



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Project HATSA completers celebrate

Nine months ago, Sara Falgan was a single mother in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program with Guam's Department of Public Health and Social Services, struggling to make a better life for herself and her young son. Today, she is a valued administrative assistant with DCK Pacific. What happened in that nine months was acceptance into the initial cohort of Project HATSA (Helping Achieve TANF Success through Actions), a federally funded grant project being conducted by Guam Community College and DPHSS. Project HATSA's goal is to build the skills and lay the foundation for TANF recipients to increase their marketability in the private sector, namely in the construction trades industry.

Falgan was one of 20 people selected for the project's first two cohorts during the HATSA orientation last December at GCC. A total of 95 people attended the orientation session.

"I never would have given construction a thought a year ago," Falgan said. "I went into the program to try to better myself for my son."

Falgan and the other 19 participants first completed a Work Readiness Workshop designed to cover the "soft skills" needed for employment. They then learned basic construction skills, heavy equipment operation, and blueprint reading, among other skills associated with the construction industry. Finally, participants completed 120 hours of internship with licensed contractors in order to utilize the skills they learned in class.

Falgan was assigned to intern at DCK, and her work ethic earned her a permanent job offer only weeks into her internship. "I was shocked. I just went, 'Is this real?'" she said.

Karen Storts, DCK training administrator, calls the program "wonderful," noting that Sara is now working in DCK's main office. Storts says another HATSA client, Erica Esteves, is currently shadowing a DCK safety representative on DCK's Guam Medical City project as a non-paid intern.

Today Falgan, Esteves, and the other successful program completers now have 17 college credits on their resumes, a National Career Readiness Certificate, certification in Forklift Operator Safety Training, and an EM385-1-1 16-hour Course for Contractors. One other completer, Paul

Pangelinan, has been hired at Titan Imports, and another is participating in non-paid work experience training at the Guam Power Authority. The rest of the completers are using the training they have just completed to search for jobs.

Victor Rodgers, assistant director for Continuing Education & Workforce Development at GCC, says the program is a great head start for employment, or for participants to continue on for an associate degree, certificate, or even a four-year college degree.

“This program is designed to give women in particular the skills they will need to become gainfully employed, so that they can eventually move away from government assistance and thrive in Guam’s workforce as successful employees,” Rodgers said.

For more information about Project HATSA, please call GCC’s Continuing Education & Workforce Development Office at 735-5640.

Suggested photo captions:

Project HATSA Completers

Bottom row, from left: Glen Ford, Doris Royal, Heather Tajalle, Marcia Bellson, Christine Medeiros, Erica Esteves, Tammy Vawter, Sara Falgan, and Nicole Santiago, and (back row, from left) Randall Afleje, Todd Fedele, Lourdes Brown, Paula Jean Quitugua, Richard Salas, and Jasmine Castro proudly smile after their Project HATSA workforce training completion ceremony today at the Guam Marriott Resort. Not pictured are Rosaline Meno, Paul Pangelinan, Brenda Arnott, Torrie Stevens and Kevin Ignacio.

Project HATSA success:

Erica Esteves, left, and Sara Falgan, far right, pose with Karen Storts, center, DCK Pacific Training Administrator, following the Project HATSA completion ceremony today at the Guam Marriott Resort. Esteves is currently a non-paid intern at DCK, and Falgan has been permanently hired as an administrative assistant with DCK as a result of her HATSA training.

For more information, contact Jayne Flores, GCC Asst. Director, Communications & Promotions, at 735-5638, 483-6400, or via email at jayne.flores@guamcc.edu.

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