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## Student Safety First

June 2015 is National Student Safety Month. This is a time in which we look at the overall safety of our students when it comes to planning for Natural Disasters, Technology, Infrastructure, Man-made Disasters, Biological Awareness, Physical well-being, and Student culture and climate. We must also take into

consideration our students with disabilities when developing our plans to address these areas.

Bullying, drugs or violent behavior are in the spotlight when it comes to student safety in terms of their culture and climate. Bullying is when someone is repeatedly mistreated physically, verbally, and/or socially, because of

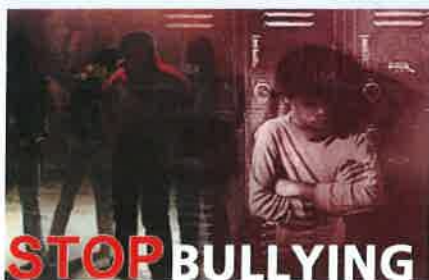
differences they may have from others. Other forms of bullying include the use of technology to verbally or socially attack someone known as Cyber-Bullying. Students who are bullied may show signs of

poor school performance as a result of trying to avoid being the target of bullying. The National Bullying Prevention

Center reports that researchers discovered that students with disabilities were more worried about school safety and being injured or harassed by other peers compared to students without a disability. One study shows that 60 percent of students with disabilities report being bullied regularly compared with 25 percent of all students.



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**For more information on Bullying and/or Substance Abuse, please contact the helpful people at the Community Guidance Center (323-6560/1) or contact us at NMPASI (235-7273/4).**

## NMPASI Training Statistics (2nd Quarter)

In January and February 2015, NMPASI staff presented on issues surrounding people with disabilities to 126 members from our community including Division of Youth Services staff, PSS/NMC Counselors and Oleai Elementary School 6th graders.

Topics covered included: Rights for Children with disabilities, NMPASI Services, and Inclusion through Adventure Education.

During March as activities for Development Disabilities Awareness Month, NMPASI presented information about Disabilities and Bullying to 1,020 students from Tinian Elementary School, San Vicente Elementary School, San Antonio Middle School, and Rita H. Inos Jr/Sr High School.

**Would you like us to present to your school or organization on select topics? Contact NMPASI at 235-7273/4.**



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The consequences associated with students who are subjected to bullying may lead to increased risk of mental health problems, and are likely to become depressed and have low self-esteem. Others who experience bullying may resort to substance abuse to cope with their trauma. Others still engage in violent behavior or become bullies themselves.

As a community we must come together to prevent harm from coming to our youth as we work toward the safety of all our students. This June stand up and speak out against bullying in order to end the climate of the Bystander Bully (those who see it, but do nothing to stop it) and support programs that aim to prevent substance abuse in our youth.

## NMC UCEDD Offers Basic American Sign Language Classes

As part of University of Hawaii Pacific Basin University Centers, the Northern Marianas College's UCEDD has successfully completed two (2) cohorts in Basic American Sign Language (ASL) classes.

The class was offered due to requests made within the community and public school systems to have individuals trained

in "signing." As of today, 40 individuals have completed the said course, stated Acting UCEDD Director, Floyd Masga.



Furthermore, ASL participant, Teresa Sharry also stated that she has learned so much and other students have expressed they have learned a lot and enjoyed the class. Teresa also indicated that the class wishes that intermediate level be offered so we can learn more in order to help our deaf island community.



We hope to offer more classes in the near future as well as offer upper level courses within ASL, stated Floyd Masga.

# A Brief Overview on the Independent Living Movement

*"The history of the independent living movement comes from this philosophy: People with disabilities have the same rights, options and choices as anybody else." (www.mtstcil.org)*

On May 29, 2015, the CNMI's Center for Living Independently (CLI) celebrated its 10th Anniversary of dedicated service to individuals with disabilities in the CNMI. In order to fully understand and appreciate the Independent Living concept, it is important to have a basic historical knowledge of the movement's trials and tribulations.

Folks within the disability arena claimed that the Independent Living movement started as far back as the 1850's when folks with hearing impairments started organizing locally into groups to advocate for their rights. These groups eventually merged into the National Association of the Deaf in 1880. In the 1940's, groups such as the National Federation of the Blind, the American Federation of the Physically Handicapped, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and The League of the Physically Handicapped were also formed thus advancing the advocacy network for folks with special needs. These groups' shared purpose, regardless of the different types of disabilities they represent, was to eliminate barriers to their much needed services. This was done by way of educating the community

about disability issues in order to influence legal policies for better and accessible services. More groups were formed later through the years with the same intent and purpose – a better life! Nothing more, nothing less!



