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Disability Partners Discuss iCanConnect The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program Program Updates



Representatives from various DNP agencies or organizations are shown in this group photo after a productive meeting regarding the CNMI's iCanConnect Program on September 20, 2018. Seated from left to right are: OVR Counselor Shana Iguel, ILOB Case Worker Assistant Ellena Sutton, Cathy Kirscher of the Helen Keller National Center in San Diego, CA, OVR Counselor Jane Tudela and Acting Director for Learning Supports Services Kaelani Demapan. Standing from left to right are: OVR Administrative Assistant Elvira Seman, WIA Federal Program Coordinator and SRC Interim Chairperson Frances Torres, OVR Director Arlene Yamagata, AT Program Coordinator Raymond Diaz, CLI Executive Director Susan Satur, UCEDD Program Manager Jennifer Castro, and DSS Counselor Lucille Deleon Guerrero.

On September 20, 2018, the Disability Network Partners, or DNP, met with Cathy Kirscher of the Helen Keller National Center of San Diego, CA at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to discuss updates regarding the CNMI's iCanConnect Program. This is Kirscher's second visit to the islands.

The DNP is comprised of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/ Independent Living Older Blind Program, Assistive Technology Program/Council on Developmental Disabilities, Northern Marianas College (University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Disability Supports Services, and

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The CNMI Disability Network Partners met with Mary Caseylocker from the American Red Cross on November 15, 2018 at the NMC Campus. The objective of the meeting was to build the Disability Integration Capacity of the CNMI by identifying our access and functional needs. Representatives from the following organizations and agencies were in attendance: American Red Cross, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), NMC Disability Support Services, Center for Living Independently (CLI), Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD), the Public School System (PSS), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc.(NMPASI), and NMC Learning & Student Support Services.

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Learning Supports Services), Center for Living Independently, Department of Labor/Workforce Investment Agency Division, and the State Rehabilitation Council.

The CNMI, through the Federal Communications Commission, was allotted \$51,120 for 2018-2019 to provide individuals with both significant vision and hearing loss with free equipment and training through the iCanConnect Program, a national program that helps people stay connected with the world.

So far, the CNMI iCanConnect Program has conducted outreaches to increase public awareness about the program and continues to provide services to a qualified

individual from Tinian so that with technology she may be connected with family and friends.

Kirscher is the regional representative for the Southwest region that includes the U.S. Territories, and she manages the CNMI's funds. She reported during the meeting that last year some of the unspent funds were diverted to Hawaii and New York to help meet the technology needs of folks who have both vision and hearing impairments.

According to Kirscher, we will need to increase the number of individuals served by this program. In Guam, they have about 4 or 5 individuals who are being served, but then their population is about three times that of the CNMI.

Ellena Sutton, Case Worker Assistant for the Independent Living Older Blind Program with OVR, also met with Kirscher regarding 2 ILOB referrals: one from Saipan and the other from Rota. We are hoping that the number of referrals will continue to increase.

If you know of anyone who has both vision and hearing impairments, please refer them to the iCanConnect Program by contacting Raymond Diaz, Assistive Technology Program Coordinator at 664-7003 or Carla Torres, ATP at 483-1143.

Also, please help to spread the word about the iCanConnect Program. For more information including how to apply, check out www.icanconnect.org.



DCCA - DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES



presents

CNMI PARENT TRAINING & INFORMATION CENTER

for **LEADERSHIP in DISABILITY ACHIEVEMENT**



**LDAH Pacific Island Partners
Training in Guam
June 2018**



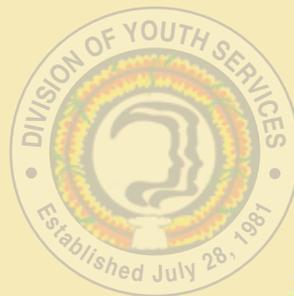
**Infant & Early Childhood Conference
In collaboration with DCCA CCDE,
DPHS-MCHB, H.O.M.E./NCDB
October 06, 2018**



**Team Koka raises awareness of
individuals with
Limb Girdle Muscular Dystrophy(LGMD)
Tinian Baseball Field
September 14 - 15, 2018**



