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## Reflection on the article:

# **Race, Culture, and Autism Spectrum Disorder: Understanding the Role of Diversity in Successful Educational Interventions**

*By: Tincani, M., Travers, J., & Boutot, E. (2009, September)*

Societies' beliefs are shaped by culture which is then reflected in its values about persons with disabilities. Within a society, especially those with a diverse population, cultural beliefs and expectations influence the identification of persons with autism spectrum disorders. Although best practices for assessment and intervention is critical, they are not enough without understanding the role that diversity plays. Diversity and culture helps persons with ASD to lead fulfilling lives. More importantly, research indicate that cultural beliefs and expectations are many and not always in agreement with each other. As such, there is strong possibility that it causes delays in identifying ASD and the delivery of special education services. (Tincani, Travers, & Boutot, 2009)

In the article, *Race, Culture, and Autism Spectrum Disorder: Understanding the Role of Diversity in Successful Educational Interventions*, the authors examined cultural diversity and factors associated with differences amongst ethnic groups. This include such things as poverty, education levels, levels of employ-

ment, fear of deportation by immigrant workers and migratory patterns. Tincani, Travers and Boutot claim that parents' culture play a clear role in understanding the nature of their child's disability. They also noted that different cultures influences families' evaluation of disability and their response to having a child with ASD. These, they claim, may hinder timely evaluations for autism and related developmental disorders and the referral for services. (Tincani, Travers, & Boutot, 2009)

The National PTA emphasizes the importance of parent involvement in the education processes, support of their children and their value as advocates for their children. Parental and family involvement benefits students, including improved academic achievement. (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) The National PTA states: "Years of experience in the education field have consistently demonstrated that parent and family involvement in education produces meaningful and lasting results." The truest predictors of student success in school are not income or social status, but the extent to which a

student's family is able to (a) encourage learning; (b) communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for achievement and career; and (c) become involved in the child's education. (National PTA, 2000) Parents' strong religious and spiritual beliefs and superstitions from their different cultures, on the other hand, often mask the existence of a disability thus delay early identifica-

tion and intervention.

In the CNMI Public School System, during the 2014 – 2015 school year, 892 of 10,427 students (8.6%) had disabilities and received special education services. Of the total population of students with disabilities and with an IEP, 12.1% were with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). (CNMI Public School System, 2014)

A scholar once asked, "How does one eat an elephant?" After offering some creative answers to his question, he explained: "One bite at a time". Working with the 12.1% of families and students with ASD would be an excellent start to making change that will eventually spill over to other students and families with disabilities; one bite at a time.

## Stop the Word

*SINCE 2008 or thereabouts there was a movement in America to eliminate the use of the word "retarded" as it is a hurtful and degrading word.*

*Since I was in grade school, the word was used around me almost daily. It was used to humiliate the struggling students. It was used to bring down those who stood out. It was used to belittle anyone who was different.*

*I am not innocent of this. My three brothers and I used the "R" on each other because it was part of our vocabulary and we did not know better. It was not until my brother William was called this by someone else that I saw how it could hurt. Lucky for my brother we were all behind him; unfortunately, many other people are alone and have no one on their side.*

*In high school, as a Dolphin at MHS, I witnessed bullies use it to devastating degrees on their victims. Again, the*

*victims were alone, different and or smaller.*

*As an adult, I see how it has negatively affected people whom I, and my NMPASI team serve. People with disabilities are not so different from anyone else. They too deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.*

*The "R" word has traditionally been used to hurt people, and more often than not, to hurt people with disabilities. In 2010, our President Obama stepped up to the plate and signed "Rosa's Law." Rosa Marcellino, whom the law was written, was 9 years old at the time and had Down's Syndrome. She and her family were advocated to eliminate "mental retardation" in health and education codes. "Intellectual disability" is now used instead.*

*I am proud to announce that from my experience, our Public School System has followed suit. Though law now, it is still*

