

## **Accessible E&IT in Education**

### **Judie Lee, IPAT Director**

The use of technology has become the norm for students from kindergarten through high school. Students and teachers are using computers, multimedia, software, e-mail, websites, and various forms of telecommunication. All students need to be able to access this technology in order to fully participate in academics and other school activities. Therefore, Electronic and Information Technology (E&IT) must be accessible to students with disabilities.

The advances in technology have made many things possible for people with disabilities. However, it has also created barriers. For example, a student with color blindness may be unable to discriminate color-coded options; someone with a hand dexterity problem may not be able to use a mouse; or a person with a vision loss may not be able to access information presented in only a graphic format. Some of these barriers are eliminated when the product is created using universal design principles; which means the product is developed to be usable by all people, including those with disabilities. Thus, universal design has built-in flexibility and offers more choices for everyone.

Standards are needed to provide guidance as to what is and is not accessible. The Federal government has adopted minimum standards for accessibility, referred to as "508 standards". Although the "508 standards" are intended for the federal government, they provide an excellent guide for everyone to use. Using these standards can help clarify appropriate purchasing decisions. There are many categories that fit under "508" including: software, website design, telecommunications, and multimedia. A complete summary of 508 can be found at [www.section508.gov](http://www.section508.gov).

A North Dakota Education E&IT Accessible Technology Committee has been established under a grant from the Rocky Mountain Disability & Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC). The purpose of the Committee is to advance the understanding of accessibility issues related to E&IT for students with disabilities and develop strategies to increase access to technology for all students. Activities to accomplish this goal are being planned and further information will be made available in the future.

Schools continue to explore and identify ways in which the vast array of technology available can be used effectively for instruction. Procedures to address accessibility need to be a part of this planning process.

## **Handi-Cabinets Etc. Inc.**

Handi-Cabinets Etc. Inc., is an independently owned business whose mission is to enable people to stay in their homes longer through customized home modification services. Bruce Hendrickson, a licensed and insured contractor of Kindred, ND is the owner and operator, and has 25 years of building experience.

The services available through Handi-Cabinets Etc. Inc., include: exterior accessibility (ramps, vertical lifts, boardwalks, driveways); kitchen accessibility (rollout shelves, roll-under sinks, custom fit cabinets, refrigerator modifications); bathroom accessibility (roll-in showers, custom vanities, grab bars, handrails); hallway accessibility (widening, railings, door protectors); bedroom accessibility (easy open windows, closet modifications); and laundry room accessibility (front loading appliances, roll-under folding counter, flip-down ironing boards) just to name a few.

If you would like more information or have specific questions about your home, call Bruce at (701) 428-9988 today. He has a static workshop and a shop on wheels that allows him to come to you.

Note: IPAT does not promote the products/services of any specific vendor; rather we provide information to increase consumer awareness and choice.

## **Home Modification Dollars Available**

North Dakotan's residing in the regions served by the Dakota Center for Independent Living may be eligible for monies to help pay for accessible home modifications. The dollars have been made available through a donation from the North Dakota Fair Housing Council and total \$10,000 for a 12-month period. For more information, please call the Dakota CIL at 1-800-489-5013 or (701) 222-3636 and ask for Bob Gomez.

## **Shareware Available to Explore Text-to-Speech**

Curious about how computers can read text to you? If you answered yes, and have a computer with a Windows operating system, there is a shareware program WillowTalk 2.5 available for download and trial-use, free for 30 days.

The WillowTalk program lets your PC speak to you. It can read Web pages, Word documents, spreadsheets, Help files, e-mail and more. It includes a free pronunciation dictionary that lets you tell it how to pronounce unusual words or abbreviations, as well as an alarm clock that can speak the time and date to you at specified intervals. Version 2.5

adds support for America Online (versions 3.0 and 4.0), Outlook Express, and Netscape Communicator e-mail.

If interested, go to <http://cnet.com> and enter WillowTalk into the search window. The results will indicate that WillowTalk is in the CNET shareware library. Click on the link, which will then bring you to the download screen. If desired, you may now download the program to your hard drive.

## **CONSUMER CONNECTION**

Mobility and Recreation Opportunities for ND Children  
Tonya Kincaid, HOPE, Inc.

HOPE, Inc. (HOPE) of Grand Forks, North Dakota, was founded as a non-profit, grass roots 501-© 3 organization in July 1992, by a group of individuals who saw the need to assist families with physically and mentally challenged children. The "HOPE" was to provide them with easy access to the latest technology available for pediatric mobility and recreation.

HOPE currently has two main programs available for the families of North Dakota: the Magic Strike Bowling Program and the Magic Mobility Program. The Magic Strike Bowling Program provides the opportunity for mentally and physically challenged individuals of all ages, and their families to participate in the exciting sport of bowling. The Magic Mobility Program promotes the need for education, assessment and access to the latest Assistive Technology mobility devices for children with special needs, their families, and the supporting members of the community in a fun, highly interactive, learning environment.

