

*The Council would also like to express our deepest appreciation for the continued support and collaboration of the Disability Network Partners*



2023

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

“BEYOND THE CONVERSATION”



**SAIPAN PROCLAMATION  
&  
RECOGNITION CEREMONY**  
March 01, 2023  
7:30 ~ 11:00 a.m.  
World Resort ~ Taga Room





*Message From  
The Executive Director  
Pamela C. Sablan*

The CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities is established under local statute P.L. 12-10 and federal law (public law 106-402). Our Council is federally funded, self-governing organization charged with identifying the most pressing needs of people with developmental disabilities in our territory. Councils are committed to advancing public policy and systems change that help these individuals gain more control over their lives.

There are 56 Councils across the United States and its territories; we work to address identified needs by conducting advocacy, systems change, and capacity building efforts that promote self-determination, integration, and inclusion. Key activities include conducting outreach, providing training and technical assistance, removing barriers, developing coalitions, encouraging citizen participation, and keeping policymakers informed about disability issues.

The Theme for DD Awareness Month 2023 is “Beyond the Conversation.” It is time to ask the question, “Once the conversations have taken place, what comes next?” What comes next is action. What are communities doing to create change? So, simply said, the time for talking is over, now it is time for us to act to create this change.


Please join us as we celebrate and honor members of our community that have dedicated their lives to helping and improving the lives of people with Developmental Disabilities.

**MEET YOUR COUNCIL ON  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

- Concepcion Ulloa - Chairperson (Rota)
- Emeterio Fitial - Vice Chairperson (Saipan)
- Doricyn Taitingfong - Secretary (Saipan)
- Felipe Aquino Jr. - Fiscal Committee Chairperson (Tinian)
- Eileen Babauta - CNMI-UCEDD
- Gregory Borja - NMPASI
- Donna Flores - CNMI PSS SPED
- Florence Bhuiyan - Self-advocate (Saipan)
- Miracle Hocog - Self-advocate (Rota)
- Cherry Mae Penaranda - Self-advocate (Tinian)
- Derek Tupas - Self-advocate (Saipan)
- Therese Ito - Self-advocate (Saipan)
- Lydia Lee - Self-advocate (Saipan)
- Wilma Villanueva - Family member (Saipan)
- Maxine Pangelinan - Family member (Saipan)
- Menecio Alulod - Family member (Saipan)
- Sutheera Secharraimul - Family member (Saipan)
- Maria Igisaiar - Family member (Saipan)
- Evander Iderbei - VOICES of the CNMI
- Susan Satur - Center for Living Independently
- James Rayphand - Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Heather Pangelinan - CHCC
- Helen Sablan - Medicaid Office
- Lorraine Maui - NMC Adult Basic Education
- Walter Manglona - Office on Aging

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."  
Helen Keller*





*The Council and staff would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the following individuals for their support and for representing their respective boards / councils / advisory groups.*

Center for Living Independently: Emeterio Fitial

Community Advisory Council: Emeterio Fitial

Council on Developmental Disabilities: Conception Ulloa

CNMI Autism Society: Romeo Cuellar

Independent Living Group: Kimberly Nepaial

Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems Inc.  
Board: Greg Borja

Special Education Advisory Panel: Donna Flores

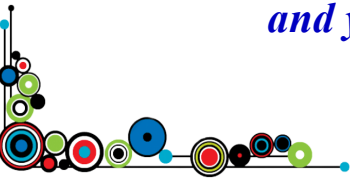
State Rehabilitation Council: Preston Basa

Statewide Independent Living Council: Nicolas Torres

VOICES - Saipan Chapter: Doricyn Taitingfong

*“Actions speak louder than words;  
let your words teach,  
and your actions speak.”*

*Anthony of Padua*



## 2023 DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

**“BEYOND THE CONVERSATION”**

Taga Room, Saipan World Resort Saipan

MC: Sam Santos

8:00 a.m.

