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STROKE WARNING SIGNS

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

By: American Heart Association

MARCH is DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

Pathway to Self-Determination

March is Developmental Disability Awareness Month. The University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities, together with the American Samoa Interagency Council (ASIC) is underway with their activities for the month of March. The awareness theme "Pathway to Self-Determination", is already in the making with Government agencies, parents, consumers, and non-profit agencies in preparation for the Disability Awareness Month. The two councils, UCEDD Community Advisory



UCEDD Advisory Council & Inter-agencies at Sadies Inn @ Fagatogo

and ASIC met on February 18, 2010 at Sadie's Inn to discuss various issues with Developmental Disability Awareness month as the main topic.

The opening ceremony for the Developmental Disability Awareness Month will be on March 08, 2010 at the Executive Office Building in Utulei. The council is anticipating for Governor Togiola Tulafono to

sign the proclamation in their presence followed by a public address at the opening ceremony. After the ceremony, agencies will have table booths of information and free give-away. Numerous of activities will take place throughout March. (Please see Awareness Calendar for details). We're on our way to that pathway!



Uta Dr. Laloulu Tagoilelagi, the Director of Protection and Advocacy, Michael Leau, Shriners, and Jacki Tulafono, Department of Health at Interagencies meeting as in planning process for the Developmental Disability Awareness Month at Sadies Inn. Restaurant

DD AWARENESS MONTH 2010 ACTIVITIES

- **March 06**
Lions Club Tsunami Outreach Project Eye Care at the Mageo's Guest House in Pago Pago. For villages damaged from the Tsunami in Pago Pago, Fagasa, and Vatia. Sponsored by: Lions Club and DD Council
- **March 08**
Developmental Disability Awareness Month Opening Ceremony at the A.P. Lutali Executive Office Building at 9:00 a.m. Sponsored by DOE SPED and UCEDD
- **March 08-10**
Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Needs Assessment Work Group at Goat Island Conference Room, Sadies by the Sea and Department of Health Conference Room. Sponsored by: DOH Maternal Child Health.
- **March 17**
Silent Day at McDonald Restaurant in Fagatogo. Re-building the Deaf Community. Sponsored by: UCEDD
- **March (TBA)**
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Training for Counselors

MEET OUR TRAINEES!



UCEDD Trainees were engaged in their research project for Disability Developmental Awareness Month.

This month we are pleased to introduce new members to our team. UCEDD would like to introduce and welcomed Ms. Lili'a Luavasa and Mrs.

Clare Iti to our ASCC family. They have been assigned to the Learn the Sign Act Early: Autism Project that will be presented in

March as part of the Developmental Disability Month.

Mrs. Clare Iti is a work study and full time student who is studying to become a nurse. She and her family reside in Nu'uuli . She is



very passionate about education and nursing.

Ms. Lili'a Luavasa is a parent of a child with Developmental Disability (DD) and also an ASCC student. She and her family reside in Auto. It is her wish to complete her degree in teaching.



ACCESSIBLE PARKING IN AMERICAN SAMOA & ASCC



This symbol will be on signs and parking spaces designated for reserved parking.



Disability laws about reserved parking access varies somewhat by state, but most are nationally accepted. They are regulated through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which has strict guidelines for accessibility. The intentions behind ADA is to provide an accessible environment for people with disabilities. Violations carry heavy consequences in the U.S. when caught. Do we have local laws prohibiting the parking without a registered permit? The answer is YES, however not enforced. The reserved parking at public places continues to be abused in our Territory. In some cases, registered users often allow or are unaware of drivers using their tags. **The reserved stalls and registered permit are only for registered users who meet the requirements.**

“The law that established accessible parking requirements is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It was signed by President George H.W. Bush on July 26, after years of debate within Congress”. (P.L. 110-325) A person using a reserved parking stall anywhere in the U.S. must have what is referred to as a blue badge permit hanging in the front car window when parked.



Is the American Samoa Community College follow all the procedures and significance of the “Accessible Parking” space and regulations?

The answer is YES.

The parking spot must be 96 inches wide. It must also be part of an accessible route to the building or facility, with a ramp provided near the entrance.



