

RI Council on Assistive Technology
February 25, 2010 ~ 2:30 – 3:30 pm
Warwick Public Library ~ Large Meeting Room
600 Sandy Lane ~ Warwick, RI

Minutes

Attendees: Flo Adeni-Awosika, Carol Dusablon, Margaret Hoye, Thomas Karweh, Michael Matraccia, Teresa O'Brien, Jeanne Panarace, Dan Pieroni, Ying Sun, and Kim Wennermark.

Partners: Kat Grygiel, ATAP Program Director; Mike Montanaro, ATAP; Denise Corson, ATEL; Lisa Labitt, EBEC; Lezlee Shaffer, OSCIL; Allen Parent-Wetmore, PARI; Judi Carlson, TechACCESS.

Welcome: Meeting was called to order at 2:40 p.m. by Co-Chairs Carol Dusablon-Folan and Daniel Pieroni.

Approval of Minutes from 12/10/09: Discussion was held as to whether or not there was a quorum. After it was determined there was a quorum, Kim Wennermark made motion, seconded by Margaret Hoye. Motion unanimously passed.

Co-Chair Report: Co-Chair Dusablon asked if there were any questions regarding the AT laws that she had given out at the last meeting.

Jeanne Panarace asked how funding was for AT program. K. Grygiel responded that it was level funded at \$320,000 per year. She mentioned stimulus funds were received by the vocational rehabilitation program and independent living programs, however none made it to the AT program. K. Grygiel added that if stimulus money was granted, they would need to hold an emergency meeting to brainstorm on ideas.

Co-Chair Dusablon followed up with a question regarding State Financing Programs and what they include. Kat Grygiel responded that within the AT Act there is a listing of services that are to be provided. State Financing is where the state provides funding for AT. Only program that falls under that category is ATEL where most of the funding comes from state dollars. On national level, several states have adaptive telephone loan programs which previously had been free-standing programs but are not handled by the AT programs. Kim Wennermark questioned the surcharge attached to telephone bills. He thought that funded the ATEL program. K. Grygiel responded they also thought that surcharge was changed to the ATEL program, but found out instead that it goes to General Funds and the state budget then allocates money to Newline and ATEL. The question was raised as to how many people are served through the ATEL program. Denise Corson responded that between 350-400 people annually. K. Grygiel recapped how the AT grant sends money to all states for “access to” and “acquisition of” AT.

Co-Chair Dusablon then asked “Where do people start acquisition of AT?” K. Grygiel responded through TechACCESS, ATAP’s Information & Referral Center. Judi Hammerlind-Carlson added that when people call the 800#, they provide information and referral services to appropriate agencies, as well as doing public demonstrations and individual demonstrations by appointment. K. Grygiel noted that when contracts were initially set up, specialists in certain areas with a presence in the community were chosen as partners.

Jeanne Panarace asked if 211 has ATAP information. K. Grygiel was not sure but will check.

Co-Chair Dusablon noted that a new membership application had been received. This will go to Membership Committee for review and interview. She also read list of members whose terms will be

expiring this year. Ying Sun and Liz Hubbard's terms expired as of 1/31/10.

Y. Sun stated he would like to continue.

Dan Pieroni made motion, seconded by Michael Matraccia that Ying Sun's term be extended for another 3 year term. Motion was unanimously accepted.

L. Hubbard was not in attendance at this meeting. She will be contacted to see if she would like to continue on council.

Kim Wennermark made motion that contingent upon L. Hubbard's acceptance, her term be extended another 3 year term. Margaret Hoye seconded. Motion was unanimously passed.

ATAP Program Director's Report: Kat Grygiel began by noting that a couple of meetings prior, she had discussed establishing training on running councils. Melissa MacDonald from RIDE had connected with a consultant, Peggy Hayden, who is willing to do a one-day training. This training would be for 6-7 various councils so only the chairs and co-chairs would be able to attend due to capacity issues. They would then offer a training for the full council.

K. Grygiel informed the council that although she was promoted to Deputy Administrator one year ago, the Assistant Administrator position she previously held has just been posted. The AT Program is going to be the #1 responsibility of that position. They will begin interviewing in March, and this person will gradually transition into the position. K. Grygiel noted she will be supervising this person, and will not be walking away from the AT Program.

Each year end, ATAP needs to submit reports to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Previously targets were submitted. They have met the targets in some areas but not in others. They not have to establish new targets for 2010. This will be discussed at the ATAP partner meeting on March 10.

They plan to look at what needs to be targeted and improved upon.

