Related Services Assistant Website is Up!

Check out the new RSA website at [www.hawaii.edu/rsa](http://www.hawaii.edu/rsa). This website is for and about the RSAs in the Pacific. Sections of the website that you may want to explore include:

1. Description of the RSA training program.
2. Description of the RSA mentorship program.
3. A map of the Pacific with names of the RSAs in each location.
4. RSA stories about their adventures and successes as RSAs.
5. Plans for building equipment for children developed as part of the RSA program.
6. Links to other web sites that RSAs may find useful.
7. Copies of all RSAs On The Move newsletters. These can be downloaded in PDF format.
8. Questions and answers from RSAs and the mentorship team in Hawaii.

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RSAs On The Move Trip to Chuuk and Yap

Kathy Ratliffe, PT, PhD, and Deborah Van Buren, OTR

Kathy Ratliffe, PhD, PT, and Deborah Van Buren, OTR traveled to Chuuk and Yap in October, 2001 as part of the RSA mentorship project. They worked with Chuukese RSAs, Kinenchy Esa, Manner Namelo, Anden Nifini, and James Nimeisa to see children and families on four different islands, and to deliver a workshop on Feeding Strategies for Children with Special Health Care Needs. They saw 12 children on Weno, Uman, Tol, and Fanapanges. Rerat William, RSA, was traveling in the outer islands, and was not available to participate in the visit. Minda Oneisom, RSA was not working as an RSA, being needed as a teacher on Tonoas, but she was able to visit us for one morning. Ary Kumos, Special Education Coordinator assured us that he is working hard to facilitate Minda’s working as a RSA in the future.

In Yap, Kathy and Deborah worked with RSAs Berna Mamreng, Francesca Tinmad, and Paul Tapang. Paul was able to come to Waqab from his island of Fais, but Henry Yangireitig, RSA, was in the outer islands and could not get back to participate in this visit. We saw a number of children and families on Waqab, and also did a two-day workshop on Feeding the Child with Special Health Care Needs. We appreciate the efforts the Yapese RSAs made to accommodate our visit, because they were all getting ready to travel to the outer islands to serve children in the coming weeks.

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Deborah Van Buren and Anden Nifini work with a child on the island of Tol in Chuuk.
RSA Website, Continued

9. Powerpoint presentations that can be downloaded about RSAs and their work in different states and about the RSA program in general.

10. An e-mail link directly to Kathy Ratcliffe, PhD, PT, the RSA project director.

Some of these sections are still under construction, but they keep changing frequently, so check often for new information.

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New Televideo Dates

New dates have been chosen for the monthly televideo seminars for RSAs in FSM from December, 2001 through February, 2002. The dates have been booked through PeaceSat in Honolulu. They are:

**Honolulu**
The seminar will be held at Wist Hall on the University of Hawaii campus in Manoa.
- Tuesday, December 11, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
- Tuesday, January 22, 1:00 – 4:00 PM
- Monday, Feb. 11, 1:00 – 4:00 PM

**Kosrae/Pohnpei**
The seminar will be held in:
- Kosrae: Toful, Dept. of Education (Lugo Skilling 625-5340)
- Pohnpei: COM FSM (Joe Habuchmai 320-2482, Luciano Mathy)
- Wednesday, December 12, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- Wednesday, January 23, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- Tuesday, February 12, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

**Chuuk/Yap:**
The seminar will be held in:
- Chuuk: Chuuk State School System Office (Karatin 330-2202)
- Yap: Yap SEED multimedia lab.
- Wednesday, December 12, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Wednesday, January 23, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Tuesday, February 12, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

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Above: Chuukese RSAs, James Nimiesa, Manner Namelo, Kinenchy Esa, and Anden Nifini on Tol with Deborah and Kathy. It was a long hike up the mountain, but Ahhh- those coconuts!

Kathy and Deborah with Berna Mamreng, RSA, Paul Tapang, RSA, and Francesca Tinmad, RSA in Yap. Deborah has her new basket!

Deborah and Kathy demonstrate feeding techniques in Yap.
Televideo Seminar Format

We have held our first televideo seminar! Unfortunately only Yap and Chuuk were able to connect. Please make sure to check the website for up to date information on times and dates of future seminars. Coordinating so many schedules is tricky.

The format for the RSA televideo seminars will be as follows:

Hour 1 & 2: Consultations about children served by RSAs in FSM. RSA will introduce child and say what the concerns are. The Hawaii team will ask follow up questions and make recommendations. Please e-mail Kathy Ratliffe at ratliffe@hawaii.edu or write her, or call her at (808) 956-9502 as soon as possible to let her know the names and concerns of children who will be presented. She can then make sure that appropriate team members are present.