*up to us individually to live above discrimination. Stand up for the bullied, eliminate the "R" word from our vocabulary and help change our islands for the better.*

*At NMPASI, we pride ourselves on treating everyone with dignity and respect. We believe that when we focus on similarities and not differences, we learn to appreciate each other and the colorful qualities that we each bring to the table. So now, I ask you to consider removing the "R" word from your vocabulary to further the Stop the "R" Word Campaign efforts and to treat everyone with dignity and respect.*

*The CNMI is already a wonderful place with wonderful people, but we can still do more.*

*For more on the "R" word, please call NMPASI at 235-7273 or 4; TTY and Fax at 235-7275; or online at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org).*

*(By: Tom Thornburgh)*

## CNMI's DISABILITY NETWORK PARTNERS



**DNP Goals adopted unanimously by members on November 19th, 2015, which were proposed by Floyd Masga of UCEDD. They are as follows:**

- 1. To partner or support each other in sanctioned events and activities.**
- 2. Reach out and provide services to as many individuals as possible.**
- 3. Be the forefront in support of disability rights in the Commonwealth.**

# UCEDDs

*UCEDDs were created in 1963 with the enactment of Public Law 88-164 to serve people with intellectual disabilities through advocacy, capacity-building, and systematic change efforts. Currently authorized under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (PL 106-402), UCEDDs are now a resource for Americans with a wide range of disabilities. The UCEDDs receive their core funding from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) within the US Department of Health and Human Services. The UCEDD network has grown to include 67 centers - at least one in every US state and territory. Each UCEDD is affiliated with a major research university and serves as a resource for all people in the areas of education, research, and service relative to the needs of people with developmental disabilities.*

## The UCEDD Framework

### AIDD

The Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) is the Federal agency responsible for implementation of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. AIDD is part of the Administration for Children and Families within the US Department of Health and Human Services and administers the core funding received by each UCEDD.

### Developmental Disability

The term development disability means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that (a) is attributable to a mental or physical impairments; (b) is manifested before the individual attains age 22; (c) is likely to continue in certainty; (d) results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, or economic self-sufficiency; and (e) reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of life-long or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

### Education

UCEDDs deliver high quality local, state, national, and international education and training in a collaborative, coordinated, and interdisciplinary fashion to address issues that affect people with disabilities across the lifespan and across the health, education, employment, and social service systems.

Each year, UCEDDs provide education and training to:

- University students in multiple disciplines at the undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral levels.
  - Practicing professionals who implement evidence-based practices.
  - Policy makers who are charged with setting future policy directions.
  - Direct care providers who provide supports for people with disabilities.
- Individuals and families as they engage in self-determination and self-advocacy.

### Other Disabilities

In addition to their work in the field of developmental disabilities, UCEDDs also work with a variety of other populations with significant, life-long disabilities, including traumatic brain injury, mental illnesses, and sensory or physical disabilities.

### Collaboration

UCEDDs achieve their goals through collaborations with individuals with disabilities, their family members, federal and state agencies, service providers, and others.

With their states, UCEDDs collaborate with two additional programs that also receive core funding through AIDD:

- State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (DD Councils) that engage in advocacy, capacity building, and systematic change activities to promote the integration and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life.
- State Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems that protect the legal and human rights of individuals with developmental disabilities.

### Research

UCEDDs engage in cutting-edge research, evaluation, and analysis, in areas of importance to the field of disabilities.

UCEDD research activities include:

- Engaging in basic and applied research
- Performing policy analysis
- Translating research to practice
- Evaluating the effectiveness and impact of services and policies

### The National Network & AUCD

Through the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), the network of independent yet interlinked Centers represents a tremendous national resource for addressing issues relevant to people with disabilities and their families.

Using advanced information technology, the

network functions in a rapid and coordinated fashion. UCEDDs can respond quickly to emerging state, national, and international needs and avoid redundancy. This national network of collaborating Centers embraces the concept that the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families is built upon the values of choice, control, and self-determination.