The only violation that we encounter daily is people parking their vehicles without “blue badge permit” on reserved stalls. We need to reinforce the ADA law by prohibiting vehicles without blue badge parking. In other cases, people have begun taking pictures of vehicles parking in the reserved stalls at local stores and government offices and are not taking action.



A car without a “blue badge permit” parked in the reserved parking stall at the ASCC parking lot

What is Autism? By Lili'a Luavasa (UCEDD Trainee)



Autism is characterized by sufferers daydreaming, hallucination disregarding of the reality of their surroundings. It involves delays in social skills, social language, and unusual behaviors and interest.

As a grandmother with a grandchild with an autism, I have tried my best to be more sensitive of his needs and wants. Teaching my grandson is also a wake up call for me to research, and find ways to react to his behavior. My first time working at the UCEDD program, gave me an opportunity to understand more ways about

“autism”. As a UCEDD trainee I learned that research is still ongoing on what causes ASD. According to an Autism Research Institute, *“Autism is a severe developmental disorder that begins at birth or within the first two-and-a-half years of life. Most autistic children are perfectly normal in appearance, but spend their time engaged in puzzling and disturbing behaviors which are markedly different from those of typical children. Less severe cases may be diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) or with Asperger’s Syndrome”*. In addition, autism should be diagnosed by a psychiatrist with the help of a psychologists together with information from a multidisciplinary team of health physicians, nurses, caregiver, special education teachers, and agencies

affiliating with disabilities. Autism can cause affections in community, home, churches and schools. Some people mistakenly label autism with deafness because of the sufferers’ unresponsiveness. As for those who never learned about Autism Spectrum Disorder in American Samoa, they labeled autism as *“ma’i aitu (possessed) or ulavale (hyperactive in a negative way)”*.

I’m still learning more and more about Autism Spectrum Disorder and finding something new every time.

Reference:

What is Autism? (2008). Retrieved February 25, 2010, from <http://www.autism.com/autism/>

LEARN THE SIGNS ACT EARLY: -

SIGNS OF AUTISM

- Does not babble, point, or make meaningful gestures by 1 year of age
- Does not speak one word by 16 months
- Does not combine two words by 2 years
- Does not respond to name
- Lose language or social skills
- Poor eye contact
- No smiling or social responsiveness
- Excessive line up of toys or objects

Why Fix What’s Not Broken: A tip on understanding

‘empowered’ people with disabilities. By: Tafaimamao Tua Tupuola

Our Samoan culture is so unique when it comes to reaching out and caring for family members or even a stranger. We try to help people overcome their struggle and lend a hand without asking. It’s a natural part of how we are raised.

In some cases for people with disabilities we turn to alternative healings or medical treatment to ‘heal’ their disability or an illness. There is definitely nothing wrong with alternative healing practices for illnesses.

That may not be the case for people with disabilities who are empowered and find nothing wrong with the way they walk or speak. Many have played a major role in advisory councils, local and national policies, and have shaped America on addressing diversity. So what’s the problem?

With the enhancement of technology and medicine continuing to find ‘innovative’ ways to make a person walk or hear gives a perception that *all* people with disabilities *need* to be *fixed*. Cochlear implants continues to

be a controversial issues amongst the Deaf Community. Stem Cell research topic follows right behind with the disability community set against why society continues to find ways to ‘fix’ them.

There is a need to understand that ‘disability’ is not the problem. The problem is society viewing them as if they live with a problem that needs to be ‘fixed’. If we were to use a cultural example, it would be how western society tried to make islanders more ‘civilized’ and eat with a fork. So who’s the one with a problem?



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OUR 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.

www.amsamoa.edu/academicssupport.htm

If you would like to receive this newsletter in an alternative format, please call the American Samoa Community College UCEDD at (684)699-9155 ext.429, 438 or 441

To receive an electronic copy of this newsletter, please send an email to ucedd@amsamoa.edu and type UCEDD NEWS and your name in the subject line. Past issues can be accessed at

ACRONYMS/MEANINGS

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

AS: American Samoa

ASCC: American Samoa Community College

ASG: American Samoa Government

ASIC: American Samoa Interagency Council

DD: Developmental Disabilities

DOE: Department of Education

MCH: Maternal and Child Health

OVR: Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

PDD: Pervasive Developmental Disabilities

SPED: Special Education

UCEDD: University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities