

October 1, 2004

Dear potential Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CLD) Transition Success Research Project participant,

My name is Brian Kajiyama. I am a 28-year old attending the University of Hawaii, where I am pursuing a Masters in education from the counseling and guidance program. I am a person with a disability, as I have cerebral palsy.

This semester, I am a graduate assistant (GA), working on a project focused on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CLD) Transition Success. I'm sure you're asking yourself what this all means, just as I asked myself when I first heard of this. In basic terms, this project seeks to explore the unique stories of students with disabilities from a variety of cultural backgrounds who have completed or are currently in a post-secondary program (college or university).

There are approximately 5 project sites across the country, each focusing on a specific culture (such as Asian Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans). Each project site will select at least 2 persons with disabilities to focus on.

My duties as GA not only include assisting in the collaboration for the project, but I am also an active participant. This means that I will share my own story of growth and progression as it relates to my educational experiences. I am very excited and feel privileged to have such an opportunity.

With that said, I welcome you to participate in this project as well. The person who will have full control over what is shared in your stories will be YOU! Your project site coordinator will provide you with the appropriate support. Examples of ways that stories can and will be shared include video recordings, audio recordings, writing, photographs, and blogging (a web log, which is an online journal). You may choose to interview close friends, family members, teachers, counselors, or whoever else that you feel has played an important role in your success. I would be happy to provide you with any support directly as well; we could communicate via e-mail, instant messaging (Yahoo, AOL, MSN, etc.), phone, or whatever means of communication that best work for you.

I strongly urge you to consider being a part of this wonderful opportunity. As a person with a disability, I feel a responsibility to share as much of my life with others; by sharing my own experiences, both the highs and lows, it is my hope that people helping students with disabilities and their families will be able to provide better service and be aware of unique cultural needs.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me at any time. You may also contact your project site coordinator or Dr. David Leake (University of Hawaii), chief project director at dwleake@aol.com.

Sincerely,



Brian Kajiyama
University of Hawaii
<http://bkajiyama.blogspot.com>