

## Iloilo City to honor PWDs today

By Handicap International Umwad Project

Today is the International Day of People with Disability or PWDs and the Iloilo City government together with various businesses, non-government organizations and support organizations will honor six persons with disabilities and will recognize the "Huwaran nga May Kasablagan" for 2010.

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The final judging and awarding ceremonies will be held on Dec. 3, 2010 at the SM City Iloilo Activity Center beside Toy Kingdom at 1 p.m.

The Huwaran nga may Kasablagan for 2010 will be chosen among six finalists who will be interviewed onstage.

Huwaran nga may Kasablagan 2010 aims to inspire persons with disabilities to reach their potentials as productive members of society and to inspire those without disabilities to support the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities.

This year's international theme of which Iloilo City is also observing is – "Keeping the promise: Mainstreaming disability in the Millennium Development Goals towards 2015 and beyond".

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Edward Ello, senior technical officer of Handicap International (HI)- Umwad Project, said the International Day is a global affair dedicated to unite disability organizations, people with disability, businesses, governments and communities in celebrating the achievements of people with disability and aims to promote an understanding of disability issues, and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well being of people with disability.

"Being one of the organizers in this year's affair, we hope to liberate the people with impairment from discrimination. The time has come to express our plight and be able to engage the sector in any of the development projects and services that they truly deserve," he added.

Huwaran nga may Kasablagan 2010 is organized by the Western Visayas alumni of the International Fellowships Program Alumni Association (IFPAA) in cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights, OPDA and Handicap International.

The IFPAA is an association of selected Filipino fellows who studied in universities abroad through the Ford Foundation and the Philippine Social Science Council. This prestigious association has more than 10 alumni in Iloilo City whose advocacy is social justice.

Handicap International, meanwhile, is an international non-governmental organization which "works to improve the quality of life and the living conditions of persons with disabilities in developing countries and in post-conflict zones."

John Rey Villarias, president of Association of Disabled Persons in Concepcion (Iloilo), said both local government and private agencies need to include people with disability in their poverty reduction strategies. They need to address the poverty experienced by people with disability.

"We must remember that poverty is not just about earning money. People with disability are poor because we are discriminated. We are marginalised and excluded from all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life and because our voices are not heard. The realization of our human rights is the key to ending the poverty we experience," Villarias said.\*



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