**Leadership in Disability Achievement
Training for Parents Anonymous®
(Adult Group)
Tinian
September 26, 2018**



**Division of Youth Services
Chalan Piao Plaza Office
P.O. Box 501000 C.K.
Saipan, MP 96950**

**Parent Education Services
Tel: 287 - 2847 (Parent Helpline)
Office: 237 - 1015 or 237-1000**

OVR Delivers Skills to Pay the Bills to Special Education Students

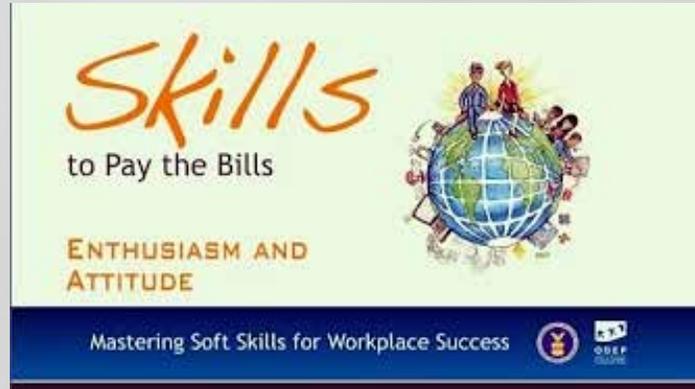
By Jim Arenovski of Island Training Solutions

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) launched Skills to Pay the Bills, a program focused on the “workplace readiness training” requirement under their Pre-Employment Transition Services program for students with disabilities. Twenty (20) Marianas High School (MHS) and Kagman High School (KHS) Special Education students were offered a one-month training in this program that teaches them work readiness, otherwise known as soft skills for employment.

Soft skills are everyday interpersonal skills that job seekers need to succeed on the job. They include communicating clearly and appropriately, remembering work directions, working well with others, and knowing how to solve problems. These skills help youth succeed in life no matter what they are doing, which may include succeeding in education, independent living, community participation, and ultimately, in the workplace.

The *Skills to Pay the Bills* program was designed by the US Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy, to help teach students skills in the following 6 areas: Communication, Attitude, Enthusiasm, Team Work, Problem Solving/Critical Thinking, and Professionalism.

Each of the 6 topics/lessons had various individual and group exercises, as well as discussions and videos on various key points. Students were given pre-tests and post-tests to see if the instruction was effective or if



adjustments were necessary on lesson delivery.

Two of the more popular exercises were: 1) the team building “marshmallow/straw challenge,” which required students to work as a team to design and build the tallest free-standing structure, and 2) a communications exercise that tested the listening skills of the participants where they had to draw various symbols in the correct location without being able to ask questions or clarification.

Although the activities were fun in nature, they brought to light key skills that each participant will need to develop to be an effective staff member.

“There are a number of students with various types and levels of learning disabilities that will be graduating this year and they are very suitable for employment. By providing them with a program like this, they are more likely to be prepared, understand the challenges they will face at work and how best to succeed,” explained Jim Arenovski of Island Training Solutions, the provider of the *Skills to Pay the Bills* courses. He added, “We are happy to be a part of bringing this

important program to our students.”

He concluded by saying, “It was clear the students enjoyed the program and picked up a better understanding of what the ‘world of work’ would be like, and how they can contribute to the CNMI’s workforce. Understandably, the students were hesitant

and shy when the classes first started, but shortly thereafter, there was a noticeable bond between the instructors and the students.”

OVR extends thanks to the Principals and Special Education heads, Leila Staffer and Anna Yamada at KHS, and Cherlyn Cabrera and Preston Basa at MHS, for without their confidence and trust in OVR’s Skills to Pay the Bills and Island Training Solutions, this program would not have been possible.

“OVR should be commended for their foresight in getting this program launched, and we are hopeful this program will expand to Saipan Southern High School, as well as the Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./Sr. High School and Tinian Jr./Sr. High School,” stated Arenovski. He continued by saying, “Director Yamagata, Josephine Tudela, and Lourdes Atalig were a great team to work with, and extremely supportive in bringing this curriculum to the high schools.”

If you have a child with a disability who is interested in entering the workforce, and would like more information on these efforts, please contact OVR at 322-6537/8 or send an email to nmidir@ovrgov.net.

OVR and Partners Plan to Provide Work-Based Learning Experiences

A planning meeting was held on October 12, 2018 at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation where representatives from the OVR, Workforce Investment Agency, Special Education Program, and Co-Op Education and Training Program assembled to discuss Work-Based Learning Experiences.



Pictured from left to right: Brandon Nicholas of the Co-Op Education and Training Program, Josephine Tudela of OVR, Donna Flores of the Special Education Program, Frances Torres of the Workforce Investment Agency, and Arlene Yamagata of OVR.