Together, UCEDDs work to achieve a shared vision where all people - including individuals with disabilities - participate fully in their communities.

### Dissemination

UCEDDs are committed to communicating and sharing information and research findings with a broad constituency and bringing the most current findings to the communities they serve.

UCEDD dissemination activities include:

- Authoring articles in academic journals
- Publishing reports and newsletters
- Presenting of conferences and meetings
- Distributing information on the internet

### Service

UCEDDs provide direct services and supports to people with disabilities of all ages and their families to minimize disparities in health care, enhance educational opportunities, develop work skills, and enrich daily living.

UCEDD services include:

- Conducting state-of-the-art interdisciplinary evaluations
- Providing clinical and other intervention services
- Connecting individuals with disabilities with emerging technologies that supports their learning, employment, and community participation
- Providing direct health care services that link young children with community resources
- Working with schools to deliver evidence-based educational programs in inclusive settings.



# March 2016 is Developmental Disabilities and Employment Awareness Month

"Ability at Work" is the theme for Developmental Disabilities and Employment Awareness Month 2016. The CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and our partners in the Disability Network celebrate Developmental Disabilities and Employment Awareness Month this March, and invite you to consider the true meaning of this year's theme, "Ability at Work!"

Statewide, and across the nation, organizations devoted to serving individuals with developmental disabilities are planning special events in March to raise public awareness of the many abilities people have, regardless of disability. "Ability at Work" encourages people to understand that when people with disabilities are welcomed into local neighborhoods, workplaces, houses of worship, and schools everyone wins. This is a time when disability organizations in the United States and its territories focus on encouraging the public to better understand the individuals that they serve.

In the United States, people with disabilities make up 20% of the population. The unemployment rate for this group is twice that of people without disabilities. The numbers are even bleaker for women and those from ethnic backgrounds.

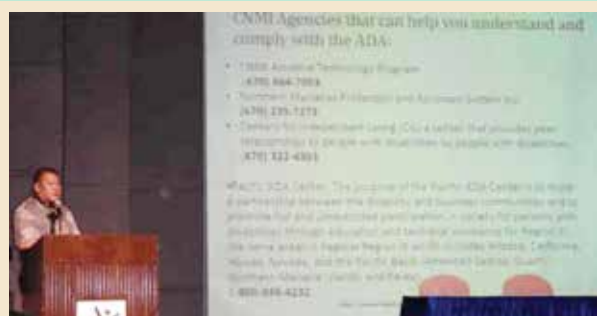
Despite the great strides America has undertaken to ensure equal opportunity and access in the workforce, people with disabilities continue to face discrimination because of fear of the unknown. Fear and stigma in the workforce must be diminished in order to cultivate disability inclusion at all levels.

In July 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, also known as WIOA, which replaced the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. With bipartisan support, the WIOA encourages the Federal, State, and local programs to work together to expand access to high-quality workforce, education, and rehabilitation services. The WIOA also

emphasizes the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities so they may be well-prepared for competitive integrated employment.

Together with the U.S., our Commonwealth will continue to promote the employment of qualified individuals with disabilities, maximize opportunities for skills training, break down barriers that prevent integration and full inclusion, and embrace the talents and skills that all residents, including people with disabilities, bring to our workplaces and communities.

On March 7, 2016, the Disability Network Partners kicked off our celebration of March 2016 Developmental Disabilities and Employment Awareness Month (DDEAM) with a proclamation ceremony and conference at the Saipan World Resort. The DDEAM conference for Rota was held at the Rota Resort on March 15-16, 2016 and on Tinian at the Northern Marianas College on March 29-30, 2016.



*RAYMOND DIAZ, AT Project Coordinator, shares information during his presentation on Reasonable Accommodations & Assistive Technology (AT) in the workplace emphasizing how employers and their companies play a key role in eliminating barriers to work for people with disabilities and how AT is one of the mechanisms employers can use to accommodate the needs of employees with disabilities. Diaz was one of the presenters during the Developmental Disabilities Employment Awareness Month Conference held from March 7 to 9 at the Saipan World Resort.*



*MONIKA DIAZ, Tinian V.O.I.C.E.S President, along with other self-advocates Jan Barcinas (Tinian V.O.I.C.E.S. VP), Emmet Fitial (S.I.L.C. President/ Saipan V.O.I.C.E.S member), and Pam Sablan (CDD director) presented to other self-advocates during the Leadership & Advocacy Training: Peer training on self advocacy and the skills needed to be a leader. The objective is learning how to speak up for yourself and others.*



*LILIAN ADA, DDEAM Committee Chairperson/CDD planner, delivers welcoming remarks to participants (mostly young, aspiring self-advocates) during break-out session on Leadership & Advocacy Training: Peer training on self advocacy and the skills needed to be a leader.*



*CYNTHIA ATTAO, a long time self-advocate in the CNMI, joins other participants in listening to presentations about Developmental Disabilities Employment Awareness Month.*



*JOHN DEMAPAN, Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD) President/C.O.T.A. Dispatcher; listens to presentations at DDEAM Conference with Carmen Blanco and other co-workers from the CNMI Office of Transit Authority.*



*MEL REBUENOG, PAIMI Advisory Council Chairperson/NMPASI Board Member; listen to presenters.*

# March 22 is National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day

OVR happily invites the CNMI community to join them in recognizing and extending appreciation to its vocational rehabilitation counselors for their dedication in serving the employment needs of eligible individuals with disabilities as well as the business needs of employers.

March 22 is annually designated by Congress as National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day, commending "rehabilitation counselors, for the dedication and hard work rehabilitation counselors provide to individuals in need of rehabilitation; and professional organizations, for the efforts professional organizations have made to assist those who require rehabilitation." To read the full S. RES 106 of the U.S. Senate on March 19, 2015, please go to <http://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senateresolution/106/text>.

The CNMI has 4 vocational rehabilitation counselors:



**Colleen F. Diaz**, VR Transition Counselor, specializes in school-to-work transition, and is highly visible at the public high school campuses, including Rota and Tinian, through OVR's fairly-new co-location

initiative. A student who would like to learn about OVR and what they have to offer no longer has to come up to our Navy Hill office for an orientation or to do intake/ application. These can all be done at the school campus. Co-location has also helped to strengthen collaboration and networking with our Special Education partners. Co-locations are also being conducted at the Northern Marianas College campus on a monthly schedule. In the fall of 2016, Diaz will be enrolled in an online graduate certificate program in Transition through the University of Maryland.



**Jane M. Tudela** is a VR Counselor with a general caseload, meaning she serves our adult population of individuals who have varying disabilities. She serves the needs of our consumers residing in Saipan as well as in Rota through our monthly outreach activities. Tudela is currently pursuing a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling through the San Diego State University distance program.



**Jiana P. Camacho** VR Counselor, also has a general caseload and provides services to consumers residing in

Saipan and Tinian. Like Tudela, Camacho is currently a full-time graduate student at SDSU, pursuing a graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling. An alumnus of the University of Hawai'i with a sociology degree, Camacho has basic knowledge of American Sign Language and continues to enhance her skills when the opportunity presents itself, especially locally at the Northern Marianas College.



**Rose B. Ichiuo** is another VR Counselor with a general caseload and is currently assigned to work with consumers from Saipan. Prior to joining OVR in 2012, Ichiuo was employed

for many years as a Special Education Teacher with the CNMI Public School System. In 2014, OVR recognized Ichiuo for closing as successfully rehabilitated the most cases.

If you would like to express your appreciation to our vocational rehabilitation counselors or want to simply say hello and wish them well, please call 322-6537/8, send an email to [nmidir@ovrgov.net](mailto:nmidir@ovrgov.net), or find us on Facebook (Ovr Cnmi) and post a comment.



## It's Back to School for OVR Counselors

Jane Tudela and Jiana Camacho – both counselors with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation – are currently pursuing their master's degree in rehabilitation counseling via distance learning through San Diego State University.