The Independent Living movement gained national notoriety in 1967 at the University of California in Berkeley when a student with a significant disability by the name of Ed Roberts and his colleagues started protesting and advocating for equal access and comprehensive services for students with disabilities. They were known as the "Rolling Quads", and their protest was significant for

it brought national attention to the independent living movement and their struggles for equal treatment and lack of services. These individuals were housed together in an infirmary, and as a direct result they developed a communal sense based on common struggles. Along with this new sense of community was the realization that they were an "oppressed minority" rather than "patients" in an infirmary. This newly realized view was and is still significant for it provided a legitimate shift in policies and services from the "medical model" to a "community based model". Simply put, the idea is that people with disabilities were better off living in the community rather than in institutions across the country.

Finally in 1972, with a funding of \$40,000 from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), Ed Roberts and the "Rolling Quads" established the first Center for Independent Living in the nation in Berkeley, California. The center's purpose was to provide independent living skills training to people with disabilities so they can live independently out in the

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# CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities Assistive Technology Programs

## Assistive Technology Trainings and Presentations

### Basic Computer Literacy Skills



AT staff one-on-one training with Center for Living Independently member on basic computer literacy skills. Trainings are provided for independent knowledge and skills and also geared towards future employment goals.

### Word Processing



CLI member develops skills in creating basic Word Processing and Power Point documents as part of the training activity.



### Introduction to Basic Functions of the Ipad and Apps



AT staff provides training to 9 Kagman High SpEd students in Ms. Anna Yamada's class. Training is provided for students to utilize apps - such as ASLT, Bizboard, Prologue2go and the like - for classroom use and learning.

### Presentations



AT Staff provides a presentation on the overview of AT Programs and Services to Rota High School students. Presentation is provided for students as an outreach and informational tool.

For more information please contact the Assistive Technology Program at 664-7003, TTY 664-7005 or email [rdiaz.cnmicdd@gmail.com](mailto:rdiaz.cnmicdd@gmail.com). Located in Capitol Hill Bldg. 1310.

## OVR Transition Students Able To Keep Their ATs

With understanding and agreement between the OVR and the PSS-SPED, OVR-eligible transition students in the high school may be able to take with them their school-purchased assistive technology once they successfully transition to the next phase of their adult life. OVR and PSS-SPED work together to negotiate the depreciated value of the assistive technology and then the former purchases it from the school to be used by the consumer to prepare him/her for employment, continued education, and/or independent living.

# The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority (COTA)



COTA was established in May 2011 when then Governor Benigno Fitial signed Public Law 17-43. COTA was charged with developing, establishing and overseeing a transportation system for the Commonwealth. It envisions public transportation

as a vital link to education, employment, healthcare and other destinations.

COTA's mission is to provide reliable, safe and comfortable public transportation service that is cost effective, reduces energy consumption and contributes to the cultural and economic betterment of its residents. It currently provides paratransit services at a reduced fare to persons with disabilities and older adults.

Paratransit service, referred to as the **Call-a-Ride** program, also serves the rest of the community.

In 2013, COTA's Call-a-Ride Saipan (CAR-S) recorded 3,343 segments and 7,504 in 2014.

## Public Transit Services Today and Visions for the Future



**Call-a-Ride** service is performed with 3-gasoline engine, 8-passenger accessible vans. COTA is

in the process of expanding with the addition of four accessible vans by early summer 2015. The new vans are capable of transporting more passengers and are more environmentally friendly than the ones currently in operation. With the new vans, COTA capacity will increase by over 200%.

The 2015 Ford Transit Vans are capable of transporting seven passengers plus two wheelchair riders and a driver!

We are excitedly looking forward to the improvements.



### Office of the Vocational Rehabilitation Consumer Success Story - Jacklyn Fejeran

*Office of Vocational Rehabilitation helped me in so many ways. They helped me find the best job for me and also helped me become more independent. They provided me adequate transportation to and from work - all paid by OVR. OVR's services have really changed my life. I am now on a permanent full-time status at my job - thanks to OVR's help. The process is not really a lengthy one and you will see immediate results in finding a job. I participated in OVR's On-The-Job Training (OJT) program for six months and it gave me experience I need to be a full time worker at a popular retail tourist-orientated company. OVR has put my life back on track and I am grateful for OVR's services and the help they provided me. I tried getting a job on my own, but having experienced something which most ordinary people do not understand my disability, it caused me to lose my previous job that I found on my own. However, from this experience I learned that you should never give up and continue to pursue your dream. Through the interventions and guidance from helpful individuals including VR counselor, Jane Tudela, she taught me that perseverance is the key to success.*

*I appreciated all the assistance provided by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. In addition, I would like to thank my supervisors and family and friends in cheering me all the way.*

# Ayuda Network, Inc.

## Commonwealth Respite Service Program

Ayuda Network Inc./Commonwealth Respite Care Program in partnership with Northern Marianas College; Community Development Institute, Area Health Education Center and the University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities completed Fundamentals in Care Giving.



