

# I Linå'la-ta OUR LIFE



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Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Tri-Agency



## Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Highlights!

By Sean Lizama



Lt. Governor Ray Tenorio, Acting Governor, signed a proclamation declaring the month of March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month on Guam. Attending the event were representatives from the Guam Tri-Agency, comprised of the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council, Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center and University of Guam CEDDERS. Also attending were members of Guam's state recognized self-advocacy group SiñA: Self-Advocates in Action as well as agency representatives from the Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Division of Support Services.



The Guam Developmental Disabilities Council held a Celebrity Bagging Event on March 14 at the Pay-Less Market located at the Micronesia Mall. Left photo (left to right): Andrew Tydingco, SiñA, Vice President, Senator Dennis Rodriguez, and Senator Jim Espaldon greet customers as they leave with their groceries bagged by local celebrities in the disability community and government. Right photo (left to right): Megan Boswell, Self-Advocate and Christine Calvo, First Lady of Guam, assist each other in bagging groceries for a customer.

**March was Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month!** The Tri-Agency along with SiñA collaborated to host a series of events to celebrate and promote public awareness of developmental disabilities. The events included the annual GSAT Conference & Fair, a Celebrity

Bagging at Pay-Less Supermarket, and the Guam Developmental Disability Council Family Fun Day, which took place this year at the Sinajaña Community Center. Self-Advocates, families, and advocates joined together to celebrate accomplishments, talk about future activities, and most of all, to establish or renew friendships.

*More photos on page 2*

## DD Awareness Month Highlights...continued



Children laugh excitedly as the Guam Community College American Sign Language (ASL) class performs popular childrens cartoon themes in a very animated and entertaining form of ASL during Children's ASL Story Hour at this years Assistive Technology (AT) Fair at the Micronesia Mall on March 7.



Carla Torres (right), Assistive Technology (AT) and Special Projects Program Coordinator, demonstrates an AT device during the GSAT AT Fair on March 7 at the Micronesia Mall.



Carla Torres (at podium), Assistive Technology and Special Projects Program Coordinator, presents an overview of Assistive Technology and how to become a wise AT consumer to a room full of conference-goers.

## Increasing Housing Choices In Planning Stages By Ginger Porter

Most people like to have choices to think about when making important decisions. This is especially true when it comes to living arrangements if special supports and services are needed. To address this issue, two new developments have taken place.

### No Wrong Door Project

Guam CEDDERS has joined the Division of Senior Citizens (DSC), Department of Public Health and Social Services in facilitating their one-year "No Wrong Door" grant to develop a three-year plan to improve access to information for long term services and supports (LTSS) for all persons and all payers.

On November 25, 2014, DSC and Guam CEDDERS kicked off an Orientation Meeting to "No Wrong Door" at the Governor's Main Conference Room that was attended

by 27 individuals representing various partners and stakeholders. That activity was followed by an exploratory site visit on January 14-17, 2015 by the partnership team of the DSC, Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities (DISID), Medicaid, and Guam CEDDERS. The team visited the Hawaii State Office on Aging to observe models of effective service and learn from the experiences of others.

Ginger Porter, Guam CEDDERS faculty, facilitated focus groups with Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center (GBHWC), DISID, the DSC, and Medicaid as they met in February and March to assess their structures for intake and referral and to further identify what structural change would make the processes more effective. These processes are being mapped for identification and reduction of overlapping roles and responsibilities and

*continued on next page*



# Increasing Housing Choices...continued



Representatives from the Guam No Wrong Door Project include (L-R) Ginger Porter, Mel Cruz, Ben Servino, Arthur San Agustin, and Janet Cruz. The Guam team met with Debra Stone-Walls (far right), County Executive of the Maui County Office of Aging.

to provide guidance for the development of the “No Wrong Door Three-Year Implementation Plan.” The plan, scheduled for completion in September, will lead into the next steps of grant planning: preliminary operations plan and financing plan to achieve sustainability, conducting gaps analysis, documenting outreach strategies, and drafting a marketing plan.

## Legislative Round Table Discussion

A roundtable meeting of stakeholders, chaired by Senator Dennis Rodriguez, addressed Guam’s need for Assisted Living facilities this past March. Often directed to individuals who are ailing and/or elderly, assisted living facilities can also provide an opportunity for individuals with disabilities to plan for residential living with long-term services and supports provided when needed.