ATAP Partners' Reports:

ATEL – Denise Corson brought in a new Captel phone to show what it looked like. She explained how it is internet based, and commented that Jeanne Panarace had just had one installed. She noted that it is like a mini-computer screen where font, background color, etc. can be changed. Denise commented there was one problem that they had with the router. Jeanne Panarac noted she had called Cox and spoke with the supervisor who approved a loaner router to work with the Captel phone. Denise said it is amazing how extremely fast this system is. This phone is not voice recognition, however, an operator is revoicing through the system and there is only a slight delay.

EBEC –Lisa also handed out her report. She began by stating that they continue to do device demonstration with teacher assistants. Lisa Labitt noted that next week she will be having breakfast with about 520 teacher assistants at a training. She also has network sessions which were being run previously by Peggy Hayden. The April network is on AT, Universal Design and Educational Technology where Lisa will go around the state. She also had another training where 4 companies were brought together to show Interactive Whiteboards. School systems are using their technology funds to purchase items like these. Device loans are pretty consistent to people to try out equipment. Lisa explained that school districts did receive stimulus funds and can use some of that money to purchase AT and demonstrations. Kat asked if a vendor of whiteboards would be able to come in and do a demonstration. Judi Carlson added that it is scary how quickly technology changes and improves. Lisa also discussed readers and explained how they are different from universal readers. Some might have speech output, larger print, etc.

PARI – Allen Parent-Wetmore said they are doing great. However, their tech person is out for 3 months. He also asked if the meeting could be held at PARI with a half- hour tour prior to meeting. This will be the September 9, meeting.

<http://www.pari-ilc.org/docs/paridirections.html>

PARI's contract with ATAP is for equipment recycling and demonstration through the PAAT program. Co-Chair Dusablon questioned home modification programs if rental. PARI and OSCIL both have guidelines set for home modifications. They can get equipment from them such as ramps and rails, however, there are other agencies that would be able to help.

OSCIL – Lezlee Shaffer handed out her report. A couple of new things that happened recently included applying for a grant for continued funding through the Tufts Foundation to expand home modification program. Also, a rep from the State Library Services came in to talk about the Talking Books Program. It has been using cassettes, however, now they are going over to a digital systems. Kim Wennermark asked if they were designed to integrate with other systems. Lezlee said they were not.

TechACCESS – Judi Carlson handed out a copy of her report, and added that the Downs Syndrome Association held their meeting at TechACCESS and prior to meeting they got to tour TechACCESS. Device demonstrations are regularly scheduled on Mondays for their Information and Referral Piece. There are 4-5 programs that deal with hearing impaired. Denise Corson and Judi had been discussing sharing resources and developing an informational program that would meet on a regular basis. Denise added they are thinking of 3rd Wednesday at 6:30 for a two hour informational presentation. Judi also noted that they have instituted fees for the device loan library. If people do say they can't afford, they can waive the fee. Judi also added that a lot of them sit on advisory boards so that AT can be discussed and kept in the forefront.

New Business (Roundtable):

Jeanne Panarace informed the council of a new program to recycle computers/printers. The Capitol Retired Senior Volunteer program which is housed in Federal Hill House. They accept old computers, cables, printers, monitors, and train veterans who are unemployed in computer repair. They use them for training at senior centers.

Membership Committee:

Ying Sun made motion, seconded by Teresa O'Brien to postpone membership meeting. Motion unanimously passed.

Next Meeting: April 15, 2010 - Warwick Public Library –
Small Meeting Room

Other meeting dates:

- June 24, 2010 - Warwick Public Library – Large Meeting Room
- September 9, 2010 – PARI Independent Living Center, 500 Prospect Street, Pawtucket, RI
- November 4, 2010 – TechACCESS of RI, 110 Jefferson Blvd, Warwick, RI

Motion was made by Ying Sun and seconded by Margaret Hoye to adjourn meeting at 4:05pm. Motion passed.

ATEL'S QUARTERLY PARTNER REPORT FOR RICAT
2/25/10

QUARTERLY REPORT: DEVICE DEMONSTRATION
RHODE ISLAND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACCESS
PARTNERSHIP

SUMMARY OF KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN
WORKPLAN:

We provide numerous home and office demonstrations, to ensure that when client's get their equipment they know how to properly use it. We also have people that do not qualify for the program, come in and test different phones and assist them in ordering.

NUMBER OF DEVICE DEMONSTRATIONS BY DEVICE
TYPE:

Type of AT Device/Service	Number of Demonstrations of this Type of AT Device/Service
Hearing	125
Speech communication	2
Other (Muscular disability)	1
Total	128

ANECDOTE

I provided a demonstration to the 3 Audiologists at Alliance Hearing Center, so that they would be aware of how all the different devices ATEL carries works; then they would have a better understanding of who these devices can help and how the

new technology has allowed ATEL to help even a vaster number of individuals with disabilities.