Tudela and Camacho started classes on January 25, 2016, and this spring term they are taking 2 classes – Theory and Process of Counseling in Rehabilitation and Medical and Psychological Aspects of Disability.

According to Tudela who is pursuing her second master's degree, "We are really fortunate that OVR, through its Comprehensive System for Personnel Development, allows us the opportunity to engage in formal education to deepen our knowledge and expertise in the field of vocational rehabilitation as our goal is to become qualified and effective practitioners."

"I am really excited and at the same time nervous because graduate school is a whole new level and expectations are

greater, shared Camacho, who further added: "But I feel confident because we have the full support of our VR director, who graduated from the same program back in 2012, so she'll be able to provide us with guidance as needed."

Both Tudela and Camacho were awarded federal financial assistance through SDSU after a successful interview with Professor Charles Degeneffe, Ph.D.

OVR wishes both counselors the best of luck in their studies!

# Does Special Education Raise Academic Achievement for Students with Disabilities?

By: Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., & Rivkin, S. G. (1998)

The Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin and the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) raises some very interesting questions regarding the impact of funding on learning outcomes. They looked at students in special education and those not in special education. Their findings are revealing and interesting.

Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin examined the effects of mainstreaming and inclusion on student achievement. Contrary to the misconceptions of many parents of non-special education students, their study suggests that special education programs on average boost the achievement of students. The study actually quells some misconceptions about special education and subdues fallacies of the impacts mainstreaming may have on students of the regular classroom.

The findings of the NBER study is nicely illustrated in Franklin Germany's reflection about his experience and the benefits inclusion had on all students in his class. Germany's complete reflection may be found in the book: "Chicken Soup for the Teacher's Soul" (pp. 227-229). Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences states that each person is unique. That they have different backgrounds, experiences, strengths and weaknesses. As a result, different people learn differently. Applying Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences to an integrated classroom, general education students may take the role of small group leaders and

assistants to the teacher. Curriculum is thematic and teachers facilitate different ways for students to learn the subjects. (Campbell, 1991) Regardless of their roles, the objective is to promote personal and academic growth through positive relationships. (Myrick & Bowman, 1991)

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*"School has been in session about two weeks when my principal came to tell me I would be getting a new student. ...Kim, a special needs student, was to be placed in a regular classroom for the first time. Her IQ was estimated to be about forty. ...I enlisted the help of two sweet girls. They volunteered to sit by Kim and help her in any way they could.*

*Children never cease to amaze me. The students acted as if having Kim in our class was as natural as could be. ...We carried on with our lessons every day as usual... As time passed, we noticed changes in Kim. She walked more upright ...rarely drooled anymore ...began to experiment with pencil and crayons and began to be interested in books and magazines. ...She began to speak in short sentences rather than pointing and saying one word. Each day seemed to bring improvement.*

*The changes not only occurred in Kim but in everyone in our class. Students were more willing to help one another, more kind and patient. We became almost like a family, not a class."* (Germany, 2002)

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All students learn in different ways. In the thematic lessons, they develop cooperative skills and make collaborative decisions. They explore, research, experiment and analyze. Then they reflect on their findings and achievements. When they present to each other, they read, write, organize and use a variety of media to dramatize their presentations. Studies show that in an integrated, thematic classroom, students develop increased responsibility, self-direction and independence. Discipline problems were

greatly reduced. They learned and applied new knowledge, skills and abilities. It is therefore clear that academic achievement improved and SPED students in the regular classroom do not detract from the education of regular education students.

According to Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin, funding trends and financial incentives have caused a rise in the SPED population, even when there is a decrease in the total student population. Expansions in special education, however, raised issues about possible adverse impacts on resources and stirred concerns about school quality for non-special education students. What the authors did not address is spending on teacher quality and effectiveness. US DOE says that of all the factors of student learning and achievement, teacher preparation is the most critical. Research findings from numerous sources provide solid evidence that high quality teacher preparations lead to increased student achievement. (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2014) The NBER research supports the US DOE assertions on the importance of teacher preparation and quality.

