



UCEDD *it!*

AMERICAN SAMOA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)

APHASIA AWARENESS

By: Lia Pelenato

Aphasia signs & symptoms:

- Inability to comprehend language
- Inability to pronounce, read, and write
- Inability to speak spontaneously
- Poor enunciation
- Persistent repetition of phrases
- Limited verbal output
- Difficulty in naming

June is Aphasia awareness month and it is a disorder that results from damage to portions of the brain that are responsible for language. Aphasia is an impairment of language ability and also impairs the expression and understanding of language as well as reading and writing. Anyone can have aphasia including children but most people who have aphasia are middle-aged or older. Men and women are equally affected and according to the National Aphasia Association, approximately 80,000 individuals acquire aphasia each year from strokes. There are two type categories of aphasia which are fluent and non-fluent. Damage

to the temporal lobe of the brain may result in a fluent aphasia which a person may speak in long sentences that have no meaning, add unnecessary words, and even create made-up words. These individuals usually have no body weakness because their brain injury is not near the parts of the brain that control movement. Non-fluent aphasia have damage to the frontal lobe of the brain which results an individual to frequently speak in short phrases that make sense but are produced with great effort and often have right-sided weakness or paralysis of the arm and leg because of the frontal lobe is also important for motor move-

ments. Aphasia is usually first recognized by the physician who treats the person for his/her brain injury and typically performs tests that require the person to follow commands, answer questions, and carry on a conversation. In some cases, a person will completely recover from aphasia without treatment but for most cases however; language recovery is not as quick as or complete. Aphasia therapy aims to improve a person's ability to communicate by helping him/her to use remaining language abilities.



SPINA BIFIDA AWARENESS

By: Lia Pelenato

June is also Spina Bifida Awareness month. Spina Bifida is a birth defect that involves the incomplete development of the spinal cord or its coverings. The term Spina bifida comes from Latin and literally means "split" or "open" spine. Spina bifida occurs at the end of the first month of pregnancy when the two sides of the embryo's spine

fail to join together leaving an open area. In some cases, the spinal cord or other membranes may push through this opening in the back. There are two types of Spina bifida which are Spina bifida Occulta which is mild and Spina bifida Manifesta which includes two types: 1). Meningocele and 2). Myelomeningocele. The condition usually is detected before a

baby is born and treated right away. Children with Spina bifida seldom need treatment however, it depends on the type of Spina bifida and its severity. This month, let us lend our support to promote awareness for our young children who are diagnosed with Spina bifida.



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MASS EMERGENCY SUMMIT By: Ernie Seiuli



“Disaster preparedness, whether it’s in anticipation of potential weather or terrorists incidents requires a skill set that someone has to be trained for”
~Bennie Thompson

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in collaboration with the American Samoa Department of Homeland Security (DHS) hosted the American Samoa Mass Care/Emergency Assistance Summit which was held June 6—9, 2011 at the Sgt. 1st Class Konelio Pele Army Reserve Center in Tafuna. The training focused on improving government, private, and voluntary/non-profit agencies and/or organizations in preparation and responding to the public during a natural disaster. The University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) staff Ernie Seiuli attended the 6-day training that focused on main topics such as Mass Care/Emergency, designing a taskforce, and identifying and

maintaining emergency shelters during a disaster. Government agencies and non-profit organizations were well represented and participated in the discussion on the role of their agency within the taskforce during a disaster. The UCEDD’s task/role is to ensure that an inclusive plan addresses the needs of the disability population during a time of disaster. Often during time of a disaster there is confusion amongst federal and government agencies during the response stage in which federal agencies are invited to provide support for response and recovery operations. These standard procedures, operations, and other plans for response activities during a disaster were well defined and resolved by the end of the

6-day summit. Human needs such as accessible accommodation, sheltering, medicine, and transportation are essential to any individual. For an individual with a disability specific accommodations must be provided according to the individuals’ functional need during a disaster. Without accessible shelter, would only limit the individual with a disability from having access to these essential needs. It is critical to identify and implement accessible emergency shelters throughout the territory. The newly Americans with Disabilities Amended Act now requires all emergency shelters to have accessible facilities. Shelter requirements such as accessible bathrooms, showers, and doors are just a few.



UCEDD staff Lia Pelenato & CNMI staff Francis attending the SART Conference in Austin, Texas.

