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In this issue:

The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) . . Page 2

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) . . Page 3

The Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) . . . Pages 4 & 5

The Assistive Technology Center (AT Center) Page 6

The Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) Page 7

The Autism Society of the CNMI (ASCNMI) Page 8

“DISABILITY WATCH”

We, the CNMI Tri-Agency, consisting of the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI), the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD), and the University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) of the Northern Marianas College, along with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), have collaborated to bring you this first volume of our newsletter “Disability Watch.”

This newsletter was created by our organizations because we saw a need for more information dissemination about disabilities and issues surrounding the needs of people with disabilities in the CNMI. This will be a quarterly newsletter and we encourage any organization or group that would like to inquire, collaborate and or share information about or related to disabilities in the CNMI to contact any of our agencies for more information. You may contact Les Ogumoro-Uludong of NMC-UCEDD at 237-6810/08, Lillian Ada of CDD at 664-7001, Tom Thornburgh of NMPASI at 235-7273/4, or Maggie Reyes of OVR at 322-6537/8. For TTY you can call NMPASI at 235-7278, and the fax number is 235-7275.

We hope that this newsletter will serve as an important informational tool that will help our small community stay connected and informed. Whether you are a person with a disability, family member, or simply someone who is interested in disability-related issues, please feel free to pick up a free copy of Disability Watch from any of our agencies or online at www.nmpasi.org.



University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

UCEDDs were created in 1963 with the enactment of Public Law 88-164 to serve people with intellectual disabilities through advocacy, capacity-building, and systemic change efforts. Currently authorized under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights of 2000 (PL 106-402), UCEDDs are now a resource for Americans with a wide range of disabilities. The UCEDDs receive their core funding from the

Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) within the US Department of Health and Human Services. The UCEDD network has grown to include 67 Centers—at least one in every US state and territory. Each UCEDD is affiliated with a major research university and serves as a resource for all people in the areas of education, research, and service relative to the needs of people with development disabilities.

Program Objectives:

To advise federal, state and local policymakers on strategies to promote:

- *Self Determination*
- *Independence*
- *Productivity*
- *Common integration of people with Developmental Disabilities.*

Northern Marianas College - UCEDD



NMC—UCEDD is under the Pacific Basin University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities through the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The NMC—UCEDD Program was established in 1993 and continues to serve the population of the CNMI.

The NMC UCEDD Program is committed to the development of culturally complimentary outcomes while promoting equal opportunity, independence, productivity, promoting self-determination, and supporting an improved quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in their villages, the Commonwealth, and the world around us.

Contact Information:

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Office of the Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)



Overview:

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is primarily concerned with the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. OVR is an agency created under a federal/state partnership to provide and facilitate direct services to people with disabilities in order to promote skill development/acquisition resulting in competitive and integrated employment thereby enhancing one's independence. OVR is located within the Office of the Governor.

Type of Service or Program:

- * Assessment to determine eligibility or vocational rehabilitation needs
- * Vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance
- * Information and referral
- * Job search, placement assistance, and job retention services
- * Supported employment services (e.g., job coach and personal assistance while consumer is on-the job)
- * Rehabilitation technology

- * School-to-work transition services (e.g., pre-employment transition services)
- * Work experience training
- * On-the-job training
- * And other goods and services determined necessary for the consumer to achieve an employment outcome.

OVR Mission:

To increase employment and promote independence among eligible individuals with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Purpose of Program:

To extend rehabilitation services to eligible consumers with disabilities to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment consistent with one's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.



VENDORS NEEDED!

OVR is looking to expand its business partnership with employers in the private or public sectors to provide work experience and on-the-job trainings to OVR's consumers in preparation for employment. Benefits of such partnerships:

- 100% reimbursement on wages to employers who participate in OJT
- Diverse work groups can create better solutions to business challenges
- Good public relations – Employees with disabilities can relate better to customers with disabilities
- It's ability – not disability – that counts!

For more information, call Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors Rose, Jane, or Colleen at 322-6537/8.

OVR is seeking qualified vendors (individual or organization-based) to provide supported employment services (e.g., job coaching and personal assistance services) to our consumers with most significant disabilities in order to participate in training and employment-related activities.

If interested, please contact Ms. Lourdes Atalig at 322-6537/8 for more information.

Job coaches assist consumers to acquire the necessary skills on the job and increase the likelihood that the job will continue when the OJT is successfully completed.



CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities

Telephone: 664-7000/1

Self-Advocacy & Emergency & Disaster Preparedness Training on Leadership Skills

1) Knowing Yourself; 2) Being Part of Your Community; 3) Communication; 4) Problem Solving; 5) Rights & Responsibilities; 6) How To Be A Strong Self-Advocate; 7) Leadership



Training was conducted by the DD Network on SELF-ADVOCACY on Leadership Skills. Follow-up activities were conducted to measure skill development; & EMERGENCY & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS on September 23, 2014. A total of eleven (11) self-advocates were able to build their knowledge and skills in advocating for themselves.



Training was conducted by the DD Network and co-presented by the VOICES of the CNMI, Tinian Chapter members on SELF-ADVOCACY on Leadership Skills. Follow-up activities were conducted to measure skill development & EMERGENCY & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TRAINING on July 21-22, 2014 on Tinian. A total of five (5) self-advocates were able to build their knowledge and skills in advocating for themselves and conduct presentations to other advocates.



Tinian VOICES of the CNMI 2014 Second Annual Summer Camp

The VOICES of the CNMI, Tinian Chapter held their 2nd Annual Summer Camp on July 20, 2014 from 9am to 4pm at Kammer Beach on Tinian. IWD's, families, and friends spend their day filled with fun activities for both young and old. Activities include: dance contest, musical chairs, egg toss, water balloon toss, etc. Prizes were given to all participants.



Training was conducted by the DD Network on SELF-ADVOCACY on Leadership Skills:

Follow-up activities were conducted to measure skill development & EMERGENCY & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TRAINING on October 19, 20 & 21, 2014 at Bay View Hotel on Rota. A total of six (6) self-advocates were able to build their knowledge and skills in advocating for themselves.



Employer Recognition Ceremony – On October 23, 2014 at the Kanoa Resort in Saipan, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Rehabilitation Council, together with its partner agencies, recognized several Saipan employers who provided successful work experience training, on-the-job training and permanent placement in fiscal years 2013 and 2014 to OVR's consumers resulting in the achievement of their employment goal.

Individuals pictured above with their certificates of appreciation represent the following employers or companies honored: CNMI House of Representatives, Department of Public Works, Herman's Bakery, Songchu Corporation, Carolinian Affairs Office, Department of Commerce, Department of Public Works, G4S, Marianas Resort, Pacific Amusement Inc., Star Sands Plaza, Saipan Sea Ventures Inc., Strategic Game Solutions Inc., T Galleria, and Torres Brothers, LLC. Tinian employers recognized at a separate event included the M.V. Reyes Catering and Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino. These events were in celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)



The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority (COTA) was also honored during the Employer Recognition Ceremony on October 23, 2014 in celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) at Saipan's Kanoa Resort. COTA was recognized for promoting the employment of qualified individuals with disabilities. Shown in photo, from left to right: Pamela C. Sablan (Chairperson, State Rehabilitation Council), Thomas J. Camacho (Special Assistant, COTA), Ivan Blanco (representing the Governor's Office), and Arlene A. Yamagata (Director, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation).



CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Our Mission is to provide and demonstrate how Assistive Technology can transform limitations into opportunities. We work toward this mission by providing access to Assistive Technology and related services that enable individuals with disabilities to achieve productivity, independence, and success according to their needs and interest.

What is an Assistive Technology Device?

Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functionally capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Resource and Referral

Not sure where to start? Let us put our research and expertise to work to help guide you to the resources you need. Information and catalogues are available on a wide variety of Assistive Technology products and services.

Device Loan & Demonstration Program

Before you purchase Assistive Technology of any kind, try it out first. We can lend you what you are looking for to ensure that it is the right solution for your specific needs.

Other Resources Funding

Trankilu Alternative Financing Program, (Assistive Technology Low Interest Loan Fund). Loans under the program are administered by a community base organization (CBO) and underwritten by Bank of Saipan. The Loan Program is available to qualified CNMI Residents with disability or a non-resident whose child with disability is a U.S. citizen, or family members, advocates, employers or authorized representative designated by an individual with disability, who intends to use the loan to purchase assistive technology equipment or services to be used by the individual or child with disability. Applicants may apply at Bank of Saipan, branches in Saipan, Tinian or Rota.

What is an Assistive Technology Service?

An assistive technology service is any service that directly assists a person with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.