HOPE has received national recognition for their Magic Mobility Program. The Magic Mobility Program has two components: the Magic Mobility Camp and Magic Mobility Lending Library. Using various play activities, camp personnel work closely with the children who are participating, their families and other caregivers to give the best opportunity for mobility. The camp therapist assesses each camper's mobility needs and new mobility equipment is introduced to the child. Then based on needs and suitability, the equipment is made accessible through the lending library for the families to utilize.

This summer HOPE has two Magic Mobility Camps scheduled to serve the eastern side of North Dakota: Fargo/Moorhead area June 10-21 and Grand Forks, July 8-19. HOPE is currently working on providing a Magic Mobility Camp in the western portion of the state.

For more information, visit HOPE's website at [www.hopeinonline.org](http://www.hopeinonline.org); or call toll-free: (866) 225-4673.

## **FUNDING NEWS**

### The ND Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program

Do you have difficulty using a standard phone, or do you know someone who does? The Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) offers specialized telephones and accessories at no cost to persons with hearing, speech, and/or physical disabilities.

To qualify a person must:

1. Be 5 years or older;
2. Have a severe hearing, speech or physical disability; and
3. Have phone service in their home or have applied for phone service; and
4. Be a resident of North Dakota; and
5. Have a family income equal to or below the state median income, or 150% for persons who are deaf.

Available equipment includes:

1. TTY-A keyboard device that sends and receives typed messages over the telephone lines.
2. VCO Phones- Allows one party to speak to the other and read their incoming message on the phone's screen.
3. Telephone Ring Signaler-Flashes a light when the telephone rings.
4. Telephone Loud Ringer-Increase the volume and changes the tone of the ring.
5. Special Equipment for persons who are Deaf and Visually Impaired
6. Telephone Amplifier-Attaches to a phone and amplifies the incoming voice.
7. Amplified Telephones-Has built-in amplification features
8. Tele-Braille-A specialized telephone for persons who are deaf and blind.
9. Hands Free Telephone- A speakerphone that allows one to make calls using a simple switch.

One can apply for the TEDP by simply filling out an application and having his/her physician, audiologist, hearing instrument specialist, or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor complete the certification form.

Please call the nearest Independent Living Center for an application packet:

- Dakota Center for Independent Living-Bismarck- 1 (800) 489-5013
- Independence, Inc.-Minot- 1 (800) 377-5114
- Freedom Center for Independent Living-Fargo- 1 (800) 450-0459
- Options Center for Independent Living-East Grand Forks-1 (800) 726-3692

## EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT

Start to Finish Books are high interest, easy vocabulary books developed to be read aloud using a computer. They have been designed to promote independent reading for individuals who cannot access standard books as a result of a disability or reading difficulty. To discover whether or not this "talking" book format is right for you or someone whose reading you support, the IPAT Equipment Loan Library has six titles available for time limited trial-use.

These electronic books feature on-screen highlighting as the story is professionally narrated, and offer individual and key word support for independent reading. The benefits realized through this reading format are: an increased exposure to the variety of literature read; opportunities to learn and practice fluent reading independently; hearing and generalizing appropriate intonations for oral reading; making and confirming predictions about what is being read; and staying connected to the content rather than the reading process.

Don Johnston has created more than 60 Start to Finish Books that cost \$65 each. They are available for either grades 2-3 or 4-5 readability and cover the categories of: Literature, Sports, History Through People, Mysteries, and Science and Nature. To obtain more information, call 1-800-999-4600 or visit their website at [www.donjohnston.com](http://www.donjohnston.com) To borrow titles from the IPAT Equipment Loan Library, call 1-800-421-1181.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1. June 23 & 24, 2002
  - Federation of Families Conference  
Holiday Inn  
Bismarck, ND  
Contact: 1-800-452-4951
- June 27 - July 1, 2002
- RESNA 25th International Conference  
Technology & Disability:  
Research, Design & Practice  
Hyatt Regency Hotel

Minneapolis, MN  
Contact: (703) 524-6683 ext. 306

- July 8-19, 2002
- Magic Mobility Camp  
Grand Forks, ND  
No Charge  
Contact: Tonya 1-866-225-5673
  
- IPAT EQUIPMENT EXPO!
  - August 14, 2002  
State Capitol Grounds  
Contact: Mike 1-800-265-4728
  
- August 28 & 29, 2002
  - Ticket to Work & Medicaid Buy-in Conference  
Radisson Inn  
Bismarck, ND  
Contact: Mike 1-800-265-4728  
Vickay 1-800-472-2670