A task force is presently working on a framework to support the creation of a facility, which involves building

codes, regulations for assisted living, and elderly care guides.

It’s important for persons with disabilities to stay in touch with policy development in our local community. If individuals with disabilities and their family members believe that assisted living should reach beyond senior benefits and extend beyond a physical facility, now is the time to act and speak up. Benito Servino, DISID Director, Sam Illesugum, Acting Executive Director of Guma Mami, and Ms. Porter, all spoke to the need to expand community supports to enable individuals with disabilities to age in their homes, recognizing the benefits of happier and healthier lives. Assisted living facilities might best be planned together with more vibrant programs of home supports. Keep watch on this important topic as it develops towards legislative action and talk to your senators and DD network partners.

## Sen. Underwood Introduces Disability Registry Legislation By Ginger Porter

Senator Nerissa Underwood recently introduced a bill to establish a voluntary registry to effectively address the needs of persons with disabilities where immediate action is performed by law enforcement personnel and first responders. The bill’s intent is to promote effective and appropriate interactions and communication between law enforcement personnel, first responders, and individuals with disabilities and their families in emergency situations.

The Registry is to be a voluntary program under

the Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities. All information about routines, communication, other special needs, and contact information will be confidential and only given to government agencies and departments that employ first responders. After registration, each individual will be issued an ID card that may be carried by the person.

For more information, go to the 33rd Guam Legislature website and search for Bill 70-33. Stay tuned for more developments on this bill as it goes through committee.

# Think College!



## Self-Advocacy:

### Skill Training for Students Needing Accommodations

Guam CEDDERS invites you to learn more about self-advocacy and practice the skills to become a good self-advocate. This just might be a life changing event. We think you'll be glad you chose to come.

## FREE!

Attend all three sessions:

Saturday, May 2, 8:30am - 12:00pm

Saturday, May 9, 8:30am - 12:00pm

Saturday, May 16, 8:30am - 12:00pm

**Location:** GSAT, House 19, Dean Circle  
University of Guam

**Facilitators:**

Leah Rassier, Maria Bontogon, Lynn Tydingco

For more information and reservations,  
contact Ginger Porter at 735-2478

or email at [ginger.porter@guamcedders.org](mailto:ginger.porter@guamcedders.org).

**SiñA**  
Self-Advocates in Action



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# GSAT Program Helps Athlete Get His Game On By Carla Torres



Jude Ogo shows off his new sports wheelchair obtained through GSAT's Assistive Technology Reutilization Program.



Every now and then, the Guam System for Assistive Technology (GSAT) will receive assistive technology devices by way of donation. These devices become a part of GSAT's Lending Library (30 day loans) or Reutilization Program (open ended loans). Jude Ogo was a recent benefactor of the Guam System for Assistive Technology's (GSAT'S) Reutilization Program. Through the program Jude received a sports wheelchair on an open-ended loan which means Jude may use the wheelchair for as long as he needs it. The wheelchair has a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$1,995.00, but the open-ended loan was made available to Jude free of charge.

Jude loves to play basketball but has a hard time doing so in his standard wheelchair. The sports wheelchair Jude received has a lightweight, high-performing frame and an adjustable center of gravity

system built for maneuverability and efficiency Jude can get his basketball game on now!

The Guam Recycling & Equipment Exchange Service (GREET) is a free online and call-in system that may be a source for "previously-owned" assistive devices, usually available at a lower cost than buying new. It is available to people with disabilities, their families, friends, service providers, and other interested individuals who want to find, buy, sell, or donate previously owned assistive technology. GREET helps get used assistive technology devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, commodes, lifts, portable ramps, and other devices out of storage and garages and into the hands of people with disabilities who need them.

Buyers can view the listings and obtain contact information about the sellers at [www.gsatcedders.org](http://www.gsatcedders.org). Information may also be obtained by calling GSAT at 735-2490 (v) or 735-2491 (TTY) to find out what is available.

# Deaf Awareness Week

## SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

**MAY 1 - 3, 2015**

## May 1st, Friday, WAVE Hands

Meet at 5:15pm Tamuning Mayor 's Office  
(Tennis Court Sidewalk)

## May 2nd, Saturday, Guam Deaf Expo

Come and experience sign language culture, find local resources for Assistive technology for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Music with ASL, children stories & songs in ASL, Learn Signs for all ages!



