

## *Welcoming Remarks*




Hafa Adai and Trow-woomi!

As Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan, I would like to welcome all our local participants and to the overseas participants and their families from Japan, Guam, Hawaii and the US Mainland to the First CNMI Conference on Assistive Technology and Biophilia Rehabilitation. It is indeed an honor for the Island Municipality of Saipan to be chosen for the Conference venue.

The theme of this conference is “From Care Reliance To Independence” comes in a very opportune time for the private sectors, and especially to our persons with disabilities and their families to avail themselves on the current technologies and most of all to appreciate life.

To the organizers, sponsors and volunteers of the Conference, I commend you all for the commitment and in taking this initiative to promote our Commonwealth. Kudos and congratulations to the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Biophilia Rehabilitation Academy of Japan for their vision in holding this joint conference.

Si Yu’us Ma’ase yan Olomwaay!

  
**JUAN BORJA TUDELA**  
*Mayor of Saipan*



## PROCLAMATION ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AWARENESS MONTH


November 2002



1. Individuals with disabilities of all ages in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, may need Assistive Technology devices and services to live independently and productively as well as fully participate in their communities.
2. Assistive Technology devices and services allow people to work, attend school, play and live in the community of their choice.
3. Assistive Technology device is any item, piece of equipment, product, or system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities or older citizens.
4. Assistive Technology services are defined as any service that directly assists an individual in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.
5. Assistive Technology devices and services are life tools that are necessities, not merely luxury items, for people with disabilities and older citizens. These essential tools empower people to control their lives and their future.
6. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Council on Developmental Disabilities is a leader in the development and implementation of Assistive Technology programs for its citizens with disabilities and older citizens.
7. The Assistive Technology Project also extends services to their family members, guardians, individuals who work for public/private entities that have contact with individuals with disabilities, educators and related services personnel, technology experts, health/allied professionals, and employers.
8. The Assistive Technology project has interagency coordination and partnerships in terms of 1. Community Living and Human and Social Services 2. Education; 3. Employment; 4. Health Care; and 5. Telecommunications.
9. For fiscal year 2002, a total of 3,000 informational materials were published and disseminated to consumers, parents, educators and school administrators, national and local disability organizations, private and government agencies, 9 public forums were held, 15 Assistive Technology exhibits and fairs, Assistive Technology presentations, and 10 Assistive Technology demonstrations were conducted.
10. There were one thousand five hundred and seventy-eight (1,578) individuals who were served by the Assistive Technology Project, 746 are people with disabilities of all ages, 142 individuals who work with persons with disabilities (case managers, counselors, educators, tech experts, health professionals), 85 employers, members of non-profit organizations and hotels, 37 policy makers, state agency personnel and 16 individuals in the general public.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in recognition of the importance of Assistive Technology, I, Juan Borja Tudela, Mayor of Saipan Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth, do hereby proclaim November 2002, as ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AWARENESS MONTH in the Northern Mariana Islands.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand on this 30th day October 2002.

  
JUAN BORJA TUDELA  
MAYOR