

DISABILITY FACTS

- International Labor Organization estimates that there are approximately 650 million People with Disabilities world-wide;
- 470 million of which are of working age;
- 80% of disabled people in developing countries are unemployed and more than 70 percent of the total world disability populations are untapped labor forces.

This monthly newsletter is dedicated to promote and realize **Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities** otherwise known as UNCRPD: **The Right to Work of People with Disabilities.**

Totally Blind, Totally Employable

By: James Paul Inawasan

This time of the school year should have been the best time for Hannah to take school life, and life in general, easy.

Hannah Mae D. Aldeza has only one subject left and enrolled in Systems Technology Institute (STI) to finish her Computer Science degree. She proudly says during the interview-assessment at the Resources for the Blind (RBI) that she's going to finish by October 2009.

But as a responsible sibling – eldest of three – she has to look for a part-time job to augment income of their family. Although she admits her father is working abroad, she says his salary is not enough to support all their needs especially that her two younger brothers are all in school, too. Timely that the Philippine Council of Cheshire Homes for the Disabled (PhilCOCHED) through the Economic Empowerment Programme is offering a job placement opportunity for people with disabilities who are conversant in English



Employment for the Blind. PhilCOCHED Programme Officer James Paul Inawasan interviews eight jobseekers with visual impairment at the Computer Room of the Resources for the Blind, June 16, 2009. Hannah is partly hidden.

and have good knowledge of basic computer applications especially Skype – the project called **English Practice in Conversation or EPIC**, a part-time online job where tutors like Hannah are required to conduct conversations via Skype, 50 minutes per session, with Japanese executives aiming to improve their English fluency. *Continued on page 2*

Company Prexy visits PhilCOCHED

By: Dexter C. Tiro

A leading businessman and business consultant, now owner of two online-based companies, visited the Philippine Council of Cheshire Homes for the Disabled (PhilCOCHED) Office at Bahay Biyaya Cheshire Student Hostel in Cubao, Qu-

ezon City, June 23, 2009.

Mr. Thomas Ng, President of Genashtim and Kapient, along with his team, discussed employment opportunities his companies can

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Totally blind...



Hannah Aldeza,
EPIC Tutor

“We’re very grateful to RBI and PhilCOCHED for giving us this job opportunity”.

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With the partnership with the RBI, Hannah, along with seven other jobseekers with visually impairment trooped to RBI and met the Programme Officer on Economic Empowerment of PhilCOCHED for assessment.

Having possessed the necessary qualifications to undertake the job, she was immediately recommended to Genashtim, an innovative learning company whose works and services are mainly online – and PhilCOCHED’s partner in employment of people with disabilities.

After more than a week, in June 25, she was further assessed by EPIC Manager Cristine Tabing and Genashtim President Thomas Ng over Skype. Right on that day, she was hired!

Weeks after, she gladly reports she has been conducting sessions and is earning PhP 120.00 per hour. She tells me over Skype “Thanks *po sa* help, Sir James! It means a lot to us PWDs *na naiipasok n’yo sa* (...who were placed in...) EPIC.”

“We’re very grateful to RBI and PhilCOCHED for giving us this job opportunity”, she happily ends.

PhilCOCHED-EE hires placement officer

By: Dave Tabaniag

A 24-year-old experienced research and administrative consultant is PhilCOCHED’s newly-hired Job Placement Officer, the newest addition to the PhilCOCHED Team.

Dexter C. Tiro, a graduate of AB Psychology from the University of Caloocan City, officially started working under the Economic Empowerment programme headed by James Paul S. Inawasan, last July 13.

Prior to joining PhilCOCHED, Dexter worked for a Quezon City-based non-government organization (NGO) working for the

promotion of peace and development in Mindanao and fostering better relationship between Muslim and Christian Filipinos as an Administrative and Research Consultant. In 2008, he rendered consultancy services for another NGO working for empowerment and capacity-building of organizational leaders particularly in the field of population development and advocacy.

With his new job, he will be mainly responsible for the assessment, skills and jobs matching, placement and monitoring of persons with disabilities seeking wage employment.

3 Cheshire Residents Enroll at Tech School

By: James Paul S. Inawasan

Three people with disabilities, who for a very long time have not gone to school, will finally go back to school and take a six-month vocational course of their choice leading to a diploma from the country's Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in one of the oldest and premiere technical, vocational and science and technology schools in the City of Manila, Philippines.

Cesar C. Barro, 40, with polio; Jerry F. Icaro, 51, with polio; and Israel Racosas, 46, with Spinal Cord Injury, all residents of *Bukang Liwayway* (Dawn) Cheshire Home in Arlegui, Quaiipo, Manila were enrolled by the Economic Empowerment (EE) Programme of PhilCOCHED last July at Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST) under its Saturday Opportunity Programme (SOP), a project of EARIST and the City Government of Manila to give opportunities to out-of-school City residents take and finish vocational and technical courses of their choice.