**QUARTERLY REPORT: PUBLIC AWARENESS AND INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE
RHODE ISLAND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACCESS PARTNERSHIP**

SUMMARY OF KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN WORKPLAN:

I did a presentation at Alliance Hearing Center on 10/27/09 and the Cranston Senior Center on 12/10/09. Also, we had our former volunteer, Kathy Schmidt, contact me about helping at a MS Presentation on 12/28/09.

**QUARTERLY REPORT: STATE FINANCING
RHODE ISLAND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACCESS PARTNERSHIP**

SUMMARY OF KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN WORKPLAN:

We serviced 93 clients and issued 96 devices. Our waiting list was 24 at the end of the quarter

Type of AT Device/Service	Number of Devices Funded	Value of AT Provided
Hearing	94	\$ 18,200.00
Speech communication	1	\$ 500.00
(other) Muscular Disability	1	\$ 400.00
Total	96	\$ 19,100.00

ANECDOTE

I visited a lady that was going thru chemotherapy for eye cancer and wasn't able to make any of her doctor appointments because she couldn't hear on the phone. She would wait for her son to come over once a week to try to schedule her appointments. After she received the phone she was so relieved that she didn't have to bother anyone to make appointments and was able to know who was calling.

Sean Gill and myself spend 3 hours installed the new Captel 800i phone at an elderly person's residence. Due to her having digital phone service she was unable to use the Captel 200 for incoming calls, and was very concerned about her family not being able to reach her directly, and admittedly didn't want them to have to call the 800#. The new Captel 800i works thru the internet for incoming calls, but we had to help her purchase a modem and hook up the new phone near her computer. She called a week later and said it was working GREAT!!!!

MAJOR CHANGES, EITHER IMPLEMENTED OR PLANNED, IN (A) WORK PROGRAM, (B) SERVICE PROVIDED, (C) STAFFING, OR (D) CHANGE IN ADDRESS AND/OR TELEPHONE NUMBER:

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1. The ordering process is going smoothly: Denise now places the bids and processes the PO's so new telephone devices are arriving on a timely process. ATEL clients are now almost always receiving home visits, compared to about 50% when ATEL was at Goodwill. Denise has to group clients by towns and give them about a 2 hour time window on their appointment due to seeing numerous clients on the same day; unfortunately, if not available at the day and time Denise will be in their area, they have to wait until the following month. However, Denise dated that most clients are very flexible and just happy to be receiving a home visit.
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2. TechACCESS, PARI and Hamilton Relay all agreed to be drop locations.
 3. New Captel device has been added to the program Captel 800i; this remarkable phone works like any traditional telephone, but it also connects to the Internet to show you written captions during your telephone conversations.
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East Bay Educational Collaborative

Portsmouth - Little Compton - Tiverton - Newport - Middletown - Bristol Warren -
Barrington - East Providence

317 Market Street Warren, RI 02885 401-245-4998 401-245-9332 (Fax)
kowalczyj@ride.ri.net

RICAT Meeting Summary East Bay Educational Collaborative Partner

The ATAP Children and Youth Resource Center located at East Bay Educational Collaborative provides a Lending Library of Assistive Technology and a Demonstration Computer Lab for School age children.

Agency Collaboration: Rhode Island Parent Network, Department of Health, Department of Education, Collaboratives, CCRI's

Device Demonstration

Demonstrations for educators, parents and families are provided on going and by appointment during this quarter.

Rhode Island Teacher Assistants: demonstration and hands on with Assistive Technology tools and devices during a 4 day course. This a course offered twice yearly wanting to work as Teacher Assistants in any school district. Rhode Island Department of Education standards indicate an element of Training to include Educational Technology and Assistive technology.

Interactive Whiteboard demonstration series: 4 vendors presented their equipment and new technology to a variety of educators, administrators and community liaisons. Vendors: Smart technologies, Polyvison, Promethean & e Instruction were available for these demonstrations.

Device Training

Digital Text and Screen Reader technology has been a popular technology this quarter for High School age students. Two families have been supporting their sons in using screen reader technology during their challenging high school courses and preparing them for Post secondary college level curricula/academics. Transitioning to State colleges who utilize these technologies already are widely acceptable and encourage the students to have mastered them prior to coming into college. So they can “hit the ground running with their classes”.

Training provided to educators in Rogers High School, Bristol Warren Special Education Department, and 2- Barrington High school Students. Communication devices (2) were utilized for training Speech Pathology Staff in Foster/ Gloucester Northwest Regional Special Education to provide assessment for several students needing Augmentative communication devices.

Device Loan

Borrowing Assistive Technology devices for assessment and consultation are done on site in the natural learning environment.

Types and number of devices loaned this quarter:

Vision (0) Speech communication(2) Learning cognition(0) Computer related (9)

Coordination and Collaboration Activities

Vocational Evaluators providing worksite evaluations and require any technology tools for their students to access the jobsite are instructed to contact me for information or to borrow devices for students.

