



The Monthly Newsletter of the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council

Alerta Represents GDDC at the The Arc National Convention in DC

GDDC Executive Director Jermaine Alerta was in attendance as The Arc of the United States hosted their 2019 National Convention from October 11-14 in Washington, D.C. The annual event helped to showcase The Arc's role as a change agent in the lives of people with I/DD and featured guest speakers and more than 30 breakout and general sessions focused on issues, challenges, and innovations in the disability community. With nearly 700 chapters nationwide, The Arc supports individuals with I/DD in the community through innovative programs, informative training opportunities, and valuable resources to ensure that individuals with I/DD and their families have access to the information, advocacy, and skills necessary to achieve full lives of inclusion and participation in society. Topics discussed during the convention included financial planning options for IWD & families, national self-advocacy efforts, diversified employment opportunities, emergency preparedness, post-secondary education for students with I/DD, transition into the workforce, electronic health records, supported decision making, a free appropriate public education in line with IDEA, and stronger supports for parents with I/DD. Guest speakers included Vincenzo Piscopo of Coca-Cola, who spoke about the employment of IWD, and Dr. Jeanette Betancourt of the Sesame Workshop, who spoke about Sesame Street's inclusion and introduction of a character with autism. This year's Convention also featured meetings of chapter leaders from around the country, a screening of the film "Invaluable", and a social event filled with comedy, music, and dancing. New Orleans was announced as the host city for 2020.



Sesame Street's Julia Raises Awareness About Autism

One of Sesame Street's newest muppets made a special appearance at The Arc 2019 National Convention in Washington, D.C. The convention concluded with guest speaker Dr. Jeanette Betancourt, Vice President for Social Impact at the Sesame Workshop, in which she spoke about the introduction and inclusion of Julia, a child with autism, as a character on Sesame Street. Her presentation - "Inclusion from the Start: The Creation and Impact of Sesame Street's Julia Character" - explained the community collaboration involved in creating the character including the goal of raising awareness about and addressing common misconceptions associated with autism. Dr. Betancourt described ways that the Sesame Workshop came up with to create a better understanding about individuals on the autism spectrum and the positive responses they received, and continue to receive, for advancing public awareness and acceptance of autism. Additionally, discussion about disabilities has led to Sesame Street addressing other social issues including incarceration, family homelessness, foster care, and substance abuse and addiction.



Know the DD Act

The GDDC is among the 56 State and Territory Councils across the country. This section highlights the laws which initially created and currently oversee DD Councils.



Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-402)

Title I - PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Subtitle B - Federal Assistance to State Councils on Developmental Disabilities; SEC. 125. STATE COUNCILS ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND DESIGNATED STATE AGENCIES (42 USC 15025)

(c) COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES, (5) STATE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.--

(A) IN GENERAL.-- The Council shall implement the State Plan by conducting and supporting advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities such as those described in subparagraphs (B) through (L).

(B) OUTREACH.-- The Council may support and conduct outreach activities to identify individuals with developmental disabilities and their families who otherwise might not come to the attention of the Council and assist and enable the individuals and families to obtain services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance, including access to special adaptation of generic community services or specialized services.

(C) TRAINING.-- The Council may support and conduct training for persons who are individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and personnel (including professionals, paraprofessionals, students, volunteers, and other community members) to enable such persons to obtain access to, or to provide, community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance, including special adaptation of generic community services or specialized services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. To the extent that the Council supports or conducts training activities under this subparagraph, such activities shall contribute to the achievement of the purpose of this subtitle.

(D) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.-- The Council may support and conduct technical assistance activities to assist public and private entities to contribute to the achievement of the purpose of this subtitle.

(E) SUPPORTING AND EDUCATING COMMUNITIES.-- The Council may support and conduct activities to assist neighborhoods and communities to respond positively to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families --

(i) by encouraging local networks to provide informal and formal supports;

(ii) through education; and

(iii) by enabling neighborhoods and communities to offer such individuals and their families access to and use of services, resources, and opportunities.

(F) INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION.-- The Council may support and conduct activities to promote interagency collaboration and coordination to better serve, support, assist, or advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
Governor of Guam

JOSHUA F. TENORIO
Lt. Governor of Guam

JOYCE TEJERESAS
Chairwoman

JERMAINE ALERTA
Executive Director

ALPHABET SOUP

A Guide to Disability Related Acronyms

CBE - Community Based Education

CBI - Community Based Instruction

CHP - Community Habilitation Program

CSS - Catholic Social Services

DSS - Division of Support Services (DISID)

FAPE - Free Appropriate Public Education

GPPT - Guam's Positive Parents Together

JOBS - Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program

SOGU - Special Olympics Guam

SSI - Supplemental Security Income



ISLAND HAPPENINGS



NDEAM Proclamation Signing

On October 1, Governor Lou Leon Guerrero proclaimed “National Disability Employment Awareness Month” with a signing ceremony at the Adelup Large Conference Room, attended by the Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities, the DD Council, and other community partners. Events for the month were organized by DISID and included an employer’s conference, a job fair, and transitional programs outreach for students with disabilities held in several local high schools.

Ancient Order of Chamori for Parker

Attorney Harold “Hank” Parker honored with the Ancient Order of the Chamori, the highest civilian honor bestowed on a non-native Guam resident, by Governor Lou Leon Guerrero on October 10 at the Adelup Large Conference Room. Mr. Parker retired after more than three decades as part of Guam’s legal community including service as executive director of Guam Legal Services Corporation - Disability Law Center, our island’s P&A system.



New DD Council Members Sworn-In

During an October 16 event held at the Adelup Large Conference Room, Governor Lou Leon Guerrero and Lt. Governor Josh Tenorio swore in Elizabeth Napoli and Robert O’Mallan as the newest members of the Guam Developmental Disabilities Council. Mrs. Napoli will serve as the representative of the Guam Housing and Urban Renewal Authority, and Mr. O’Mallan will serve as a self-advocate member.

CNMI, Guam Discuss ABLÉ Accounts

While visiting Guam, Pamela Sablan, executive director of the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities, met with Jermaine Alerta, of the Guam DD Council, at the Guam office on October 19 to discuss the ABLÉ Savings Account Program. The ABLÉ program allows eligible individuals with disabilities to save money without jeopardizing federally funded benefits they receive. The directors discussed the possible drafting of ABLÉ legislation to be introduced locally in the CNMI.



Down Syndrome Association of Guam Picnic Celebrates Individuals and Families

On October 19, nearly hundreds of people - children, adults, and families - came together for the Down Syndrome Association of Guam picnic at the Governor Joseph Flores Park in Tumon. Among those present were Guam DD Council members Josephine Guerrero and Augusta Francis and their families. *(Photos courtesy of Josephine Guerrero)*



We want to hear from you! Was this newsletter helpful? Is there other information that you would like to see included? Please let us know by contacting the GDDC office at (671) 735-9127 or send an e-mail to guamddc@gddc.guam.gov.

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