



Finding Strength, Independence, and Hope: Patricina Taitano's Story



When Patricina was first diagnosed with diabetes, she struggled to accept it. Denial was her first response, but over time, she learned that managing her health was the only way forward. Then came an even greater challenge—losing her right leg below the knee. Adjusting to life with a wheelchair was not easy, and she often found herself longing for the freedom to walk, work, and live more independently.

With the encouragement of her sister, Patricina connected with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) eight years ago. She met with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) to explore options for receiving a prosthesis and job training. At first, the process seemed overwhelming. She doubted herself, especially since she never graduated from high school. But she knew deep down that she wanted to prove—to herself most of all—that she could still build a meaningful life.

Patricina describes her prosthesis as her “miracle.” She takes great care of it, though she also understands that daily use means repairs and replacements will eventually be needed. Over time, she learned that new prosthetic designs and materials can make everyday life easier and help her stay independent. “Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, keeping up with new inventions, and never giving up helped me through the dark days of my life,” she shared.

Through OVR, Patricina not only received her prosthesis but also gained access to training in computer and office skills. She was never ashamed to ask for help, and she discovered that seeking assistance was, in fact, a strength. Her six months of On-the-Job Training as an office clerk at the Center for Living Independently gave her the confidence to pursue more opportunities. Today, she serves as a part-time Independent Living Services Trainer at the same Center—helping others on their own journey toward independence.



Patricina Taitano is proof that helping one person can lead to helping many others.

Her prosthesis has given her more than mobility—it has restored her sense of freedom, purpose, and hope. “I see the world as a stage where anyone can shine and say, ‘I can do anything,’” Patricina says with a smile.

Patricina's story reminds us all that with faith, support, and perseverance, obstacles can become stepping stones to a brighter future.





Spotlight on Our Team: A Day in the Life of VR Counselor Ruth Pangelinan



Every success story at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is guided by a counselor dedicated to helping consumers move toward greater independence. For Ruth Pangelinan, that means meeting with consumers to address barriers to employment while also building partnerships with employers to create opportunities for training and jobs.

What Ruth enjoys most is seeing the impact of OVR services. “Each time we provide a service to a consumer, it feels like an accomplishment,” she explains. “What may seem like a small step to us can make a world of difference to someone else.”

Her journey into vocational rehabilitation began with a simple desire to help people in her community. After learning about OVR and its

impact, she took the leap. Since then, she has continued to grow in her role, guided by the belief that *the help you give is greater than you think*.

Her advice for anyone considering this field is straightforward: be patient, stay open to learning, and never be afraid to ask for help. On difficult days, she finds strength in her coworkers and in remembering past successes. Outside of work, she balances life by staying active—whether walking, hiking, swimming, or simply moving throughout the day.

Counselors like Ruth bring quiet strength and steady commitment to the work of helping people achieve their goals—one step at a time.

Professional Development Training: Building Stronger Partnerships for Students

On August 14, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) hosted a professional development activity at the Marianas Beach Resort, featuring Brenda Simmons and Michael Stoehr from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition–The Collaborative (NTACT:C).

They provided training and technical assistance to OVR staff and Special Education teachers from Marianas High School, Kagman High School, and Saipan Southern High School. The focus was on strengthening coordination and communication between partners to deliver effective Pre-Employment Transition Services for students with



disabilities.

This marked the first time Brenda and Michael returned to Saipan since 2019, making their visit a meaningful opportunity to reconnect and build on past progress.



P.O. Box 501521, Saipan, MP 96950
Bldg. 10839, Delegado Dr., Navy Hill



(670) 322-6537/38



nmidir@ovrgov.net



www.ovrgov.net