

Outstanding Projects - AT Leadership Training Institute

Judie Lee, IPAT Director

One year ago, 25 people were accepted to participate in the Assistive Technology Leadership Training Institute. The purpose of the institute was to expand individuals' skills to include a broad-based understanding of AT. The Institute established a statewide network of AT leaders and expanded the opportunities for interagency collaboration at local, regional and state levels. Each participant developed and implemented an Individual Action Plan for an AT project which promoted lasting change in their school, place of work, or community. The participants recently had a reunion to share their accomplishments and celebrate their success. They selected an outstanding project in 5 different categories. The winners in each category were:

Number of People Impacted: Barb Delohery, Grand Forks Public Schools, received this award for her project to promote awareness of AT in the school and home environments among school personnel and in the Grand Forks area. She is providing training and materials to general educators, administrators, UND students, special educators, and the community.

Significant Changes Within a System: Dale Sattler and Maurice Hardy, Dickinson Vocational Rehabilitation, received this award for the development of an AT Focus Group. Members included people from the business community, health providers, education, and vocational rehabilitation. Together they established an assistive technology demonstration lab in Dickinson.

Significant Change Within a Community: Grace Sharbono, Public Health Nurse, Indian Health Services, Belcourt, received this award for her project with Senior Wellness Adventure and Health Education Fair. She provides information and demonstrations at senior centers on available AT products which provide people experiencing changes due to aging, particularly those with low vision or hearing loss, solutions so they can continue living in their own homes.

Creative Solutions to Unexpected Barriers: JoAnn Ross, Special Education Coordinator, Williston, received this award for her project to maximize educational programming through the use of assistive technology for special needs students. Barriers which included release time, funding and apathy or fear of computers were all overcome with

class offerings which met the skill level of the staff, provided peer tutoring, and a comfortable environment. JoAnn discovered and utilized existing resources to make this training opportunity available to special education personnel, para-educators and students with special needs.

Collaborative Efforts: Raylynn Lauderdale, People First of ND, received this award for increasing AT awareness via collaborative methods with people throughout ND. She has infused AT information within conferences and has collaborated with numerous entities to include AT information in their dissemination efforts.

Voting & People with Disabilities

What if you wanted to vote but the polling place was locked? For many of the 33.7 million Americans with disabilities of voting age, this situation is all too real. Not because polling officials are deliberately blocking people with disabilities from entering, but because so many polling places are inaccessible.

Polling booths are frequently set in church basements, in upstairs meeting halls, or in public schools where ramps and elevators are non-existent. Or if the polling booth is accessible the ballot is not. For example, in most states people who are blind don't have the right to a Braille or text-to-speech ballot, they have to bring someone along to vote for them. This is still happening despite state and federal laws - including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which requires polling places to accommodate disabled voters:

'The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 generally requires polling places across the United States to be physically accessible to people with disabilities for federal elections. Where no accessible location is available to serve as a polling place, a political subdivision must provide an alternate means of casting a ballot on the day of the election. This law also requires states to make registration and voting aids available for disabled and elderly voters, including information by text telephones.'

It is the fundamental right of all Americans to vote. Studies show that people with disabilities are interested in government and public affairs and want to participate in the democratic process. If you want your voice heard and need accommodations to vote, contact the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division at the US Department of Justice at 1-800-253-3931 (voice/relay) or check out their website www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting to discover what is available for you today.

Take Note

IPAT announces the availability of an updated **IPAT Products and Services Brochure**. This publication identifies and describes products available through IPAT in the areas of: general AT resources, assessment tools, modules, books, newsletter, surveys, and videotapes. In addition, a section on IPAT services is provided describing: AT financial loan program, consumer advisory committee, equipment expo!, equipment loan library, regional coordinators, website, AT help-line, adaptive equipment services and advocacy services. If you would like a copy call the AT Help-Line at 1-800-472-2911 or download from <www.ndipat.org>.

Computers Available

Do you or does anyone you know have need for a computer? IPAT has two computer loan options for people with disabilities. Computers available for long-term loan have 486 processors with Windows 3.1 or DOS operating systems. Computers available for short-term loan have Windows '95 or '98 operating systems. If you are interested in more information about how to borrow one of these computers, call 1-800-265-IPAT(4728).

