

PACIFIC news



▷ The 46 students of St. John's Episcopal School's class of 2006 were commended by Guam's legislature for their efforts in collecting more than half a ton of food, clothing, textbooks, and sports equipment for the residents of Namonweito Atoll in northwestern Chuuk State. The atoll was hard hit by Typhoon Chata'an and suffered again when Supertyphoon Pongsona followed six months later.

School Openings

Schools opened smoothly in American Samoa despite the serious flooding that took place in May. While many roads and private residences were affected, the territory's schools escaped major damage. Children on the island of Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) also went back to school on time, though the recovery from December's Supertyphoon Pongsona continues. Extra classrooms made it possible to start classes despite extensive damage to the island's schools.

In neighboring Guam, however, students continue to suffer the effects of Pongsona. A shortage of classrooms there has forced two schools to share one campus and another school to schedule double sessions. In addition, last-minute repairs on the campus of one of the island's high schools delayed the start of classes by one week.

Support for Art Education

Arts education in American Samoa, CNMI, and Guam is being supported by a \$76,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. This PREL project will build capacity and foster collaboration among the arts councils in the territories through the Internet and videoconferencing, cross-cultural art lending libraries, and the provision of professional development training for museum and arts council staff.

Kosrae

Henry Robert has been confirmed by the State Legislature for another term as Kosrae's Director of Education.

A new Kosrae children's dictionary is the result of a joint project of the Kosrae Department of Education and the Shonan Institute of

Technology in Japan. The project seeks to promote primary language skills by creating educational materials in the Kosrae language. Work is also underway on a trilingual (Kosrae, English, Japanese) junior dictionary for grades 3-5.

Guam

Juan Flores has been chosen Guam's Superintendent of Education, replacing interim Superintendent Nerissa Bretania-Shafer. Flores is a former Program Specialist with the Pacific Mathematics and Science Regional Consortium at PREL and also served on the Pacific Mathematics and Science Leadership Team.

PEIRs Selected

Three new Pacific Educators in Residence (PEIRs) will join PREL for 2003-2004: Kanchi Hosia from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, who will work in the area of early reading; Justino Kaliga of Chuuk, a science teacher; and Meritiana Faleali'i Savea from American Samoa, an elementary school teacher specializing in mathematics.

Educational Programming via Satellite

Mabuhay Philippines Satellite Corporation (a subsidiary of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company) will partner with PREL to provide educational programming via satellite to homes, schools, and health centers throughout Asia. This agreement will significantly increase the number of people in the Asia-Pacific region reached by PREL's educational and professional development programming.

PREL Awards

The Western Association of Educational Opportunity Personnel (WESTOP) recognized PREL with a "2003 Friends of WESTOP" award during its 25th annual conference in Honolulu. The award recognizes PREL's support of the organization's goal to increase access to educational opportunities for disadvantaged students.

The NEARStar program's website (www.nearstar.org) has been awarded a 2003 EDDIE award for the Best ESL Website in the Early Elementary category. The EDDIE, or Education Software Review Awards, recognize websites and programs that are innovative and feature excellent content.

In Memoriam

American Samoa's Governor Tauese Sunia passed away suddenly March 26 while enroute to Hawai'i for medical treatment. A respected leader both in the Congregational Church and in government, Sunia began his career as a high school teacher and later served as Director of the American Samoa Department of Education.

The Pacific educational community lost two other leaders earlier this year. Steve Umetaro, former Director of Palau's Bureau of Public Schools, and Alfonso Fanechigiy, former Director of Education for Yap State, also passed away. All three former heads of education also served on PREL's Board of Directors.