Hour 3: Continuing education presentation. Topics to be announced over e-mail.

Deborah’s Micronesian Experiences

Deborah Van Buren, OTR

To all my new friends I send my ALOHA. My trip to Micronesia with Kathy Ratliffe did, in many positive ways, change my life.

Our arrival in Chuuk was late at night and we were both tired from a long flight from Honolulu. I have to admit it is easier going to Micronesia than returning to Honolulu, because we were at least able to get a good night sleep the first night there. We were on the go from the moment we woke until.... well, until we just had to stop or drop each night. I met so many wonderful people I won’t attempt to mention them all, besides I’m not good at remembering names and I would surely miss someone important. But, the RSA’s that were there were "CHARMERS", each of them in their own unique way.

We were able to travel by boat to a few of the outer islands in the lagoon on two separate days to see children and families. I particularly loved that because I got to experience island life from the water. Many people in Chuuk have to travel by boat between islands every day, so we got a small sense of what they experience. Kathy and I saw a lot of children and families and were welcomed into each and every home with such hospitality. We were always offered cool drinks, coconut straight from the coconut trees and bananas as well. On one special occasion James had us all to lunch at his family’s home on Uman. His wife and sister fed us with rice, fresh fish and fresh fruits. We sat on the floor and ate with our fingers in the Chuukese way. Yum! Thanks James!

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Success Story- Jesse

Paul Tapang, RSA

Jesse is a five-year old boy living with his family on Shark Island in Yap. He has been deaf since birth. After Paul Tapang’s RSA training in Pohnpei, he began working with Jesse at home. Jesse’s parents were worried because he was hitting other children, not obeying his parents, and running away from his Head Start classroom. Paul worked hard with Jesse and his family, teaching them signs so that Jesse could learn to communicate his needs. After learning more than 30 signs, Jesse now stays in Head Start and enjoys school. He does not hit other children any more and he has friends. The teacher at Head Start and all of his classmates have learned the signs also. Now Paul’s problem is learning enough signs to keep up with Jesse’s needs. He needs a TV and VCR and a set of training tapes to help himself and Jesse’s family to learn to communicate more functionally using signs.

Jesse and his family at home on Shark Island in Yap.
Deborah’s Thoughts, Continued

Anden was my guide and boat driver and he did a great job of keeping the bouncing to a minimum. We got soaked by a couple of squalls on the way back one afternoon, but what’s a boat ride without getting wet? Manner kept me informed about the local folklore and kept the rain Gods relatively quiet. Kinenchy provided a gentle but wise perspective on the families and children and answered some very pointed questions from me. I appreciate his insights. James was Kathy’s driver and he did a great job of racing us to the docks safely.

All in all we worked hard to see as many kids as we could and Kathy took the lead in getting all 12 of the reports completed before we left. We both learned a lot about each other and also about team instruction as we did our best to present a workshop on feeding over two half days. We learned from our mistakes!

From Chuuk we made our way to Yap and were met by Francesca and Berna at the airport with leis and hugs. What an organized group the Yapese RSAs are! Again we were busy from dawn until dusk with meetings, evaluations, short sightseeing tours and late nights writing and talking about the day’s events. We presented a two-day workshop in Yap on Feeding the Child with Special Health Care Needs to a full house of parents, Headstart teachers, RSA’s and RSPs (related services providers).

I was introduced to betel nut and the art of chewing and spitting by Berna, I have some practice to do with the spitting part. Francesca and Paul made sure I got a beautiful hand-woven Yapese basket of my own. Kathy and I also had the pleasure of being able to pick out lava lava’s woven by Pius’ wife. The ones I chose are hanging in a special place in my house waiting for the next trip so that I can actually wear them.

Maria loved to keep us laughing and “talk story” whenever she could catch us free. We also enjoyed the Monday grounds-cleaning exercise at YapSEED. Everyone could learn from these folks for they are really environmentally conscious. Yap’s computer lab is impressive to say the least.

Chuuk and Yap are very different in many ways and it is my belief that they would be wise to begin to set up exchanges to share insights and experiences as they each have valuable lessons to be shared as their Special Education Departments grow and evolve. It was my pleasure to have had this unique experience of traveling and working with such dedicated and passionate professionals in the Federated States of Micronesia. I look forward to my next visit.

Deborah

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED