

### **AT Reutilization Summit!!**

Judie Lee, IPAT CEO

IPAT, in conjunction with the Pass It On Center, held a stakeholders meeting to talk about assistive technology reutilization efforts that are presently occurring in North Dakota and nationally. It was an opportunity for participants to talk about ways to collaborate and support each other in AT reutilization efforts. We think by working together we can make what is happening now even stronger. Together we can increase the awareness and availability of used assistive technology for people.

The Pass It On Center is the national technical assistance center for device reutilization out of Atlanta, Georgia. The facilitators, Carolyn Phillips, Center Director and Joy Kniskern, AT Services Manager, have traveled throughout the United States to guide reutilization efforts. They led the group discussion to identify our vision for the future and what we want to see happen in North Dakota. They shared the national perspective and various models from other states. They facilitated the identification of critical issues and started the process to draft a vision statement.

The following comments were provided by the group when asked: Why are you here? What is your vision for AT Reuse in North Dakota?

- Economics of reutilizing AT - eliminate waste
- Deepen collaboration and partnership around AT Reuse – Connect the Dots
- One Stop Shop for AT Reuse with simple access for those from cradle to rocking chair – access is a big issue in North Dakota, as a rural state
- Address the needs of aging population for aids to assist in seeing, getting around (mobility aids), in activities of daily living, access in and out of homes (ramps)
- Develop a way to address unmet needs for those who don't qualify for benefits
- Repurpose outgrown equipment
- Empty the sheds and closets
- Create a sustainable program that will serve many people

The group identified varied critical issues related to reutilization such as:

- Storage of equipment
- Liability
- Sanitization
- The need for expertise in matching equipment to person's needs
- Ownership of equipment
- Determining types of equipment focus
- Reaching out to other interested groups
- Developing of a statewide plan for reuse with key stakeholders

It was a full day of hard work. Work groups were established for priority activities identified during the day. The group plans to meet again the first week in March to

discuss progress made, outline a Model Plan and next steps. This coalition welcomes others and encourages you to contact IPAT if you are interested in participating.

## **AT and the IEP**

Lynn Dodge, Ed.D.

IDEA requires that IEP teams determine whether a student needs AT and/or AT services to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). AT devices and AT services represent one tool in a system of tools that can be used to facilitate student success.

During the AT discussion, the IEP team should review the student's past and present use of, or need for AT in all academic and functional areas prior to examining the student's future needs. In planning for the coming year, the team should examine the new environments and tasks for potential barriers that may require continued or additional AT support. A list of questions and a template to help guide this discussion can be found in Appendix C of the North Dakota Guidelines for the Individualized Education Program Planning Process on the department's website: [http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/speced/guide/iep/IEP\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/speced/guide/iep/IEP_Guide.pdf).

A common question that often arises during the discussion of AT relates to whether school-purchased AT may be brought home or used in other settings. According to IDEA, the team must make this decision on a case-by-case basis. The team must determine whether access to the AT in another setting, like the home, provides the student with access to the general education curriculum and FAPE. In addition, IEP teams must examine whether the AT makes it possible for the student to participate in non academic and extra- curricular activities and how it can be integrated into the student's program across settings such as work placement and homework. IEP teams have the responsibility to: evaluate student needs to determine appropriate AT and/or AT services; monitor the functioning of the AT; document the purpose of the AT and any training or technical assistance that may be needed by the student, service providers, employers, family or other individuals involved in major life functions in the IEP; and regularly assess the student's need for AT. IEP teams must be able to distinguish needs from wants (just because new AT is available, doesn't mean the team should consider replacing older technology that is working with the newer version).

## **IPAT Staff Earn Certificate**

Peggy Shireley and Scott Weissman, assistive technology coordinators in IPAT's Bismarck office, have successfully completed the coursework, and have each earned an Executive Certificate in Home Modification (ECHM). This certificate can be earned online through the National Resource Center on Supportive Housing and Home Modification at the University of Southern California. The goal of IPAT staff participation in this five course program was for them to develop the skills needed to understand the scope and complexity of home modifications. This was done so that IPAT can respond knowledgeably to the increasing demand for home modification services in North

Dakota. If you have questions about home modifications call Peggy or Scott at 1-888-540-4728.

### **Calling all Facebook Users**

IPAT is now on Facebook. Look for us on Facebook at *IPAT North Dakota Assistive Technology* to start receiving the latest news on IPAT, event notifications, and of course information on the hottest assistive technology devices.

## **CONSUMER CONNECTION**

### **Walker Buddy**



I work as an Independent Living Specialist for Options Resource Center for Independent Living. In my work with Options, I have referred people I serve to the Assistive Safety Device Distribution Service (senior AT safety program) that IPAT administers on numerous occasions to obtain needed equipment.

Recently, I had 3 gentlemen request trays for their walkers, as they were unable to transport items while walking because their hands were occupied holding the walker. I am familiar with Buddy Systems International which manufactures medical assistive devices locally – in Fairdale, ND, so, I recommended a Walker Buddy to the gentlemen.

The first Walker Buddy was made in 2001 by Sandra Lenagh; it is a mesh basket that attaches to an individual's walker which allows the person to safely carry items and see their feet while walking. You can close the walker with the Walker Buddy in place, and it washes in soapy water and air dries for simple upkeep. In checking with the individuals who received this item, they are very pleased with it and I would not hesitate to recommend it for anyone who may need it. As one gentleman stated, he likes this product because it doesn't have a lot of pockets so he doesn't forget about things – "out of sight, out of mind." As I said, this item is a North Dakota product, which contributes back to our local economy.

If you would like to view other products manufactured by Buddy Systems International, please go to [http://buddysystemsintl.com/pages/buddy\\_medical\\_assistive\\_products.html](http://buddysystemsintl.com/pages/buddy_medical_assistive_products.html) or call 1-800-967-4133 and Sandra would be glad to assist you.

Revel Sapa, Options RCIL  
Independent Living Specialist

## Funding News

### *Hidden Resources*

Sometimes financing assistance to purchase assistive technology devices can come from unexpected sources. For example, if you've determined that a closed circuit television (CCTV) is what you need to support your reading interests, you may not have thought about acquiring a used one. At a price substantially less than the full retail cost of a new unit, a neighbor down the street or possibly a stranger across the state may just have one that they no longer need and would be more than glad to see it put to better use than serving as a bulky paperweight in their spare bedroom!

But how do you find out about that "hidden resource"? That's where IPAT's AT Swap & Shop can help. Since 1996, this program has allowed individuals to buy, sell, swap, or give away AT equipment through a statewide used equipment database. Through the AT Swap & Shop, individuals can list their device for 6 months or longer and get statewide exposure by calling IPAT's toll-free number (800-265-4728) or by connecting with IPAT's website. If you're someone looking for a used AT device, IPAT can be contacted using the same method as the lister using the toll-free line or the accessible website. As you contact IPAT in search of a device, staff will provide you with information on all listings appropriate for your needs. You can then decide which listings to pursue, and go on to organize the sale, trade or donation with the person listing the device. IPAT does not get directly involved in the negotiations between seller and buyer.

The *AT Swap & Shop* has significantly increased the number of individuals with disabilities who have acquired AT devices. If you have equipment to list, or are looking for used equipment check out [www.ndipat.org](http://www.ndipat.org) to participate in what may have been a 'hidden resource' for assistive technology.

## EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT

### RNIB Pen Friend



In this edition of the equipment spotlight we are going to take a look at a device with a modest design that has powerful features. The RNIB Pen Friend is a labeling system for individuals that have a vision loss. With the Pen Friend a user is able to label items like food (to include cooking instructions), movie and music collections, or household paperwork with a customized voice label. By adding a self-adhesive label and then

recording a message a user is able to retrieve the message at a later date. Other applications include using it as an audible shopping list or listening to music on the included mp3 player. The uses for the Pen Friend are only limited by ones creativity.

For more information on this device please contact Independent Living Aids at: 800-537-2118 or visit their website at [www.independentliving.com](http://www.independentliving.com). If you would like to rent this item from the IPAT loan library, please call 800-895-4728 or email: [ipatinfo@ndipat.org](mailto:ipatinfo@ndipat.org)

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

### **Up with Downs Fall Conference**

November 20, 2010  
Hope Lutheran Church  
Fargo, ND (701) 212-7877

### **Signing with Jolene**

November 22 (six weeks)  
6:30pm – 8:00pm  
(701) 857-6450

### **8<sup>th</sup> Annual AT Expo**

April 27, 28, 2011  
Ramada Inn  
Fargo, ND  
[www.atexpo.org](http://www.atexpo.org)