Consumer Connection

Assistive Technology: A Needed Boost

Based on an interview of Bob Puyear by Kathleen Donahue

Multiple sclerosis saps me of my strength, energy and mobility. Consequently, I rely on a three-wheel scooter and an elevator to move freely about my Bismarck home, and I use voice-recognition software to access my computer. But it is the simple things I use that I see as having a profound impact on my day-to-day life.

For instance, I use a straw in my coffee cup to drink; this eliminates the physical effort of lifting and holding a cup, which is fatiguing for me - I am an avid coffee drinker! I also use a piece of dycem to keep my cup in place. With a plate guard to keep food on my plate, I can more easily 'load' food on my fork. My favorite home technology, however, is my environmental control system based on X-10 modules from Radio Shack and www.Smarthome.com. With this system, I just touch the appropriate button on my remote control, and I can open the front door for visitors, make my lamp brighter, or turn on and off my air conditioner. I typically use my environmental control system while seated in my recliner because while seated there, I lose the mobility my scooter offers. My recliner has a built in lift-seat that helps others transfer me from my scooter to the chair.

The devices I use to remain active fall under the category of assistive technology. They are really just tools I use to maintain or improve my capabilities while allowing me choice and independence. Without assistive technology, I am not sure I would be able to remain in my home with my wife Shirley and stay as connected as I am to my daughter and grandchildren who live next door. I know for sure I couldn't do any of this without the support of my family.

Funding News

\$30,000 Community Awards Competition

The National Organization on Disability (N.O.D.)/United Parcel Services (UPS) Community Awards Competition is requesting proposals at this time. All communities in the US and its' territories are eligible. "The purpose of the Community Awards Competition is to recognize and promote replication of outstanding efforts to increase the participation of people with disabilities in community life."

There are three population categories each eligible for a \$3,500 First Place Prize, a \$2,000 Second Place Prize, and a \$1,200 Third Place Prize. These categories are: towns and cities with populations above 50,000, towns and cities with populations below 50,000 and counties.

"ALL communities are eligible for the \$10,000 Grand Prize, which will be awarded to the best overall." The deadline for submission is November 30, 2000. Winners will be announced/awarded in January 2001.

Let's continue to put North Dakota on the map when it comes to bringing new ideas and innovations to individuals with disabilities! Take advantage of this exciting contest!

For further information regarding this competition and application forms, access their website at: <www.nod.org/2001cppform.html>.

Mark Your Calendar!

October 10, 2000

AT Room Open House
1pm - 7pm
117 First St. E.
Dickinson, ND
(888) 227-7525

October 19, 2000

AT: Effective Strategies for Community Employment
8:30am - 4:30pm
ND Heritage Center
Bismarck, ND
(701) 328-2674

October 19-21, 2000

Closing the Gap
Computer Tech in Education
Radisson - Bloomington, MN
(507) 248-3294

IPAT Equipment Expo!

October 13, 2000

NDSCS
Whapeton, ND

October 18, 2000

DSU
Dickinson, ND

Call Mike Bishop for details,
(800) 265-IPAT(2748)

Equipment Spotlight

The Link

The Link is an easy-to-use, affordable communication device that has text-to-speech capabilities. Comprised of an AlphaSmart with DECTalk™ speech synthesizer, it is the size of a regular 80 key keyboard and weighs approximately 2 pounds. It features "instant messages" and abbreviation expansion capabilities.



One can store frequently told stories, reports, etc., in one or more of the Link's 8, 8-page files. Files can then be downloaded quickly to a Mac or PC (using the included cables) with the press of a button for printing or formatting. Accessories available include a case, keyguard, and telephone headset kit.

The Link, with a base price of \$1395, is suitable for anyone who can spell and type using a keyboard with or without adaptations. It is available for loan from the IPAT Equipment Loan Library at 1-800-421-1181. Assistive Technologies, Inc. also offers a "free"(one must pay for shipping back to the company) 2 week preview. For more information, check out their website at: www.assistivetech.com or call their toll-free number at: 1-800-793-9227.