

I Linå'la-ta OUR LIFE



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ADA Celebration Posters Featured in D.C.



Dr. Heidi San Nicolas (far right), Guam CEDDERS Director, presents Guam CEDDERS posters to representatives from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). Receiving the posters are: (L-R): Shakia Baskerville, MPH, Presidential Management Fellow, Office of External Affairs, Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Shia Byers, Summer Intern, American Association for People with Disabilities (AAPD); Andrew Morris, MPH, Policy Analyst, Office of the Commissioner, Administration on Disabilities, Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

Resource materials developed by Guam CEDDERS and funded by CEDDERS' Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) Core Grant were put on display at the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act Festival (ADA) held at the Smithsonian Museum of American History on July 24-26. Copies of the posters, featuring advocates on Guam, were also given to AIDD for display at the AIDD offices in Washington, DC. to celebrate the ADA.



Posters produced by Guam CEDDERS to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the ADA were on display at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. on July 24-26.

It Pays To Speak Up

By Evelyn Duenas



Evelyn Duenas

For the past couple of years, I have been trying to access the Lam Lam Trolley service, which travels from the Micronesia Mall to other shopping malls and Two Lovers' Point. It would be great to access transportation without having to make advance schedules. Buses with wi-fi onboard arrive conveniently at the Mall every 10 minutes, and fares are reasonably priced. Trolleys have indoor and outdoor seating for you to enjoy the scenery, and you can interact with the diverse local and tourist cultures. Who wouldn't want to ride the Trolley and get to their destination in 10-20 minutes!

So far, I have been unsuccessful. I still encounter barriers to the use of the Trolley service.

This past March, I asked for help to document the problem. Once again, I made an attempt to access the service from the Mall to Two Lovers' Point. I received the same response, "It is only for the public and tourists." The manager told me that I was to use the public transit services because "that is for persons with disabilities."

"But I am also the public," I responded. He didn't get it. He told me again, "The transit is there for a person with a disability. Our drivers are not trained and the lift can only be operated with management on site. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not apply to us."

I couldn't believe it. I knew that my rights were being violated. My note taker took everything down while I continued to ask for rides for an hour and a half. No bus was accessible, no driver knew how to operate the lifts, and lifts weren't operable. I called Lam Lam supervisors and was connected to transit. They still didn't get it. I wanted to ride the Trolley service to Two Lovers' Point.

With so many unsuccessful attempts, I decided to file a civil rights complaint through Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center (GLSC-DLC), our Advocacy Law Center. I believed that Lam Lam's bus service is a public transportation service and they must serve everyone, which includes individuals with disabilities.

GLSC-DLC agreed to take my case. After they researched the ADA regulations, they delivered a letter two days before the 25th Anniversary of the ADA, telling Lam Lam that since their service is public transportation, they were discriminating on the basis of disability and must come into compliance with the ADA. The letter also said that their purchase of 11 new trolleys in 2013, costing more than \$3 million, was unlawful, and that the profit from out-of-state tourists violates interstate commercial law.

This was good news! This means that everyone, including persons with disabilities, whether they are from Guam, Japan, the US, or other countries, can expect to have access to the Trolley service. Lam Lam responded that they are working on it, but did not offer a timeline, which is what I am looking for. GLSC-DLC told Lam Lam that "their company should take active efforts to make your other existing transportation service more accessible to persons with disabilities."

If that doesn't follow, the issue might have to go to the Department of Justice. The ball is now in Lam Lam's court. In the meantime, I am waiting to take a \$4 ride to Two Lovers' Point like everyone else.



Tavita Faasuumalie, shown above, points out dangerous barriers caused by route signage near the Bank of Guam.

In other access news, people can thank Tavita Faasuumalie for clearer pedestrian pathways in Hågatña. For most people, road signs and posts that are located on pedestrian pathways can be an annoyance, but as Tavita found out, they can be a danger and a barrier to persons with disabilities. In 2013, after a second encounter with a road sign that gave him a nasty gash requiring five stitches, he took his issue to GLSC-DLC. Speaking up for himself, he asked for legal assistance to remove the barriers to clear pedestrian access in and around central Hagåtña.