2011 SART CONFERENCE By Lia Pelenato

The Sixth National Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) conference entitled “SART: Together We Can” was held May 24—27 at Austin, Texas and University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) staff Paulia Pa’o-Pelenato was able to attend. The conference highlighted exciting advances that SARTs are making and strategies being employed to tackle the challenges they face. By training together, SART members can gain knowledge and motivation

to jointly assess the effectiveness of their current efforts, consider ways to overcome roadblocks, and plan positive changes. Members can also examine ways to widen the “circle of victims” they serve and the issues they address. Amerika Samoa Multi-Disciplinary Team (ASMDT) was established late last year after the initiation and as a spin off from the Domestic Violence training held at Sadie’s by the Sea. This year ASMDT formed a SART team which was set off from the training this past Febru-

ary with Mrs. Linda Ledray of Minneapolis which was well attended by local service providers who work with victims of sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence and child abuse. UCEDD’s role in the ASMDT and SART is to provide the disability component to local service providers in working and dealing with local victims with developmental disabilities. Women and young girls with DD are highly targeted and ten times likely to be abused and/or assaulted.

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

By: Lia Pelenato

The office of the Governor, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is working in conjunction with Mr. Chas Compton and Mr. Mark Tucker from the San Diego State University Interwork Institute in order to conduct an assessment of the needs of persons with developmental disabilities (DD) in American Samoa. A series of focused group sessions comprised of

individuals with disabilities, their family members and representatives of organizations and/or local agencies that serve individuals with disabilities were held the week of June 6-10 at the Tradewinds Hotel in Tafuna. UCEDD staff Paulia Pelenato was among several local service providers at the meeting. The purpose of these focus groups was to examine in

detail the unmet needs of individuals with DD and explore the relationship between these needs and the locations where individuals with DD live and work. The findings of this needs assessment will be incorporated into a strategic plan for providing rehabilitation services and will influence the programs and services available to persons with DD throughout American Samoa.



Mr. Tucker and Mr. Compton of the San Diego State University during the assessment of needs meeting

FYI Corner: Did you know?

Rights of Students with Disabilities

By: Lia Pelenato

The U.S Department of Education's Office for Civil Right (OCR) issued guidance through Dear Colleague Letters to elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education along with a Frequently Asked Questions document on the legal obligation to provide

students with disabilities an equal opportunity to enjoy benefits of technology. This guidance is a critical step in the Department's ongoing efforts to ensure that students with disabilities receive equal access to the educational benefits and services provided by their

schools, colleges and universities. All students, including those with disabilities, must have the tools needed to obtain a world-class education that prepares them for success in college and careers in the future. This is a benefit available to our local students in Tutuila as well.

Above all, be accurate and do not feign compassion. It can't be faked.

~Unknown

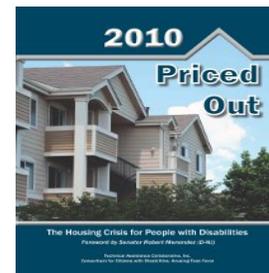
Priced Out in 2010

By: Lia Pelenato

The Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Housing Task Force have released a study "Priced Out in 2010" which shows that the national average rent for a modestly

priced one-bedroom apartment is greater than the entire Supplemental Security Income of a person with a disability. The study sheds light on the serious problems experienced by our nation's most vulnerable citizens—

extremely low income people with significant and long-term disabilities. Priced out is the latest in a series of housing publications created as a joint forces of these agencies to assist individuals with DD.





MISSION STATEMENT

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

UCEDD
P.O. BOX 2609
Pago, AS 96799

<http://asucedd.org>

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.

ACRONYMS/MEANINGS

- ADA:** Americans with Disability Act
- ARC:** American Red Cross
- ASCC:** American Samoa Community College
- ASMDT:** Amerika Samoa Multi-Disciplinary Team
- CCD:** Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities
- DD:** Developmental Disabilities
- DHS:** Department of Homeland Security
- FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Agency
- OCR:** Office of Civil Rights
- OVR:** Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- SART:** Sexual Assault Response Team
- TAC:** Technical Assistance Collaborative
- TEMCO:** Territorial Emergency Management Coordinating Office
- UCEDD:** University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities

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UCEDD STAFF DIRECTORY

Ms. Tafa Tua-Tupuola
UCEDD Director
(684)699-9155 ext. 429
t.tupuola@amsamoa.edu

Mr. Ernie Seiuli
UCEDD Interdisciplinary Trainer
(684) 699-9155 ext. 438
e.seiuli@amsamoa.edu

Mrs. Lia Pelenato
UCEDD Trainer
(684) 699-9155 ext 441
p.pao-pelenato@amsamoa.edu

Ms. Lesina Falaniko
Office Assistant
(684)699-9155 ext. 428
s.falaniko@amsamoa.edu