Each year, OVR sets aside 15% of their funding to meet the pre-employment transition services needs of students with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 21 years. The goal is to help facilitate students' transition from school to postsecondary employment and education. Aside from Work-Based Learning Experiences, the other required Pre-ETS services made available to students are: Job Exploration Counseling; Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Post-Secondary Education Programs at institutions of higher education; Workplace Readiness Training to Develop Social Skills and Independent Living; and Instructions in Self-Advocacy.

The meeting concluded with the planning team having solidified their commitment to work with OVR to make Work-Based Learning Experiences available to students with disabilities this school year and into the summer of 2019.

One of the major challenges to community-based work experiences is that of transportation. Pre-ETS funding cannot be used to pay for transportation. Further discussions on how to overcome

barriers including transportation will take place in future meetings. According to research, students with disabilities who participate in work experiences during high school will be in a better position to achieve meaningful employment after they exit school. To paraphrase Dr. Richard Luecking during a presentation he made at the Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) Conference in March of 2016: The number one factor predicting post school success is work experience during high school. Mr. Luecking has a passion for improving education and employment

outcomes for people with disabilities, and is the author of *Working Relationships, Make the Day Matter!*, and *The Way to Work*.

The primary goal of the planning team is to improve transition services and each member recognizes it is only possible to do so through effective interagency collaboration and coordination as it takes a village to produce the outcomes that all stakeholders can be proud of.

OVR Staff Complete QPR Training



Mia Jones (back right) and OVR staff oblige for a souvenir photo at the conclusion of the QPR training on September 14, 2018.

Mental Health Counselor Mia Jones, MS Psy conducted the QPR training for OVR staff on September 14, 2018.

QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer, which is a technique that helps an individual to "recognize the warning signs, clues, and suicidal communications

of people in trouble, and gain skills to act vigorously to prevent a possible tragedy," according to Paul Quinnett, Ph.D. of the QPR Institute.

Anyone can learn QPR to help prevent suicide and become a Gatekeeper, which is defined as "anyone in a position to recognize a crisis and warning signs that someone may be contemplating suicide."

Learning the warning signs of suicide is critical. An individual may be very clear with their intentions by saying things such as "I wish I were dead," or "I'm going to end it all." Others are less direct with statements such as "I'm tired of life," or "My family would be better off without me," or "Soon I won't be around."

Dr. Quinnett offers some behavioral clues that a person may be contemplating suicide:

- Relapse into drug or alcohol use after a period of recovery,
- Purchasing a gun,
- Stockpiling pills,
- Putting personal and business affairs in order,
- Making or changing a will,
- And many more.

If you or your organization is interested in learning how to save a life and offer hope, please reach out to **Mia Jones of the Community Guidance Center at (670) 664-4572.**

Is Your Child Development Age-Appropriate?



AWESOME!



Don't leave yet!



Not sure? Don't worry!



Continue reading...



All parents and caregivers expect their child to be developing age appropriate, healthy, and happy.



Developmental Monitoring means observing how your child grows and changes over time and whether your child meets the typical developmental milestones in playing, learning, speaking, behaving, and moving.

Developmental Screening takes a closer look at how your child is developing. It provides an opportunity to identify delays early and intervene during the most critical period of development, the first five years of life. Screening is part of a regular well-child visit for children even if there are no concerns. If your child is at higher risk for developmental problems due to preterm birth, low birthweight, no prenatal care, and/or environmental risks or other factors, additional screening may be discussed.

1 IN 4 CHILDREN ARE AT RISK FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS.

Act now! Parents and caregivers are active partners in children's learning development.

By completing a developmental screening, you are making sure your child is off the best possible start.

- **CHCC Children's Clinic** offers developmental screening as part of a regular well-child visit for children even if there are no concerns. Request for an age appropriate questionnaire to start with.
- **Children's Developmental Assistance Center** offers additional screenings for developmental concerns.
- **Maternal and Child Health** will provide you with further information and answer to questions you may have with the process.



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH BUREAU

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No power but we are here!

The Centers for Living Independently

There are so many things to be thankful for this holiday season: CUC, Colorado Utilities, Palau Utilities, Pohnpei Utilities, Guam Utilities, FEMA, AmeriCares, American Red Cross, SBA, Samaritan's Purse, My Pros, Salvation Army, CNMI CORE and Ayuda Network. The Center for Living Independently would like to say Si Yu' us Maase, Ghilisow and Thank You so very much.



Thank you AYUDA GUAM !



AYUDA GUAM delivery



Getting Crafty: Angels are making paper plate angels.



Personal hygiene products from CNMI CORE/ American Red Cross

*Happy
New Year!*

From: CLI





Thank You for celebrating 25 years of Advocacy with NMPASI! Special thanks to our Donors!

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