

Profile of the Participants

The AT component of the No Place Like Home project met the AT device and service needs of 20 North Dakota residents with disabilities or long-term illnesses. The individuals represented 10 communities: Fargo, West Fargo, Bismarck, Mandan, Minot, Williston, Park River, Grafton, Wilton, and Center. There were 12 women and 8 men, who ranged in age from mid-thirties to mideighties. One person resided in a group home, three were in apartments, and 16 lived in single family dwellings. The people served exhibited disabilities in the areas of hearing, mobility, blindness, quadriplegia, cognitive limitations as a result of traumatic brain injury, deafness, or had been diagnosed with long-term illnesses resulting in continued loss of abilities (multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, and rheumatoid arthritis). IPAT's initial goal was to serve 15 people with the funds made available through the No Place Like Home project but was actually able to serve 20 people. A sampling of their stories follows:

A retired ranger living with his wife took part in the project. He had lost the full use of his legs and arms to a muscle-wasting disease, but could speak and had good head and breath control. His wife worked outside the home, leaving him alone for a good portion of the day. They both had concerns about how he could get help if something happened while she was at work, and his wife also wondered how he could turn on a light once it got dark. She forgot to leave a light on once when leaving for work and came home later that evening to find him sitting alone in the dark. To ease the concerns of both parties, a hands-free, infrared environmental control system, the Relax II, was purchased with project funds. This system, with the addition of a chin switch mounted to his wheelchair, allowed him to answer his phone, place a phone call, turn the TV on and off, change channels and adjust the volume, as well as control the room lights independently. ". . . don't get me wrong, nursing homes are needed and are fine places for some people. I just want to stay home and do as much as I can for myself for as long as I can, keep my wife company and be part of my family. The technology you found for me lets me do that, thank you."

Participant with quadriplegia –
Bismarck, North Dakota

- Cost of AT device: \$1,358.75
- Cost of AT service: \$694.79
- Average cost of assisted living care: \$19,726/year
- Average cost of nursing facility care: \$43,815/year
- Having the choice to remain at home: PRICELESS

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A middle-aged woman who has been blind since birth and lives alone with her cats was referred to the project. There was assistance available to help her do

her shopping (food, medicine, clothing) when out in the community, but when it came time to cook, take medication, do laundry, or get dressed, she was on her own. This led to frequent frustration and safety concerns when wrong choices were made. Without vision, she found it difficult to determine which pill bottle was blood pressure medication, which soup can was tomato, or which laundry items needed to be washed in cold water. To help make living alone with blindness less frustrating and safer, the i.d.-mate II Bar Code Scanner was purchased for her with project dollars. This device reads the item label and other item specific information (contents, weight, dosage) aloud as she moves the infrared scanner over the product barcode. She can then distinguish between medicine bottles, food products, clothing care instructions, and other coded information independently. “. . .I take the i.d.mate II to the grocery store to identify the contents of canned goods, bottles, boxes, and bags before the purchase. Once home, I can prepare meals independently and without waste by using the scanner to identify the container contents, and ‘read’ the directions for preparation on the package. No more opening a can of peaches when I wanted kidney beans for chili, or adding too much water to a rice dish and ending up with an icky rice soup.”

Participant with blindness –  
Minot, North Dakota

- Cost of AT device: \$1,624.00
- Cost of AT service: \$356.25
- Average cost of assisted living care: \$19,726/year
- Average cost of nursing facility care: \$43,815/year
- Having the choice to remain at home: PRICELESS

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A married couple, who both use wheelchairs for mobility, were selected to be project participants. They were living in a house without a ramp, which rendered them prisoners in their own home – once inside, there was no safe way to get outside. A ramp was purchased for their home, making it possible for them to go in and out as they chose. “. . .thank you for all the work and assistance you gave us in getting a wheelchair ramp built. We feel so much more safe and independent since we have had it – we can even get out to empty our own garbage again.”

Participants with mobility issues –
Williston, North Dakota

- Cost of AT device: \$1,204.15
- Cost of AT service: \$658.68
- Average cost of assisted living care: \$19,726/year
- Average cost of nursing facility care: \$43,815/year
- Having the choice to remain at home: PRICELESS

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Comments from Other Participants

“ . . . I thought I needed a contractor to redo my shower and laundry room space because of the step, now I found out I can use an EZ Step instead for less than \$100 – this is great, and my kids will be so much less worried about me falling.”

“ . . . it is nice to know my options, but for now I will just go with the tub-rail and bath bench – if I ever need the hydraulic bath lift, I know where to go.”

Participant –

Mandan, North Dakota

- Purchased: EZ Step, jar opener, and bathtub rail
- Total cost of AT services and devices: \$570.83
- Having the choice to remain at home: PRICELESS

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“ . . . figuring out what my wife needed was really so simple, but I couldn't do it myself – I didn't know where to start. . . it seemed so big.”

“ . . . now, having my wife wear the Emergency Dialer Telephone pendant gives me peace of mind, and allows me to drive into town to run needed errands when it works out for me rather than making it work with a friend or family member's schedule.”

Spouse –

Wilton, North Dakota

- Purchased: Swivel seat and emergency phone dialer
- Total cost of AT services and devices: \$1,111.60
- Having the choice to remain at home: PRICELESS

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“ . . . with my arthritis, using a key to unlock my door was difficult and painful, so many times I just left the door unlocked when I went out. When my kids found out I did that, they were not happy! So, what I want to say is that for me and them, this remote controlled deadbolt is a godsend.”

Participant –

Bismarck, North Dakota

- Purchased: Remote control deadbolt, Up-easy chairlift, & an X-10 module
- Total cost of AT services and devices: \$708.23
- Having the choice to remain at home: PRICELESS

“ . . . My husband and I would like to sincerely thank you and IPAT for the assistive devices he has received. Each and every one is truly an item that was so needed and we are so appreciative. We are most anxious to be able to use the threshold ramp so he can get in and out of the patio door to the backyard. With spring around the corner, it is such an uplifting thought for him to be able to make the transition from indoors to outdoors on his own. The wireless keyboard and mouse are so neat. . . no more wires getting caught in his feet under the desktop either.”

Participant –  
Fargo, North Dakota

- Purchased: Wireless keyboard and mouse, Palm ZIRE 72 with keyboard, 2 threshold ramps, and a wheelchair tray
- Total cost of AT services and devices: \$2,215.23
- Having the choice to remain at home: PRICELESS

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