Welcoming Remarks - Eileen Alepuyo Babauta,  
Director, UCEDD

Family Advocate Testimonials  
(Nicholas Family, Aquino Family & Hocog-Manglona Family)


Proclamation Reading  
(Felipe Aquino Jr., Miracle Hocog & Hannah Igisaiar)

**PROCLAMATION SIGNING**  
Honorable Governor Arnold I. Palacios  
Honorable Lt. Governor David M. Apatang

Theme Presentation - Conception Ulloa  
(Chairperson, DD Council)

### 2023 CHAMPIONS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION

*Advocate of the Year*  
*Community Member Advocate of the Year*  
*Educator Advocate of the Year*  
*Employer Advocate of the Year*  
*Family Advocate of the Year*  
*Legislative Advocate of the Year*  
*Private Business Advocate of the Year*  
*Public Entity Advocate of the Year*  
*Self Advocate of the Year*  
**NMC-UCEDD HEROES**



Closing Remarks - Pamela C. Sablan, Ex. Director, DD Council

**#BeyondtheConversation**





**MARCH 2023**

**DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH**

There are more than 6,000,000 individuals with developmental disabilities that reside in the US mainland and its territories. These individuals have the same hopes and dreams as all CNMI residents – to be self-determined, work and earn a living, practice their faith, and be included in their community. People with developmental disabilities have unique abilities and experiences that contribute to our islands rich diversity and heritage, just like all residents. Throughout our history, people with developmental disabilities have utilized their unique abilities to make our islands a better place for all.

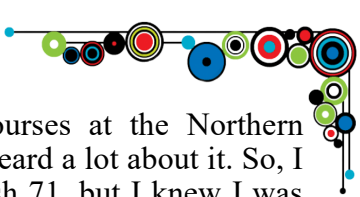
The CNMI is a stronger place when people of all abilities are included in community life. Students with developmental disabilities who are included in the classroom with their nondisabled peers are more likely to achieve their full academic potential. When people with disabilities are included in the general workforce, they have an opportunity to earn a competitive wage, work as part of a team, and impact the local economy. People with developmental disabilities who are included and active in their communities generally live longer, healthier lives and are more likely to give back to their communities. When inclusion happens, communities in the CNMI are stronger.

Each year, March is designated to raise awareness about developmental disabilities and highlight the importance of including people of all abilities in all aspects of community life. This month, we all can raise awareness about how classrooms, workplaces, houses of worship, and communities are stronger when they include people of all abilities. I encourage all CNMI residents to raise awareness about developmental disabilities and support full inclusion and equality for these remarkable individuals.

Therefore, I, Arnold I. Palacios, Governor, and I, David M. Apatang, Lt. Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, do hereby proclaim March 2023 as;

**Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**

**#DDAM2023** 



Five years ago, I decided to try to take courses at the Northern Marianas College. I wanted to try it out as I'd heard a lot about it. So, I got in, and during that time, I started in English 71, but I knew I was going to make it through to English 101. I attended classes all year and my tutors taught me lots of things that I never knew, such as past tense, phrases, verbs and where I should put a comma or period, and how to write paragraphs. Finally, I passed English 101! I want to continue to take classes at NMC and the staff of the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities will help me with registering to enroll at NMC to finish where I left off. Finishing my college degree will help me be more successful in the future.

While attending classes at NMC in the past, I started out as a volunteer and ended up working part-time at the Center for Living Independently (CLI). My job duties at CLI were to post daily disabilities watch articles, work on the Director's PowerPoint presentations for her upcoming meetings, made tickets & cards for upcoming events, such as Christmas and Valentine's and create content for CLI. I can't say thank you enough to the Director of CLI and her staff for helping me reach one of my goals and increasing my educational skills. I really appreciate you all and your continued support.

This work experience opportunity was very helpful, however, I feel that I need more training and education to continue to grow my skills and knowledge with web design at NMC. I will be able to take my experience from CLI, as well as my web skills and apply it to my new venture. Currently, I volunteer at the DD Council while waiting for my meeting with my OVR counselor to revise my IPE. So far, I'm enjoying it and I'm learning new stuff. What do I do there? It's basically the same stuff that I worked on at CLI...creating social media content, posting on their pages, and creating captions for the pictures on the pages. To the DD Council ladies, I am truly honored to work with you all and I appreciate all your help.

Here's a quote I'd like to share, as it was something I heard and truly believe.