Assistive Technology Device and Equipment

Hardware/Software, Computer Access, Educational Aids, Vision Aids, Communication Devices, Environmental Control Devices, Hearing Equipment, Adaptive Toys, Mobility Equipment, Daily Living Aids.

Device Reutilization Program

The goal of the CNMI Assistive Technology Exchange is to help get Assistive Technology Devices that are no longer being used into the hands of people who need and can benefit from them. The program brings together CNMI consumers and families who are buyers and/or sellers of AT together with the goal of increasing acquisition of AT.

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NMPASI

Training Statistics (1st Quarter)

During October 2015 in recognition of Behavioral Health Awareness month, NMPASI staff presented information about Bullying, Substance Abuse and Depression to 765 students at Saipan Southern High School, Kagman High School, Marianas High School, Tinian Jr/Sr High School. the month of December 2014, presentations about Disability Awareness and Inclusion were made to a total of 389 students from; Tanapag Middle School, Garapan Elementary School, and MHS.

Would you like us to present to your school or organization on select topics?

Contact NMPASI at 235-7273 or visit us online at nmpasi.org

May is Older Americans Awareness Month

Greg Borja, Projects Specialist-NMPASI

There are over 5,700 Man'Amko living in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and of that number 1,124 (19%) are living with disabilities. Historically, in the United States people with disabilities have been subjected of abuse and neglect in our communities. In 1995 the CNMI government found that it was in our best interests to have statutory protections of the mental and physical health of the Man'Amko (PL 9-21). This law was created to ensure abused Man'Amko receive proper emotional, mental and physical care, and others to report incidents of physical abuse and/or mental cruelty against the Man'Amko.

May's national awareness month theme is "Get into the Act", a time to recognize older Americans for their contributions to the nation. This is a time in which we can sit with our elders to learn from their experiences as they share their knowledge. I believe that we as a Commonwealth must protect our past to ensure a bright future.

NMPASI Does Adventure Education!

We have certified Rugged Outdoor Physical Experiential Systems (ROPES) trainers with more than 20 years of experience between them. In the CNMI, these inclusive ROPES games are known locally as Adventure Education. This change of name is at the request of Community Guidance Center (CGC). As you may know, the Micronesian islands are known for a high rate of suicide, and being sensitive to that, we at NMPASI in collaboration with the CGC have adopted this name change to be sensitive to this serious issue in our islands. Some survivors of suicide end up with disabilities that will last the rest of their lifetime.

NMPASI personnel use these physical games to teach Teamwork, Collaboration, Inclusion, Leadership Skills, Trust, Critical Thinking Skills, Communication, and many other skills to help bring all our people together including our people with disabilities in all aspects of our CNMI community. For more on Adventure Education please do not hesitate to contact NMPASI at the following:

Telephone: (670) 235-7273/4; Fax: (670) 235-7275; TTY: (670) 235-7278; or online at: www.nmpasi.org

Autism Around the World and in the CNMI



**Autism
Society
of
CNMI**

"Offering support and assistance to friends and families of children with autism in the CNMI"

The eighth annual World Autism Awareness Day is April 2, 2015.

Every year, autism organizations around the world celebrate the day with unique fundraising and awareness-raising events. How will you celebrate? Use #LIUB to share your experience across social media and help light the world up blue this April!

What is Autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communications and repetitive behaviors.

In the CNMI, the Autism

Society of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (ASCNMI) was a parent support group created in the nineties to help parents come together to learn and grow with Autism. Since 2008, the CNMI Tri-Agencies which consist of The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities(CDD), The University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities(UCEDD), and The Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) have worked closely with the ASCNMI to help spread awareness of Autism in the CNMI through Quiz Nite, Hot Dog Walk a.k.a. Family Fun Day, trainings for parents and / or teachers, radio interviews, articles in our papers and on

television with the help the John Gonzales Show. For more on ASCNMI visit www.nmpasi.org online for ASCNMI Page.

Though it is true that we, the parents, members of ASCNMI, the disability community, and those with autism have done a lot of work to spread the awareness, there is still a lot to do to ensure our people in the CNMI are aware of autism, be sensitive to their needs and include people with autism in every facet of life here in our beautiful Marianas.

This is why we ask everyone in the CNMI to help us this April 2015 to celebrate Autism Awareness Month in the CNMI.

*Join us this April
in the CNMI to
Light Up Blue!*

ASCNMI CONTACT INFORMATION:

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