"I explained how we physically get hurt or injured from these poles, not only the one that cut my eye, but the ones that are in the middle of the sidewalks. For example, the one by the Bank of Guam on Route 4, also the two signs in front of the Hagåtña Library and heading up to Agana Heights. These are just some of many poles that we get injured from... I also mentioned the metals that stick up on the sidewalk where we have tripped and fallen."

If you check out today's environment, you will see that speaking up made a difference. Route and traffic signs have been moved and Hagåtña has improved pedestrian access for everyone. Thanks, Tavita!



Here is a prime example of improperly placed signage in our island's capital. Route signage approaching the Nieves Flores Library in Hågatña, which was placed in the middle of the pedestrian sidewalk, has since been moved.

PEP Hosts First Summer Camp



Parents Empowering Parents, also known as PEP, hosted its first summer camp on July 27-31. The **I CAN TOO Summer Camp** offered a wide range of activities for children with distinct abilities, their siblings, and non-disabled peers, in elementary to high school, for an inclusive learning experience. Topics included art expression, creative writing, music, science, and team building games. PEP is a non-profit organization comprised of parents and supporters of children with disabilities.

GDDC to Focus on Diversity

By Marie Libria



Marie Libria, Guam Developmental Disabilities Council (GDDC) Program Coordinator, attended the **Technical Assistance Institute** on July 23 in Reno, Nevada. Information received during the institute will be used in the planning and development process of the GDDC Five-Year State Plan for 2017-2021. The State Plan will have an emphasis on diversity, cultural competency, and targeted disparities of people with developmental disabilities who are unserved and/or underserved as required by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD).

(Left photo): Attending the Technical Assistance Institute were (L-R): Sudie Johnson, DC DD Council, Program Analyst; Luz Collazo, Puerto Rico DD Council, Analyst Planner; Marie Libria, Guam DD Council, Program Coordinator; and Shar'ron Williams, North Carolina DD Council, Business Services Coordinator.

Funding Opportunities Await

By Carla Torres

More often than not, funding for important, life-impacting things like assistive technology or home modifications to create accessibility for the recent onset of a physical disability can be hard to come by. The Guam System for Assistive Technology, better known in the community as "G-SAT," offers the community financial assistance in the form of low interest personal loans to help with these very causes.

For individuals with disabilities and their family members seeking funding for assistive technology, accessible vehicles, and home modifications, the Guam Options for Alternative Loans-Assistive Technology (GOAL-AT) Loan Program is a great option to consider.

GOAL-AT is a federally funded program that provides affordable financial loans to persons with disabilities and/ or authorized representatives 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 2.125%. When

insurance coverage is not available or when personal finances are tight, GOAL-AT is there to help. When one wants an opportunity to establish credit or needs help in rebuilding a negative credit history, the GOAL-AT Loan Program can also help do just that.

Many people with disabilities today are turning to the flexibility of self-employment and entrepreneurship to meet both their career aspirations and financial goals. GSAT offers another financial loan program with the same low interest rate of 2.125% for individuals with disabilities who aspire to become self-employed. This program, called the Get Guam Teleworking Loan Program (GGT), can provide funding assistance for equipment and supplies needed to run a

business.

Information and applications for the GOAL-AT and GGT loan programs may be found on the GSAT website at www.gsattedders.org, at the Bank of Guam locations (GOAL-AT only), or you can call the GSAT office at 735-2490/1. If you have any questions or need assistance completing the application, the GSAT staff will gladly answer your questions and guide you in the loan application process. (See advertisement on back page.)



Electronic Magnifier



Wheelchair



Speech Communication Device

The GOAL-AT and GGT Loan Programs can help people with disabilities acquire needed assistive technology.

ADA Transportation News

By Ginger Porter

Thinking of flying sometime this year? There are some new accessibility rules coming from the Department of Transportation that will help ease your access.