2 trainings were cancelled this reporting quarter for lack of registration.

1. Assistive Technology basic information for families
2. Low tech Communication devices/ picture communication environments

Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL)

Summary of Activities for January - February 2010

Device Demonstration/Reutilization

Visits to consumer homes continue, providing an opportunity to conduct independent living assessments and/or OT assessments to identify AT to address barriers to independence. Visits may include bringing sample AT for demonstration, short-term trial use of AT, providing vendor catalogs and ordering information, and exploring possible funding sources. Home visits allow us to observe consumers in their home environment performing activities of daily living.

OSCIL's Letter of Inquiry has been submitted and accepted by Tufts Health Plan Foundation enabling us to submit a full proposal for additional funding of our Home Sweet Accessible Home project. The majority of the \$50,000 received in July 2009 has been used or is earmarked for projects/purchases currently in process. The submission deadline is March 24 with notification of grantees in late June. The focus will again be "Keeping Seniors Safe" and will enable us to expand our Home Access & Equipment program with purchases of additional AT and minor home modifications.

Public Awareness & Information Dissemination

OSCIL continues to provide information, news articles and human-interest stories on AT and how it can be utilized to address barriers to independence in the home and community through its quarterly newsletter, *Signs of Independence*. The March 2010 issue will include an update on Talking Books Plus, informing consumers about the new digital recorders and digital cartridges that will be replacing cassette recorders and cassettes. Following training next month, OSCIL's AT Specialist, Melissa Rosenberg, will be assisting in registering and training consumers for the new digital recorder. Also included is a write-up on VetTECH, a Community Computer Repair Depot, providing low-cost computer systems or computer repairs, and an appeal from A-Tel Program for volunteers to serve on its Advisory Committee.

Collaboration & Networking

OSCIL continues working closely with Westbay Community Action (the other Tufts Health Plan Foundation recipient), referring to/from each other depending on consumer needs for AT to address safety issues in the home. Westbay's grant covers seniors in Warwick, West Warwick, East Greenwich and West Greenwich only and primarily provides funding for the purchase of Phillips Lifeline Personal Emergency Response Systems and will cover the cost until the grant ends. Additionally they will pay for safety equipment such as commodes, door alerts, walkers with seats and breaks, and shower chairs.

OSCIL remains as a satellite mini-site for the “The Point” (RI’s resource place for seniors and adults with disabilities), and receives receive referrals (including walk-ins) for information/assistance on AT and other disability related issues.

Collaboration/referrals from area nursing homes continue, along with outreach efforts via calls, mailings and promotion of Community Living option in OSCIL’s newsletter.

Technical Assistance/Transition Services

Nursing home transition efforts continue targeting younger disabled (30 – 60 years old). OSCIL’s Nursing Home Transition Specialist relies heavily on information provided by staff at area nursing homes and OSCIL’s ATAP Specialist to identify and obtain AT required for consumers to make a safe transition back into the community.

Lezlee Shaffer
OSCIL Program Director

TechACCESS of RI

Report to RI Council on Assistive Technology (RICAT) Summary of ATAP Activities February, 25, 2010

Device Demonstration:

Free, public demonstrations continue to be offered every Tuesday from 2 until 3:30. There has been some concern about “Technology for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing”. Consequently, this session is in the process of being reviewed for content, format, and collaboration with other interested agencies/individuals.

Open Lab Hours continue to be at capacity on Tuesdays.

Device Loan:

Loans of a variety of devices continue to be made. We have instituted a \$5 inventory maintenance fee per loan to cover cleaning and refurbishment.

Fees have also added for devices over \$200

- Value up to \$200 ~ free
- Value \$200-500 ~ \$10/week
- Value \$500 and over ~ \$25 per week.

Fees encourage people to return devices promptly

Fees are waived for individuals if it is a hardship.

Training/Exhibits

TechACCESS provides a variety of training workshops to help people understand about assistive technology in general and how

to operate and use specific technologies. Sessions for December, January, February include:

- **Presentation for URI Education program**
- **5 educational workshops on adapting books**
- **2 full day software workshops on software**
- **2 Blind/ Low Vision Technology Vendor Demos**
- **Statewide presentation offered on Autism and Communication**
- **Intro technology session to the Down's Syndrome Society**
- **2 CyberVision Saturday sessions**

Technical Assistance:

Participation on several statewide advisory committees continues by Director and Staff to insure that assistive technology issues and concerns are included in policy and decision making:

RI Vision, Education Services Program (RIVESP)

Rhodes to Independence

Peer Assisted Health Initiative

**Judi Hammerlind Carlson
TechACCESS Director**