All students can learn! NBER, through the study by Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin, strongly implies that this is true given the right environment and quality of teachers. The NBER research therefore suggests greater focus on ensuring quality of teacher preparation in the pre-service training phase. Are we giving adequate focus and emphasis on NMC, our only community college in the CNMI and producer of teachers?



## Reflection on the article: **Disability in Multicultural Theory: Conceptual and Social Justice Issues**

*By: Anastaiu, D., Kaufman, J. M., & Michail, D. (2014)*

While most education professionals agree with IDEA 2004 and the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requirements, issues and controversies exist regarding its interpretation and application. In the *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, published online 2 December 2014, Anastasiou, Kauffman and Michail notes that issues and controversies arise from major differences between cultural diversity and diversity of disabilities. They assert that although civil rights groups and advocates for persons with disabilities seek equality amongst all people, the solutions for civil rights do not apply to all persons with disabilities.

Unfortunate, but true, many people with disabilities suffer from social exclusion and frequent environmental and attitudinal barriers limiting their options and opportunities. As such, the authors suggest a paradigm shift in the views and attitudes of policymakers and school personnel. They conclude that anti-discriminatory concepts produce civil rights-like and affirmative-like policies appropriate for many minority groups, but cannot serve the whole spectrum of persons with disabling conditions. (Anastaiu, Kaufman, & Michail, 2014)

The authors examined theories of cultural diversity and the assimilation of disability into multicultural educa-

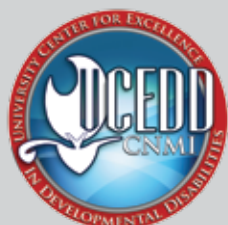
tion models. Multicultural theorists tend to view disability as another cultural difference. They often view persons with disabilities as a minority group or oppressed category. In the Northern Mariana Islands, the public school system is bound by the same laws, regulations and policies as other jurisdictions in the United States. The interpretations and applications of these guiding documents and the attitudes are the also the same.

The comparisons and analysis of the authors are important because they show that multiculturalism can enrich education but they also lead to environmental and attitudinal barriers limiting options and opportunities for many persons with disabilities. In relation to disabilities it only recognizes impairments. It does not capture the socially constructed barriers to the self-determination of persons with disabilities and to appropriate services such as education, medical care and counseling services. (Banks & McGee Banks, 2013) Anastasiou, Kauffman and Michail do not argue against multiculturalism. Instead, they conclude that disabilities should not be considered as merely another form of diversity.

At the Northern Marianas College in Saipan, there were approximately 1,100 students enrolled in the Spring

Semester 2016. Of these, and estimated 27% had a documented disability. In the CNMI Public School System, during the 2014 – 2015 school year, 892 of 10,427 students (8.6%) had disabilities and received special education services. (CNMI Public School System, 2014)

Despite improvements to legislation and practices made in the United States and the Northern Mariana Islands, there are still many opportunities for improvement. In the cases of age, disability, and disease, equality usually means equal availability and application of resources. Anastasiou, Kauffman and Michail argue that a more adequate and socially just way of considering equality is the equality of capabilities. They suggest a balanced and comprehensive strategy that removes barriers in social life and applying additional resources in order to expand educational, economic and social opportunities. Such changes could include disability cash benefits, intensive rehabilitation programs and vocational training, supported work, sheltered and public sector employment, hiring quotas and tax incentives for employers and employees. (Anastaiu, Kaufman, & Michail, 2014) The article provides a powerful idea and a possible improvement action plan for the self-advocacy group, Voices of the CNMI.



The NMC UCEDD Program is committed to the development of culturally complimentary outcomes while promoting equal opportunity, independence, productivity, promoting self-determination, and supporting an improved quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in their villages, the Commonwealth, and the world around us.