In a new ruling, airports will be required to provide high contrast captioning on audio-visual displays at ticket counters, gates, lounges and common passenger areas. This is great news for people with hearing loss and/or low vision.

There is also great news if you are a wheelchair passenger headed for Rota or Saipan.

Mechanical lifts for enplaning and deplaning passengers with mobility impairments will be required where level entry loading bridges are not available.

Service animals in our community are few and far between. However, if you are traveling with a service animal, airlines are required to make at least one sterile service animal relief area available on their flights.

The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) is also launching the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center later this year, providing technical assistance to address the needs of seniors and people with disabilities. Late this summer, FTA will also issue guidance on transit-related ADA requirements for the transit industry to provide guidance on how to comply with ADA regulations.

Finally, the Federal Highway Administration is updating a Questions and Answers document related to accessibility issues of ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a great resource for everyone!

Organizations Collaborate on Communication Film

By Sean Lizama

Guam CEDDERS, Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center, and SiñA: Self-Advocates in Action recently collaborated to

produce a video on communicating with individuals with disabilities entitled: *Ta Fan Acompreni: Communicating with People with Disabilities*. *Ta Fan Acompreni*, which means "to understand each other" in Chamorro, features strategies to facilitate communication with individuals with disabilities.

The video, which is still in production, will be used as a training and education tool to help the general public communicate better with individuals with disabilities. For more information on this video please contact Sherry Guerrero, Guam CEDDERS Grant Assistant at 735-2456.



Left to right: Kirsten Bamba, Sign Language Interpreter; Erlinda Tydingco, SiñA President; Barbara Johnson, Self-Advocate; David De Leon, Production Assistant; Glen Paulino, Caregiver; Moses Puas (seated), Self-Advocate; Andrew Tydingco, SiñA Vice President; and James Davis, Videographer take time out from shooting scenes at the Micronesia Mall on July 1.

Summer 2015 National Disabilities Conferences

Estorian Lynn Tydingco

The summer of 2015 was a most memorable one, with celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act and my attendance and participation at the Nevada Disabilities Conference and the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD).

As the Chairperson of the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council (GDDC), I represented Guam at the conference and training. Along with Chairpersons from the 50 states and 6 territories, we participated in a Chairperson's Leadership Training. We also had the opportunity to network and share councils' best practices.

Keynote Speaker, Administration on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Commissioner, Aaron Bishop, emphasized the importance of self-advocacy and diversity.

In July 2014, I was nominated by the GDDC Executive Director Rosanne Ada and was one of twelve leaders that was inducted into the newly established National Leadership Circle of Self-Advocates. The leadership circle recognized the dedication and accomplishments of the leaders in the Self-Advocacy movement nationwide. The leadership circle's first task was to develop an electronic book on self-advocacy. The ebook, "The Art of Impact," debuted on July 21, 2015. The ebook is intended to be a living resource for self-advocacy and best practices. The ebook will be constantly updated by NACDD.

NACDD Chief Executive Officer Donna Meltzer asked me to be one of five panelists from the leadership circle to share our self-advocacy story. I spoke of my personal self-advocacy story. I also described how by bonding with my peers and establishing a great rapport networking and the collaborative efforts of the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council, University of Guam CEDDERS, Guam Legal Services Corps, the Department of Integrated Services for Individuals With Disabilities, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, service providers, and other disability organizations, we started Guam's first cross disability organization, Self-Advocates in Action in 2009. It was an honor to represent Guam and be recognized as a role model leader and cross disability self-advocacy organization on the national level.



Erlinda Tydingco (right), SiñA President, presented a Guam cultural necklace design and made by Stephen Madarang, Self-Advocate Carver, Bubu Designs to Donna Meltzer (left), National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, Chief Executive Officer.



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Alternative formats (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tapes, or electronic file) of *I Linå'lä-ta* will be made available upon request. Please contact Coleen Dela Cruz at 735-2477 (v) or 734-6531 (TTY), or email: coleen.delacruz@guamcedders.org for more information.

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*Conditions may apply.