

AT KEY NEWSLETTER

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The Year in Review

Judie Lee, IPAT Director

IPAT provides opportunities for people of all ages and with all types of disabilities to learn about, try out, and get the assistive technology they need for home, school, and work. To accomplish this, IPAT operates essential programs which provided the following services during the program year October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007.

Equipment Loan Library - The statewide Loan Library provides ND residents an opportunity to try equipment within their own environment before buying. It is also available for AT assessments by clinicians and educators. On occasion it provides an individual access to a temporary replacement device. IPAT made 227 equipment loans.

Equipment Demonstration Sites - IPAT supports 2 AT demonstration sites, one in Fargo and the other in Bismarck. These Centers showcase AT in an interactive setting and give people an opportunity to have hands-on exploration of AT devices. IPAT demonstrated AT equipment to 181 individuals.

Alternative Financial Loan Program - IPAT established an alternative financial loan program to make it easier for people with disabilities to get financial loans to purchase assistive technology. It offers lower interest rates and flexible terms, making these loans more affordable. Loans range from \$500-\$50,000. The program made 9 loans for a total of \$145,635.

Assistive Technology Swap 'n Shop - IPAT expanded the used equipment exchange program, Swap 'n Shop, by partnering with Cross Country Courier to transport the equipment exchanged at NO charge for ND residents. This past program year, 68 devices were exchanged with a retail value of \$194,315 saving users \$95,057.

Information Requests - IPAT responds to individual requests for AT information through phone conversations, e-mail, mail, videoconferencing, and/or in person. IPAT responded to 1,281 requests from people with disabilities, family members and/or service providers. Of those requests, 71% were from rural areas and 29% from metropolitan areas.

Training - IPAT conducts AT training within conferences, as stand alone sessions, as part of staff-in-services, support groups, college classes, special venues, and topics specific to an individual's needs. IPAT provided 10 training sessions attended by 266 individuals this past year.

Public Awareness - Public awareness is an ongoing challenge and an integral part of the IPAT program. IPAT participated in 39 exhibits reaching 4,476 people. IPAT takes a leadership role in sponsoring the AT Expo, held annually in Fargo. IPAT continues to produce a bi-monthly newsletter and maintain an accessible website www.ndipat.org

Coordination and Collaboration - IPAT serves the state as a no-cost resource by participating on various task forces, committees, and by providing AT expertise to agencies and organizations.

Additional Services - This past year IPAT partnered with Protection and Advocacy to provide education, device demonstration and AT assessment in the area of AT & Dementia. IPAT also provides AT assessments and consultations for individuals who otherwise may have to leave the state for this service or go without.

The need for assistive technology is expected to increase as our population ages and demands to be productive and independent. If you or someone you know is interested in AT call 1-800-IPAT (-4728).

AT Via Internet Video Conferencing

Internet video conferencing is becoming more popular now that computer hardware, software, and the internet infrastructure have matured. IPAT is jumping on board with internet video conferencing to help provide the citizens of North Dakota with assistive technology services.

IPAT has internet video conferencing in place to offer North Dakota residents from all corners of the state access to IPAT staff and AT. The uses for internet video conferencing are limited only to one's imagination. A possible scenario may involve an individual that is located in Williston, who would like to take a look at what the IPAT Bismarck Technology Access Center has to offer. Instead of driving 230 miles, the individual could look using internet video conferencing. This internet link would allow them to look at an array of devices, and also have those of specific interest demonstrated to see if they may work for them.

To take advantage of all that internet video conferencing has to offer, you will need to have a few things. First, you will need a high-speed internet connection. This will typically come from your cable or phone service provider. Next, you will need to choose a video conferencing computer program. Examples of free programs are: Skype (www.Skype.com); ooVoo (www.oovoo.com); and SightSpeed (www.spightspeed.com). When choosing a computer program, remember that all of your contacts will need to use the same one. Lastly, you will need a camera. When looking at cameras, price usually equals quality. With that being said, you should be able to get a highly functional camera for around \$50.

For more information on how you can “see” what IPAT is doing, go to the IPAT website at www.ndipat.org or give us a call at 1-800-365-4728.

New IPAT Equipment

IPAT recently added new equipment to the Equipment Loan Library, and Technology Access Centers. Below is a listing of new equipment in the areas of computer access and communication. Check future issues of the AT KEY for new equipment in the areas of hearing, vision, learning/developmental, and health/safety/daily living/recreation.

Computer Access Equipment

Evoluent Vertical Mouse – Mouse designed to relieve wrist and arm discomfort for people with repetitive stress injuries.

Key Ovation Keyboard – Adjustable, ergonomic keyboard that allows you to adjust the two alphanumeric sections horizontally and vertically to suit your needs.

Head Mouse Extreme w/sip and puff switch – Replaces the standard computer mouse for people who cannot use, or have limited use of their hands when controlling a computer or augmentative communication device.

Dragon Naturally Speaking Preferred 9 – Allows users the power to create documents, reports, e-mails and more—all by speaking.

FooTime Mouse – A foot mouse and programmable pedal that allows people to navigate the computer using their feet.

Large Print Trackball Keyboard – A standard Windows keyboard with large print alphabet and numeric keys with a built-in trackball.