*(NMC-UCEDD Mission Statement)*

# The History of ASCNMI's Quiz Nite

It all began in October of 2009 when the Autism Society of the CNMI (ASCNMI) under the leadership of President Barbara Merfalen and Vice President Romeo Cuellar when we launched this event that has taken root in our community and is now an annual event for bragging rights of who knows the most about disabilities and random trivia.

Since we did not know anything about putting on an event such as this, we had to go to the experts at Wild Bills in Garapan with Glen Hunter and Tina Sablan who hold a Quiz Night event regularly. After extensive research into this topic, soliciting from many good folks on island, and securing a venue at a great discount, we finally felt comfortable.

We set the date into stone for Quiz Nite 1 (QN1) on December 3rd, 2010, where the great battle of knowledge would play out, culminate brain power and maybe even blow up! So the scene was set at the Royal Taga Ball Room in the World Resort. A mix of teams from all corners of Saipan stepped up to the challenge. From Junior High Students came Team Halitai of Hopwood Junior High with Principal Jonas Barcinas, to teams like Dr. Ada's Clinicians. From the beach side, came a team, with Jerry, the Entertainer of the Saipan Sunset Cruise, to As Terlaje hill side with several teams from the Northern Marianas College.

I, unfortunately for everyone, was the emcee, and game host, but hey, dinner also came with the event! We had 5 rounds of 10 questions each and 50% of all questions had to deal with Autism or other disabilities like "What does ADHD stand for?" The other half were totally random trivial questions like "Where is lake Titicaca?" In anticipation for unsportsmanlike conduct, we setup stringent rules like

"No Rudeness" and "No use of hand-held electronic devices." Then like a typhoon brewing, just after the 1st question of the 1st round, the battle began!



*Attorney Mike White, with his wife Mrs. Rose White and their grandson, winners of the very first ASCNMI Quiz Nite.*

We had teachers, doctors and lawyers, among other brilliant folks on island battling every which way with each and every question. The breaks could not have come sooner as tensions were high and each team wanted to win as we heard their voices rise with feverish pitch as they tried to explain why their answer was correct. I saw awesome teamwork and the leading team kept switched over rounds adding and taking away from the hopes of many teams.

Finally, as the end of round 5 approached, the judges were nervous as they had ultimate say in who scored more points and thus winners of QN1. They could only hope that there was no tie. When the storm cleared, it was Team Apaka, which means "White" in Chamorro raised the 1st place Golden Trophy! Team Apaka was the smallest team, but that did not matter as

Attorney Mike White with his lovely wife and one of their grandchildren walked away champions of the very first ASCNMI Quiz Nite.

This began the tradition, and over the next years we have continued this event improving it each time we held a Quiz Nite. QN2 Champions were again Mike White and his team of attorneys who taunted the other teams with the name "Catch us if you can." QN3 was won by team "One Hullava Knight" who are teachers from Kagman High School and maybe Mount Carmel alumni too.

This year, the stakes are higher than ever before, because Quiz Nite is in its 5th cycle!

Our returning champions from QN4 the Beauties and the Beast's Diane Zede has met with me and expressed her team's desire to repeat! Will our QN4 Champions continue their bragging rights into 2017? Only one way to figure that out and that is to come and join Quiz Nite V at the Grandvrio Hotel on Saturday April 16th, 2016 from 6pm to 10pm for one of the best trivia challenges around island. Tickets are \$30 a piece and include dinner from 6pm to 7pm before Quiz Nite V blows the roof off Grandvrio!

So, as the secretary of the Autism Society of the CNMI (ASCNMI), and on behalf of our officers and members, I invite you to Quiz Nite V! Come join a tradition of fun and awareness this April 16th, 2016 at the Granvrio Hotel!

For tickets call me at 783-6378, or at NMPASI at 235-7273/4, TTY & Fax at 235-7275 or email at [tomthornburgh@gmail.com](mailto:tomthornburgh@gmail.com). Do you have what it takes to be QNV champions? Prove it!

*(By: Tom Thornburgh)*