

# Good News

## “ECC gave me hope”—Richard Estrella, PWRD



Richard Estrella, a person with work-related disability (PWRD) from Butuan City.

After a long time of pain and dismay, Richard Estrella, can now play basketball, go to the market on his own, and fetch his children from school.

Estrella, a father of two who used to work as a company driver of Amethyl Enterprises, lost his right leg due to electrocution while he was cleaning the roof of their office.

“After the accident, I thought I will be paralyzed for life”, he said

The resulting injury from his accident, which happened after he was tasked by his employer to clean the roof of the office, is considered compensable under the Employees’ Compensation Program (ECP) since it was an order from his employer and took place within the company premises.

“I never expected that I could walk normally again,” Estrella said.

The ECC Regional Extension Unit in Butuan reached out to him af-

ter finding out from the Social Security System (SSS) that Estrella qualified for a permanent partial disability (PPD) benefit under the ECP. The ECC invited him to avail of benefits under the ECC’s Katulong at Gabay ng Manggagawang May Kapansanan (KaGabay).

For starters, Estrella underwent 12 sessions of physical therapy treatments last March 2014 before he was given a free leg prosthesis amounting to P75,000 on November 2014.

Aside from these, he will also be undergoing livelihood training in Northern Mindanao School of Fisheries in Buenavista, Agusan del Norte. He will be taking Meat Processing Training so that he will learn to make longganisa at home and eventually sell it in nearby schools.

“I am so thankful for all the services ECC has given me and

my family. Now I am enjoying life at its best inspite of what happened to me”, he added.

Richard Estrella, a living proof of ECC’s finest service to the Filipino people.

The ECP provides a package of benefits for public and private sector employees and their dependents in the events of work-connected contingencies such as sickness, injury, disability, or death. Its main components are prevention, compensation, and rehabilitation.

“We, however, emphasize on the importance of safety in the workplace as prevention is always better than compensation and rehabilitation. Prevention of workplace accidents and diseases should be of utmost concern as the health and safety of our workers is our primary consideration,” ECC Executive Director Stella Zipagan-Banawis. ■

# From sewer to entrepreneur through the ECC KaGabay Program

**E**lizabeth Magat was a sewer in a garments manufacturing for 8 years when she had to resign from work due to occupational asthma and pneumonia tuberculosis. She had no choice as her health was worsening.

The Employees' Compensation Commission invited her to undergo free entrepreneurial seminars, start-your-own-business-and-enterprise seminar.

Through this seminar, she learned the basic details on how to start a business. She was able to launch her dream business – catering.

“ECC gave me the biggest opportunity of my life. I never knew I will be able to put up my dream business. From being a sewer, I can proudly say that I am now an entrepreneur. All of this is through the help of the ECC,” Magat mused.

Magat explained that this business covers her family's daily expenses and gives them a better quality of life compared before when she was still a sewer. Currently, her business clients include banks and government agencies.

ECC Executive Director Stella Zipagan-Banawis said the

persons with work-related disabilities like Magat are the inspiration of ECC to continuously enhance its programs and projects for the Filipino workforce.

ECC Katulong at Gabay sa Manggagawang may Kapansanan Program is a special economic assistance program for persons with work-related disability who lost employment by reason of work-related sickness or injury. It provides PWRDs equal access to livelihood opportunities and assists them in setting up their own micro-enterprises or home-based businesses. ■

## Employee who lost a leg still grateful despite challenges, thanks to ECC

**J**effrey Librado, a physical education teacher in an aeronautical school, lost his left leg in a hit-and-run crash on 7 October 2013 while he was on his way to work.

Librado's leg was severed right after the sedan crashed his leg. He thought it was only his shoe so he picked it up then he found out that it was his leg. At that time, he thought that he was going to die any time. Yet, he did not give up.

“If I am not going to do anything, I will really die. I need to survive for my family. I need to seek help,” Librado recalled.

He waved his helmet to approaching vehicles for them to see him. However, no one stopped to help him. He called his wife to inform her of his situation.

Until another motorcycle approached him and called for help to bring him to the hospital. A delivery tricycle offered to assist him.

Consequently, he lost his job as a PE teacher. He started worrying for the provision of his family as he only has one leg left.

“Fortunately, the Employees' Compensation Commission intervened. I received a leg prosthesis worth

P140,000 from the ECC KaGabay Program,” Librado mused.

Aside from the prosthesis, Librado received free eight sessions of physical therapy at the PGH under the Katulong at Gabay sa Manggagawang may Kapansanan (KaGabay) Program of the ECC, P3,800 monthly EC permanent partial disability pension for 46 months, and P34,000 EC loss of income benefit.

ECC is an agency that assists employees who met work-related sickness, injuries or death. It grants loss of income benefits, medical, carer's allowance, rehabilitation services and death benefits.

ECC Executive Director Stella Zipagan-Banawis explained that ECC has a KaGabay program that empowers persons with work-related disabilities (PWRDs) economically by providing them rehabilitation appliances such as prostheses and giving them free entrepreneurial trainings and re-skilling programs.

“ECC encourages economic independence to PWRDs for self-reliance, sustainability and better lives through our KaGabay Program,” Banawis added.

After receiving the prosthesis from ECC, Librado got back to his school where he used to teach. He now works there as computer laboratory facilitator.

“ECC led me to economic independence. Without ECC, I will not have my job back. The prosthesis ECC gave me is my tool to self-reliance. Thank you ECC for making my life better,” Librado stated.

Librado is planning to take up computer courses through the ECC KaGabay Program to further his career.

“Through ECC, I know everything will be alright,” Librado stated.

Banawis, however, encourages employers and employees to practice good occupational safety and health which is fundamental to public health. Employers should comply with OSH standards to ensure a healthy and safe work environment for employees. On the other hand, employees should also take reasonable care of their own health and safety.

“I would like to emphasize that prevention is better than compensation. The ECC provides benefits for work-related incidents but good practices in OSH provide a better and healthier community,” explained Banawis. ■