



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DEPENDENTS SCHOOLS PACIFIC/
DOMESTIC DEPENDENT ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS - GUAM
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
UNIT 35007
APO AP 96376-5007

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Director's Message National Disability Awareness Month

During National Disability Awareness Month we pay tribute to the accomplishments of the men and women with disabilities whose work contributes not only in the field of education but in making our nation's workforce strong. The statistics show that between 15 and 20 percent of US citizens have some disability and more than 7 million use devices to compensate. The devices may be canes, walkers, back braces, hearing aides, or communication boards to name a few.

Integrating people with disabilities more fully into every aspect of life fosters thousands of experiences where fear and ignorance are replaced by openness and understanding, and creates a deeper understanding of and respect for individuals with disabilities. In providing these opportunities, our communities show that people are not victims of a disability but rather role models of acceptance and hope.

In 1973, Congress enacted the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by Federal agencies, in programs receiving Federal financial assistance, in Federal employment, and in the employment practices of Federal contractors. The standards for determining employment discrimination under the Rehabilitation Act are the same as those used in Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act which was signed into law by President George H. W. Bush.

Americans with disabilities are active and contributing members of our society. We all benefit from their talents, creativity, and hard work. Famous and successful people with disabilities include the following:

- Jim Abbott has thrown a no-hitter and won Olympic gold in 1988. He is one of a handful of professional players who never once put on a minor-league uniform, jumping instead straight from college baseball to the big league. But those aren't the only reasons we know Jim Abbott. He is the only player in major league baseball who was born with one hand.

- Itzhak Perlman contracted polio at age 4, permanently paralyzing his legs. He began his music career at the Academy of Music in Tel-Aviv, Israel. Itzhak, now an acclaimed violinist, has performed with every major orchestra and in recitals and festivals the world over. He performs his music while seated and walks with crutches.

- In 1921, Franklin Roosevelt contracted a near fatal case of polio that left him with limited physical activity. In 1928, Franklin Roosevelt was elected as the governor of New York. He then started campaigning for the presidency and became the 32nd president of the United States in 1932. Furthermore, by defeating Alfred Landon in 1936, Wendell L. Wilkie in 1940, and Thomas Dewey in 1944, he became the only American President to serve more than two terms.

During this month, let us acknowledge the contributions our employees with disabilities make in attaining our mission to support highest student achievement. Let us also take time to thank all those who have dedicated their time and effort to ensure that people with disabilities are provided equal opportunities to be integral parts of our workforce, helping to strengthen our economy.