**Where:** GCC, Student Center Building  
Student Lounge & Room 5108

**Time:** 10am – 2:00pm Only

## May 3rd, Sunday, Deaf Family Picnic & Sign Language Movie

**Where:** Adelup Park (Governor's Office)

**Time: 2:00pm LUNCH**

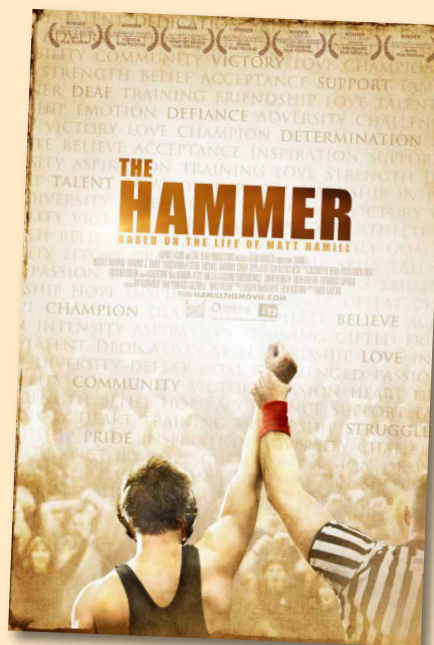
### Movie at Sunset:

## American Sign Language Movie “The Hammer”

Bring the family down for some fun!  
Don't forgot swim gear if you plan on swimming.  
ASL entertainment & ASL games, kids stories &  
songs with activities.  
Bring your chairs or blanket for movie at sunset.

Donations for food/Drinks are accepted. Help Setting up and  
Breaking down also would be appreciated. Recycle Cans &  
Bottles please!

Please note monetary donations for your menu items (Meats, drinks, can be given to Kirsten Bamba, email [kbmba2003@hotmail.com](mailto:kbmba2003@hotmail.com) or cell 689-0729 or Barbara Johnson, email [bjohnsongu@yahoo.com](mailto:bjohnsongu@yahoo.com) or cellphone 488-6011 text only.



## FY 2015 Guam Developmental Disabilities Council Meeting Schedule

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**Venue: GDDC Conference Room**

**Wednesday, May 20, 2015, 9:00am-10:30am**

**Wednesday, August 19, 2015, 9:00am-10:30am**

## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

**Venue: Pacific Star Hotel**

**Wednesday, June 10, 2015, 11:00am-2:00pm**

**Wednesday, September 9, 2015, 11:00am-2:00pm**



# ABLE ACT: National Legislation Supports Savings

By Ginger Porter



Do you want to Achieve a Better Life Experience (ABLE)? With the new ABLE Act, signed into law in December 2014, persons with disabilities and their families can now create tax savings accounts that protect eligibility status for Medicaid and other federal benefits.

The new "ABLE accounts" allow more individual choice and control over spending on qualified disability expenses and limited investment decisions. These accounts are intended to be easy to open and will be available on Guam. Final action by our government should make them available by July of this year.

Assets in an ABLE account and distribution from the account for qualifying expenses would be disregarded when determining eligibility for most federal means-tested benefits.

Here are some of the key characteristics of an ABLE account:

- An eligible individual may have **one ABLE account**.
- Any person may contribute to an ABLE account for an eligible person.
- Annual contributions may not exceed the gift-tax exemption (\$14,000 in 2015).
- An eligible individual is 1) a person who is under the Social Security disability, retirement, and survivors programs, **or** 2) who submits certification that meets the criteria for a disability certification. **An eligible individual's disability must have occurred before the age of 26.**
- The eligible individual who established the ABLE

account and who is owner of the account is the designated beneficiary.

- **Qualified disability expenses** are those made for the benefit of the designated beneficiary and related to his/her disability, including: **education, housing, transportation, employment training & support, assistive technology and personal support services, health, prevention and wellness, financial management and administrative services, legal fees, expenses for oversight and monitoring, funeral and burial expenses, and other expenses** upon approval.
- Earnings on the accounts are not taxable.
- Assets may be rolled over without penalty into another ABLE account.

If that is a fit for you, start saving and consider checking this out early this summer.



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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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**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](http://www.lawhelp.org)



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