



UCEDD *it!*

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**University Center for
Excellence on
Developmental Disabilities**

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GET INVOLVED:

- * Volunteer
- * Invite people with disabilities to participate at your organization as a volunteer
- * Remind others that people with DD deserve respect and can make meaningful contributions to our community.



Help end the "R" word! By Tafaimamao Tupuola

For years people with disabilities have not only been discriminated against, but also bullied. Name calling is a significant sign of bullying, and a tool which is used to demean others. With hurtful names such as "Retard" or "Retarded" some of the most vulnerable members of our community are marginalized, and made to feel less than significant.

But a new day is drawing, and around the world family, friends, and especially people with intellectual disabilities are pledging "Spread The Word To End The (old) R—Word" and help promote the new R-word: Respect. March was Developmental Disability Awareness month and it had kicked off with the theme "Building an inclusive community". What better way to build an inclusive community than by making a pledge to end the old "R" word, and replace it with a better one. Every man, woman and child deserves respect and dignity,

no matter what their station in life, their abilities, or their disabilities. The importance of treating others with dignity and respect can never be over-emphasized. It is the basis of genuine progress and a true indication of our concern for our fellow man. It is the essence of the golden rule. In October 2010, President Obama signed "Rosa's Law" mandating Federal statutes to remove the term "mental retardation" and replacing it with "intellectual disability". The new term "intellectual disability" and "individual with an intellectual disability" will replace the R-word in federal health, education and labor policy. The rights of individuals with disabilities will remain the same.

Rosa's Law was named for Rosa Marcellino, a 9 year old girl from Maryland who has Down's Syndrome. The initiation came from her 14 year old brother who did not like hearing the R-word whenever school teachers and people referenced his sister. Rosa and her brother worked with state legislators

to pass the law within the state of Maryland, and U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski took it to the next level, sponsoring the bill at the U.S. Congressional level. We as a society need to realize that everyone defines "normal" from their perspective. What appears normal to you may not appear normal to others. We need to embrace the fact that everyone is unique, and one of the best ways to build an inclusive community is to embrace diversity. It does not separate us, but makes us stronger as a people, as a nation. Let's embrace the new R word—Respect. To make a person's life more meaningful to the community in which they live"Spread the Word, To End the R-Word" and replace it with the new one "Respect"



VP Mikaele Etuale with Sen. Barbara Mikulski

Talented Students at Lupelele By: Ernie Seiuli

Students at Lupelele Elementary School expressed their thoughts about their friends and classmates in the Special Education (SpEd) Program through art, music, and theater competitions in celebrating of Developmental Disability Awareness Week. The school kicked off its week-long activities with an assembly, where their 47 classmates receiving Special Education were given candy leis and recognized by the school. Representative of the SpEd Program, Ms.

Faanati Penitusi thanked the school for hosting activities that aim to provide understanding, encouragement, and opportunities to help students with developmental disabilities lead productive and fulfilling lives. The week long activities included music competitions, poems, movies at the theatre, and ended with their arts and crafts competition. The guest speaker was 34 year old Sevelu Liu, who received Special Education services through the public school system. With 10 percent vision,

his disability did not prevent him from completing his high school diploma. He also completed his associate of arts degree at the American Samoa Community College. Representatives Larry Sanitua and Galu Satele were also in attendance of the conclusion of the week-long activities to celebrate the Disability Awareness month.



OUR COMMUNITY IS BETTER TOGETHER! By Ernie Seiuli

“Our Community is Better Together” is the theme for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month 2012. The theme encourages people to understand that everyone wins when people with disabilities are welcomed into local neighborhoods, workplaces, church, and schools. It collectively sums up efforts to promote and include all individuals with developmental disabilities (DD), which could be used to help others and can also motivate other individuals with DD to step up

and participate in what is happening in our communities. March was the time for us to focus on the abilities of those with developmental disabilities and encourage our community to better understand the individuals we serve. In American Samoa, organizations and schools serving individuals with developmental disabilities planned special events to raise public awareness of the abilities people have, regardless of disability. During this awareness month, University Center

for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) encouraged the public to learn more about individuals who have developmental disabilities and to recognize that all have unique abilities that make this a more diverse place to live. “Together we can accomplish so much based on the theme “Our Community is Better Together”.

History of Developmental Disabilities Awareness! By Ernie Seiuli

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan declared March as National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. The proclamation called for people to provide understanding, encouragement, and opportunities to help people with developmental disabilities lead

productive and meaningful lives. This national proclamation generated renewed respect for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and has increased awareness of the issues faced by this constituency and by their families. The main purpose was to

commemorate the progress toward improving the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and also highlight the challenges that remain in achieving full inclusion. They deserve respect and can make meaningful contributions to our community.

Film Festival! By Lia Pelenato



The University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)

celebrated the Developmental Disability (DD) month by hosting a film festival. The film festival was held at the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) Lecture Hall on March 6, 13, and 20, 2012 from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. and was opened to the general public with free admission. Each of the first two showings at-

tracted an average of 60 students with a full house at the final showing. The three films that were featured are (1) *“Without Pity”*, (2) *“Including Samuel”*, and (3) *“I Am Sam”*.

“Without Pity” is a documentary by Christopher Reeves which celebrates the efforts of people with disabilities living full and productive lives. This film applauds the resilience and potential of people with disabilities and their determination to be self-sufficient.

“Including Sam” is a highly personal and passionate film that captures the cultural and systemic barriers to in-

clusion and features interviews with teachers, parents, and disability rights experts. It documents the hopes and struggles of Samuel.

“I Am Sam” stars Sean Penn is a single father with DD who raises his daughter Lucy.

The message behind the films is that individuals with DD are capable of anything in life regardless of their DD. Inclusion in all facets of life is critical to providing the necessary support for the individual with DD to make the best choices for his/her life and/or future endeavors.

FYI: DID YOU KNOW?

THINK COLLEGE!

Doors to colleges are opening for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in many different ways all over the country. The website—www.thinkcollege.net is designed to share what is currently going on, provide resources and strategies, let you know about training events, and give you ways to talk

to others. The information is for transition aged students as well as adults attending or planning for college. It provides resources and tools for students, families, and professionals. The website also features the following:

- Finding jobs for students with intellectual disability

- Think College Standards for Inclusive Postsecondary Education
- Think College Live!
- Think College Island—a place for students to start thinking about and planning for college!

Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation

The Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation is seeking exemplary professionals and/or family members of persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities who are currently working or volunteering in the field of inclusive services and supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for an intensive one-year

Public Policy Fellowship in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the Fellowship is to prepare both early career and more seasoned leaders to assume leadership in the public policy arena in their home state and/or nationally. During this one year Fellowship, the successful applicant will learn how federal legislation is initiated, developed, and passed by Congress, as well

as how programs are administered and regulations promulgated by federal agencies. The applications will only be accepted online at <http://www.aucd.org/app/jpkffellowship2012.com>

Should you have any questions please contact Steven M. Eidelman at Eidelman@jpkf.org

MISSION

The **University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)** assures that individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages and their families participate fully in activities that will design and promote self determination, independence, integration and inclusion in all facets of life in American Samoa. The UCEDD will ensure the delivery and purpose of the Developmental Disabilities act through culturally competent activities



We are on the Web!

<http://asucedd.org>

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ACRONYMNS/MEANINGS

- ASCC: American Samoa Community College
- DD: Developmental Disabilities
- SpEd: Special Education
- UCEDD: University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities

SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

We would love to hear from you if you have comments about our newsletter, or if you would like to be added to our newsletter list!

Drop us a line at ucedd@amsamoa.edu

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