Barro, in wheelchair, a vendor of religious items in Quaiipo Church is taking up Computer Hardware Servicing up to December of the year. A graduate of Computer Technology and Systems Management in 1998, he was not able to practice his studies though he does freelance servicing from time to time. "I tried applying several times after I graduated but was always rejected. I got frustrated so I stopped applying. Perhaps due to my disability," he shared in Filipino.

Although his classes are conducted in the third floor, the school's computer laboratory being there, and the building having no elevator, Barro said he is determined to attend classes every Saturday, finish and find a good job.

"We are aware of the Accessibility Law but our school was established in 1945. Our

school leadership is studying the possibility of improving accessibility of our school but for the meantime, what we can do is ask his classmates and school's security guard to assist him manually up to his floor," Ms. Shiela M. Matias, School Registrar, said.

"We are also studying the possibility of bringing the trainings near to where they are," she continued.

Moreover, Icaro, who is an elementary graduate and a sampaguita vendor, enrolled to Shielded Metal Arc Welding while Racosas, a high school undergraduate and unemployed, to Bartending. Their classes are done in the ground floor.

"Skills development is a major component of our programme. Training and building competencies of disabled people not only increase their chances of getting employed but must be seen by the society-at-large as a long term investment which will eventually reduce the society's, especially the government's, expenditure on welfare services catering to financially dependent disabled persons," James Paul S. Inawasan, Programme Officer, explained.

Originally, nine Cheshire residents manifested their interest to enroll but due to inaccessible building, six have decided to withdraw their enrollment. EE Programme is planning to enroll them to a nearby college.

Their enrollment fees were taken cared of by Dr. Mariquita Mendoza, Commissioner of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the City Government the instructors' overtime pay; and the PhilCOCHED-EE their meal allowance. #

Coy Prexy...

offer to people with disabilities to PhilCOCHED National Coordinator Richard D. Arceño and Programme Officer on Employment James Paul S. Inawasan.

"Currently, we have EPIC, an English tutorial for Japanese clients; telemarketing for our e-Cornell courses; and head-hunting and recruitment under Kapient. These are all open to qualified disabled", Ng explained.

He pointed out he sees disabled people as reliable peo-

ple and emphasized his commitment to employ people with disabilities.

After the business meeting, he proceeded in a separate room to interview four PWDs initially recommended to EPIC as online English tutors. Three were hired on the spot.

As of this date, there are ten PWDs hired in his companies; six are already actively working; and 18 more are pending for their final interview. #

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PhilCOCHED



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**Building Partnerships for a
Barrier-Free Philippines!**

The **Economic Empowerment Programme** is a two-year pilot project on the employment of persons with disability/ies with funding support from Leonard Cheshire Disability, a UK-based non-profit organization with operations in 52 countries.

Dubbed as Access to Livelihoods: The Economic Empowerment Programme for People with Disabilities in the Philippines, this project aims to ensure that the right to work of People with Disabilities is recognized and their lives are improved economically. Specifically, the programme aims to support at least 900 PWDs to have access to job information, skills training (soft, technical and vocational), placement, self-employment and other support services for their meaningful participation in the world of work, initially in two years time.

This is our rights-based and developmental response on the pressing concerns of this forgotten sector, especially on society's doubt on their productivity, the increasing number of jobseekers with disabilities ready and fit to work but are unemployed, and the ballooning social welfare cost if a big number of them who supposedly could finish a degree and work are continuously denied of their right to education and training, and to work and earn for themselves and their families.

PhilCOCHED Core Areas of Work

Aside from Economic Empowerment, PhilCOCHED has the following programmes / projects to promote inclusive development:

1. **Inclusive Education Program.**

This program aims to facilitate greater access to education among the children with disabilities to public elementary schools through various educational and health management support to children with disabilities, system support to partner schools, and organizational development support for the parents and volunteers working for children with disabilities.

2. **Support for Everyday Living** aims to ensure that each PWD will be able to meet her/his basic human needs such as food, clothing, shelter,

and education, physical, psychological and spiritual wellness. We have been doing this in our in our 35 Cheshire Homes/Services all over the country,

3. **Inclusive Youth Center-**

Young Voices (IYC – YV) aims to change the attitude of society toward PWDs by bringing together the disabled and non-disabled youth to promote the rights of PWDs, create social awareness by promoting inclusion in the mainstream society and encouraging them to be actively involved in community service. IYC is a winner of SMART TAYO Innovation Award and TAYO Award in 2007.

Young Voices campaigns and monitors the compliance of the

Government of the Philippines to UNCRPD.

4. **Cheshire International Internship Programme Scheme (ChIIPS),**

a unique exchange-learning program to foster international understanding of disability and development for young people through the provision of internship placements across the world in services from and among Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD) affiliates.

5. **Inclusive Community Action for Rehabilitation for Education (ICARE)**

aims for early detection and rehabilitation of disability/ies so CWDs may have easier access to education.