***"If we allow our minds to believe that it's possible, then we can do it"***

*Unknown*





## ***A Self-Advocate's Journey***

**By: Hannah Igisaiar**

A part of my struggle in my journey that I would like to share with you, would be that, in reality, it's not easy having a disability and restrictions in physical activities. Always living in observation mode. Every morning I have to wait to move... because I have to wait for someone who can assist me with my clothing, assist me to the restroom, and assist with my other needs. Anyway, I don't know why I loved to go to school because being there, always watching, allowed me to dream of what IF. What would it be like IF I were that kid or another. I admire that they can run around and can have conversations with classmates and others. Just simply having a cup of water that I could hold and drink for myself.... to just standing up on my own.... to simply walk... that is mental and emotional pain I endure because I can't do what others do... and yet there's so many that take life for granted and use it in unharmonious ways that saddens me. But it also motivates me to continue to grow and try to do more, even if that more is just to lift my finger....to be able to continue to live even if it's just through my eyes.

My family and friends asks me what I want to do when I get older, I give them different answers every time because my mind can't stop dreaming. I still remember my first answer (I wanted to be a teacher) and then they asked why I wanted that because I wanted to help them and it's fun to teach them. Yet, I couldn't read or spell during all my years of schooling. I felt ashamed at first but that shame motivated me. I was good at listening to my teachers. My lack of knowledge made me feel that it was useless to go to school, and I didn't care for it much, but I felt that as long as I showed up, at least I can learn a little. During those years I loved to ask my mother if she could read any books to me before I headed to bed. Months and years went by, and I decided to work on my reading skills with the Bible, which was what helped me the most. To be honest, I'm still struggling with it, but I'm surrounded by family and friends that support and help me out with my spelling and grammar, which is why I'm so thankful for all people who have been helping me.

# LOOKING BACK AT OUR 2022 CHAMPIONS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

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### ***Advocate of the Year***

***Saipan: Tiava To'omato***

***Tinian: Nora Aquino***

### ***Community Member Advocate of the Year***

***Saipan: Hannah Igisaiar***

***Tinian: Charito Cristoria***

### ***Educator Advocate of the Year***

***Saipan: Donna Flores***

***Tinian: Maria Aguon***

***Rota: Elvira Mesngon***

### ***Employer Advocate of the Year***

***Saipan: Northern Marianas College***

***Tinian: Tinian Mayor's Office***

***Rota: Northern Marianas College***

### ***Family Advocate of the Year***

***Saipan: Chamiko Namauleg***

***Tinian: Lorina Sheena Atalig***

### ***Legislative Advocate of the Year***

***Saipan: Congressman Angel A. Demapan***

***Tinian: Tinian Municipal Council***

### ***Private Business Advocate of the Year***

***Saipan: Herman's Modern Bakery***

***Tinian: Sweet Fix***

### ***Public Entity Advocate of the Year***

***Saipan: Northern Marianas College***

***Tinian: Northern Marianas College - Tinian Campus***

***Rota: Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc.***

### ***Self Advocate of the Year***

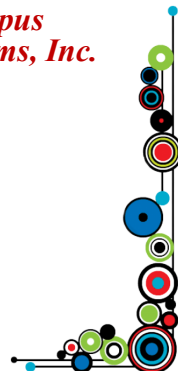
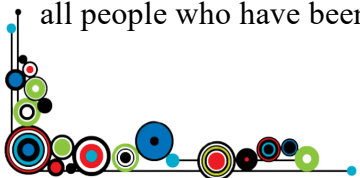
***Saipan: Emeterio Fitial***

***Tinian: Felipe Aquino Jr.***

### ***NMC-UCEDD HEROES***

***Saipan: Devonne P. Sablan***

***Tinian: Maggie Mae Atalig Palacios***





# 2023 SAIPAN CHAMPIONS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

2023 SAIPAN CHAMPIONS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY




*Saipan Advocate of the Year*  
**John Allen A. Cabrera**




*Saipan Legislative Advocate of the Year*  
**Former Rep. Leila Staffler**



*Saipan Community Member Advocate of the Year*  
**Vicente M. Babauta**



*Saipan Private Business Advocate of the Year*  
**Delta Management Corporation**  
**Northern Marianas Protection**  
**& Advocacy Systems, Inc.**



*Saipan Educator Advocate of the Year*  
**Tai Doram**



*Saipan Public Entity Advocate of the Year*  
**Division of Youth Services**



*Saipan Employer Advocate of the Year*  
**Center for Living Independently**



*Saipan Self-Advocate of the Year*  
**Hannah Igisaia**



*Saipan Family Advocate of the Year*  
**Dr. Yvonne R. Pangelinan**



**Saipan NMC-UCEDD HEROES**



**Bre Tudela Humphries**  
**DeVonne P. Sablan**  
**Juanicia Villanueva**