Communication Devices

Dynovox V and Dynovox Vmax – A speech-generating device available that can be customized for a variety of ages, abilities, and conversational settings.

Palmtop III – A good choice for people looking for a small, lightweight, portable speech-generating device with powerful communication abilities.

Say-it! SAM Communicator Version 2 – A handheld augmentative communication device weighing only around 1 lb., which provides easy to use picture-based (over 6,500 pictures) and text-based communication options.

Tango – A speech-generating device that allows an individual the use of 2500 prerecorded messages, plus the option to add and customize the communication experience with additional memory and a built in camera.

Contact IPAT staff to make arrangements to see and/or try the new equipment.

FUNDING NEWS

Achieving Home Ownership

The North Dakota Housing Finance Agency (NDHFA) offers the **HomeSmart Program** that encourages first-time homebuyers to ask questions, make decisions carefully, and prepare for successful homeownership. The program provides a \$100 grant to first-time homebuyers who complete an approved homebuyer education workshop. The grant may be used for closing costs or other housing expenses. Completion of an approved workshop may also qualify you for other cost reduction or incentive programs.

Another homeownership program available through the NDHFA is their **HomeAccess Program**. Although not restricted to first-time buyers, it can only be used for purchase transactions; not refinancing of existing mortgages. It offers low-interest mortgage loans with both 30- and 40- year terms, and down payment and closing cost assistance. Funds are available statewide for existing and newly constructed homes including town homes, condominiums, and manufactured homes on a permanent foundation.

HomeAccess provides low-interest mortgage loans to those with disabilities, those who are elderly, veterans, and single-parent households. Eligible households include those that have either an immediate family member with a permanent disability or a family member age 65 or older. An "immediate family member" is defined as being the mortgagor, mortgagor's spouse, and any dependent(s) permanently residing in the home. Veterans are defined as those who have served in the active military, naval or air service and have been discharged or released from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable. Single-parent households with at least one dependent child residing in their home 50 percent of the time may be eligible. The **HomeAccess Program** eligibility has been extended to include households impacted by the Northwood tornado that are purchasing or rebuilding a home in Northwood!

For more information contact the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency at (800) 292-8621, (800) 366-6888 (TTY), or check the following website links:

HomeSmart Program workshop providers:

http://www.ndhfa.org/Web_Images/hbe_providers_list.pdf

CONSUMER CONNECTION

Rebuilding Together™ Exceeds Expectations

My name is Teresa VanVleet, and I live in Bismarck, North Dakota. I am legally blind and live alone in my own home. I don't know who applied on my behalf to Rebuilding Together™, but I was lucky enough to be selected as one of



the homes this group worked on, the last Saturday of April this year. I was worried about three things: a shed in my backyard that was falling down, a large tree that was dangerously close to power lines, and cracks in the walls. Rebuilding Together™ volunteers came to look at my yard and home; they took some pictures and talked to me about everyday things. Next thing I knew, Laurie, the house captain, and a crew, came and went with me from room to room taking notes and asking me if this or that worked for me, and if I felt safe using the bathroom, entryway, kitchen, and basement stairs. After Rebuilding Day, the cracks were gone, the walls in my front room and kitchen were painted, new carpet was installed and I have two grab bars, a bath bench and hand-held showerhead in my bathroom. The shed in my backyard was replaced, the tree removed, and the entryway at my back and front doors were redone with indoor/outdoor carpeting and hand rails. Everyone worked so hard. I also received a phone with large numbers, a medication dispenser, refrigerator and new dryer. I just can't believe all the things they did for me to keep me safe at home.

Sincerely,
Teresa VanVleet

EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT

Jenda Lifetime Voice Calendar

The Equipment Spotlight turns its attention to a voice calendar that can help anyone with organizing and preparation. With the Jenda calendar you are able to organize your life with the press of a button.



Its' simplified layout is setup for fast and easy scheduling of reminders and the auditory playback of those reminders when you need them. With a separate section for the day, week, month, and year, you can reach any day with the press of a button. When you need to schedule a reminder, note, or appointment you simply press the button(s) for the date and then press the record button and speak. It's as simple as that. Then when you want to retrieve the message you simply press the date again. The today button is extremely handy in that it will light up if there are reminders set up for the day. A to do list button is also available for the spur of the moment things that you need to remember.

For more information on this device please call the manufacturer at: 1-866-908-9639 or visit their website: www.buyjenda.com. If you would like to try out this device stop by the Fargo or Bismarck Technology Access Center, call 1-800-895-4728 or email: ipatinfo@ndipat.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Youth Transition Services

July 9, 2008
August 6, 2008
10:00 – Noon
Independence, Inc. – Minot, ND
1-800-377-5114
tabitha@independencecil.org

Escape to the Lake – Adaptive Water Skiing

June 14 & 15, 2008
Nelson Lake – near Center, ND
NDAD 1-800-532-6323

Autism: A Neurologists View

June 26, 2008
Teleconference
1-800-233-1737
jolynn.webster@minotstateu.edu

RTI that Makes Sense: Teaching Students with Autism using CAPS

August 4 & 5, 2008
Alerus Center – Grand Forks, ND
1-913-897-1004
www.asperger.net/conferenences