "Make It & Take It" Workshops



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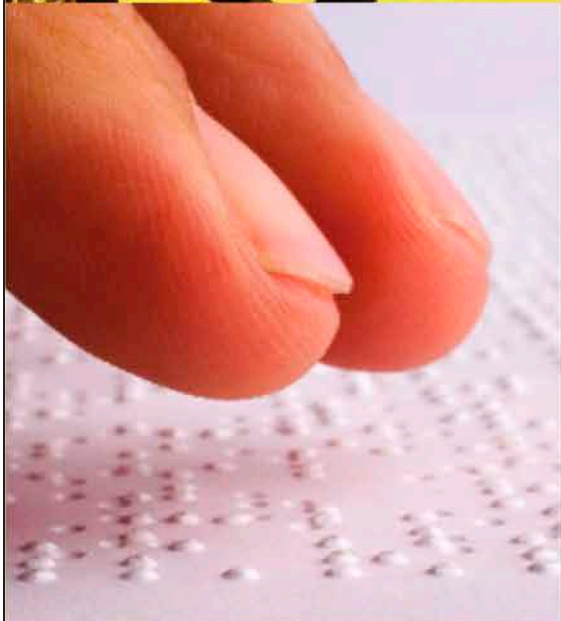
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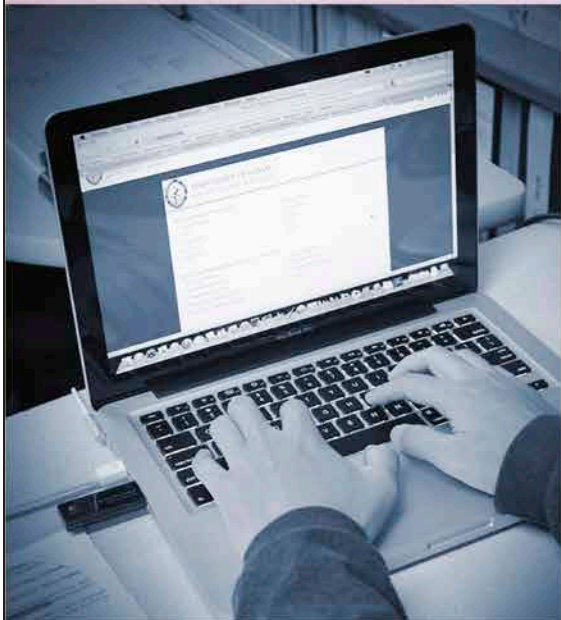
Are you an individual who is entitled to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) based on disability or blindness?

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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