Participants pictured with instructors: Clarissa Adlawan; Lani Mae U. Diaz; Isabelita Fernandez; Lisa Hacskaylo; Yeldez Javier; Rebecca Manalo; Mary Ann Ondra; Joanne Ordone; Guadalupe Borja-Robinson; Elphidia Sablan; Chona Soriano; Edward Yanoria; Monica S. Manalo.  
Instructors: Rosa M. Tudela, RN and Johnny S. Aldan, RN

NMC-UCEDD/CDI/AHEC are collaborating on courses for the same training and follow-up courses for family caregivers, partner agencies, stakeholders, and students interested in building their capacity to provide respite care for the CNMI.

The said training is in response to the growing need of qualified caregivers in the Commonwealth - caregivers that can provide relief to family members in order to complete simple tasks such as paying bills or full filling personal needs. (Diana T. Camacho,

Director, Ayuda Network Inc.). The said training is a two-part training program involving the fundamentals of Caregiving and meeting the needs of developmental disabilities as well as Aging and physical disabilities. (Floyd Masga, Acting CDI Director). ANI/CRSP and

**For information on the said Caregiver Training classes, please call Ayuda Network Inc. at 322-7469 or email: [ayudanet@ayuda-cnmi.org](mailto:ayudanet@ayuda-cnmi.org) or [crsp.ayudanet@gmail.com](mailto:crsp.ayudanet@gmail.com).**

*Funding for the Commonwealth Respite Service Program is made possible by local appropriation through PL: 18-66 to the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities.*

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community. This prompted the federal government in 1978 to amend the Rehabilitation Act to include Title VII, which for the very first time secured and provided funding for the independent living network. Today there are over 600 centers throughout the nation, including CNMI's very own center. These centers provide an array of services for folks with special needs. These services are not limited to the core services, which are peer counseling, advocacy services, independent living skills training, and information and referral.

CNMI's own center wasn't established until decades later

in 2005 through sheer hard work and support from individuals within the local and federal government and members of our island community. The CNMI's Center for Living Independently, or CLI as referred to locally, continues to thrive on endless support from volunteers and members from both the private and government sectors despite limited funds and manpower. The center's two lone personnel along with volunteers from the Independent Living Group (ILG) are working very hard to meet the needs of our residents with special needs. The Independent Living movement continues to be an endless struggle for basic independent living rights. One way to insure continued positive

outcome for our people with disabilities is to keep our island community members informed and aware of the movement's ongoing challenges. We might have won some battles but the war is far from over, so, in other words, hunker down and pick your battles.

Congratulations CNMI to another decade of raising independence in the CNMI!!

**For more information on independent living issues, please contact the Center for Living Independently directly at (670) 322-4303, or the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. at (670) 235-7273/4 or [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org)**

# CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities

## FY 2014 - FY 2015

The month of March marked the celebration of “National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness” to recognize the valuable contributions of citizens with disabilities to our communities. The DD Network and Partners collaborated to coordinate and conduct trainings, outreach, supporting and educating communities in the following areas of emphasis:

### EMPLOYMENT

The DD Network & Partners collaborated during the 2014 National Disability Employment Awareness Month and 2015 National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and conducted trainings on WORKFORCE L.I.F.E. and BEING WORKFORCE READY: Developing Personal & Leadership Skills. The training was designed and developed for participants to build traits and skills so that they can become aware, ready and able to perform general tasks as needed in entry-level positions. Training was conducted by NMC-UCEDD/CDI on TINIAN, October 16, 2014 & March 11, 2015 to fifteen (15) self-advocates & sixteen (16) employers; ROTA; October 22, 2014 to five (5) self-advocates and one (1) family member; & SAIPAN; March 11, 2015, to eighteen (18) Special Education High Schools students – seven (7) teachers & March 20, 2015; to twenty-one (21) Special Education High School students & one (1) teacher.



### SELF-ADVOCACY

The DD Network & Partners collaborated during the 2014 National Disability Employment Awareness Month & 2015 National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and conducted SELF-ADVOCACY Training on “Knowing Your Rights” – “Leadership Skills” - & Best Practice. Training was conducted by DD Network during the 2014 NDEAM in October. Ms. Monika H. Diaz & Jan Barcinas, members of Tinian VOICES of the CNMI conducted training during 2015 National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March on TINIAN on October 17, 2014 & March 13, 2015 to eighteen (18) self-advocates; and ROTA on October 20, 2014 and April 21, 2015 to twelve (12) self-advocates, two (2) family members, & one (1) SpED teacher; & SAIPAN on March 05, 2015, to twenty-three (23) self-advocates.



### TRANSPORTATION

The DD Network & Partners collaborated during the 2014 National Disability Employment Awareness Month & 2015 National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month to conduct DD Council's Needs Assessment on Transportation on TINIAN: October 15, 2014 - collected eight (8) surveys from self-advocates and family members; Rota: October 20, 2014- collected twenty-five (25) surveys from employers, self-advocates and family members.



### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The DD Network & Partners collaborated during the 2014 National Disability Employment Awareness Month & 2015 National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month to conduct presentations on Emergency & Disaster Preparedness on how individuals with developmental disabilities and their families have access to emergency and disaster preparedness information so they may be well informed and prepared in the event of a disaster. Training was conducted by the DD Network on TINIAN: October 16, 2014 to five (5) self-advocates; ROTA: October 20, 2014 to four (4) self-advocates and two (2) family members; SAIPAN: March 6, 2015 to seventeen (17) self-advocates.



# Icehole Zombies

SOME years ago the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a graphic novel, "Preparedness 101: Zombie Apocalypse," providing tips to survive a zombie invasion as a "fun new way of teaching the importance of emergency preparedness."

The CDC goes on to summarize cultural references to a zombie apocalypse. "It uses these to underscore the value of laying in water, food, medical supplies, and other necessities in preparation for any and all potential disasters, be they hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, floods," or...hordes of zombies?

Though well-intended, the CDC's depiction of a zombie apocalypse as a metaphor for the real and very serious nature of deadly epidemics initially struck me as more of a distraction that somewhat trivialized the intent. But, more recently it occurs to me that perhaps sensationalizing (as with a typical Hollywood depiction) the onslaught of a zombie virus in warp-speed has in fact served to desensitize us from the all-too-real, slow-creeping epidemic of actual zombies who walk among us today. Hear me out.

I really don't think it's much of a stretch to compare the pale clusters of jacked-up "ice-heads" in our community with the hordes of walking dead zombies made popular in film. Admittedly, I really don't understand the biological effects of meth on a person's brain, but I picture the sight of dripping gasoline on Styrofoam where it literally burns/melts holes upon contact. Hence "Icehole" (as coined by one of my brothers) which, coincidentally, rhymes with

another word that I'd like to but can't use here. Ultimately, we're talking about, "mindless, unthinking henchmen under the spell of an evil force" with both being generally "hostile to human life while engaging in a general assault on civilization."

Mind you, I believe whole-heartedly that recovery is possible for meth addiction and, unlike the zombie virus, can be mitigated without a bullet to the head. But, for anyone



actively using and refusing to seek help, I'd just as soon see him wallow in some deep, dark hole of despair never to be seen or heard from again — alas the beast inevitably comes out to eat. I mean, for a fix, these Iceholes will rob and beat-up their own Mothers (or worse, their Grandmothers) for God's sake. Recently, I've heard of young children being pushed by their own Icehole relatives to peddle the stuff for them. Even worse than that, I heard from someone who knows that a child of a mere fifteen years old is a known user in the community...our community.

Of course, we know with some certainty that punitive measures to combat addictions are less likely to yield any genuine, positive outcomes as say, a proper treatment plan (i.e., Rehabilitation). So

despite my visceral aversion to Iceholes, I am not completely without empathy. You see, "(using), once a habit becomes an obsession, a true insanity that condemns people to (use) against their will."

Sadly, we also know that drug use "can sometimes give rise to symptoms that, over time, lead to a diagnosis of mental illness" though "it is dangerous to conclude that drug use caused a mental illness" (Dr. Porteus). The point being that the lines between mental illness and drug addiction are sometimes blurred; in fact, "research suggests at least a 60 percent rate for co-existing disorders in treatment programs. Professions have started to include

substance abuse counselor training with mental health competencies, and mental health training with substance abuse competencies" (NAMI-YOLO).

On a personal note, I've had to make a concerted effort to distance myself from or rather cut certain people out of my life due to their involvement with Ice. It's really a sad occasion when you have to tell someone you are close with or care about that he/she is

not allowed to come to your house anymore; unfortunately (especially in the CNMI), the options are slim. And, short of praying for some divine intervention, that's all I know to do in order to keep my kids safe — I don't think I need to elaborate on the kinds of criminal atrocities being committed at the hands of these Iceholes.

Make no mistake. Our civil island-society is under attack and we are at war — World War IZ: The Rise and Fall of the Icehole Zombies.

**For more, please feel free to contact the NMPASI Office at 235-7273/4 (tel) / 235-7275 (fax/tty) or via the internet at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org).**

**Also, our Governor has proclaimed May 17-23, 2015 as Prevention Awareness Week. For more information on what you can do to assist in efforts to prevent addictions, please call CGC at 323-6560/61.**

*The writer (Jim Rayphand) is the Executive Director of Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc.*