

**RI Council on Assistive Technology**  
**January 28, 2016 ~ 2:30 – 4:00 pm**  
**Tech ACCESS of RI**  
**110 Jefferson Blvd, Suite I, Warwick, RI**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:** Chair Michael Matraccia, Kathleen Grygiel, ATAP Program Director; Monica Dzialo, Elisabeth Hubbard, Courtney Petrarca, Robert Pires, Melanie Sbardella, Colleen Poliselli

**Guest:** Justin Pasquazzi, President of ASTRO; Connor McDermott, Touch Screen Solutions; and Pat Robert

**Partners:** Lorna Ricci, OSCIL and Lisa Labitt, EBEC

**Excused:** Denise Corson, ATEL; Kelly Charlebois, TechACCESS; Teresa O'Brien; Tara Townsend; Flo Adeni-Awosika, Ying Sun, Becky Wright, Kim Wennermark

**Welcome:** Meeting was called to order by Chair Michael Matraccia at 2:35 pm. Introductions were done by all attendees.

**Approval of Minutes from October 22, 2015:** Elisabeth Hubbard made motion to approve minutes with no changes. Robert Pires seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

**New Business:**

**New Members Needed:** Michael Matraccia made motion to accept Justin Pasquazzi as a new member. Lorna Ricci seconded. Approved unanimously.

**Renewals of term:** Michael Matraccia made motion on the renewal of term for Elisabeth Hubbard. Monica Dzialo seconded. Approved unanimously.

Ying Sun and Kim Wennermark were not in attendance but expressed their continuance as members. Michael Matracia made motion to renew terms for each. Elisabeth Hubbard seconded. Approved unanimously.

**Program Director:** Kat Grygiel shared from October's meeting that Linda Deschenes would be the new Program Director and take over the responsibilities of the ATAP program. Since then there have been many extra projects that fall under Linda's scope of responsibilities that had been neglected and with those responsibilities has discovered that the complexities are more than anticipated. Linda is currently devoting her attention to these projects. Kat Grygiel will continue to be the Acting ATAP Director and will make every attempt to try to get to at least one or two of the National Conferences on AT. Her recommendations for members are to continue to attend the RICAT meetings on a regular basis and bring ideas, feedback and suggestions. Also, if there is a conference or presentation, make every effort to attend and show support.

**ATEL:** Not in attendance. Report was submitted and is attached.

**OSCIL:** Public Awareness: Lunch and Learn continues to be a success and is held on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Having products for the hearing impaired, closed captioning, and interpreters there make these sessions accessible for all. Different pieces of AT are highlighted during each session. DaVinci is scheduled for next month to talk about how CCTV can help with vision loss.

OSCIL has expanded and has acquired additional space at 175 Main Street, Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The Deaf program will move there because there is quite a bit of interaction with the School for the Deaf. It will also bring that program to a more central part of the state. There is a video phone set up currently at OSCIL for staff and consumers. The same set up will be located at the Pawtucket location.

**AT Inventory:** The AT room has expanded. There continues to be more walk-ins on a daily basis. The Try-Out Program has taken off. There are devices for those with sensory, physical, and visual impairments as well as devices for the Hard of Hearing including high end devices such as the DaVinci CCTV for the consumer to try.

Lorna noted that although Medicare will pay for such as tub cuts, bars and rails, taking shower doors off, there is difficulty finding contractors who will put them in. OSCIL is a licensed contractor and could possibly bundle these projects. OSCIL is already doing the assessments and is proposing that OSCIL take on the entire project than report back to NHP by saying an individual can benefit by doing A, B and C. Lorna Ricci is proposing Medicare change this somehow and is speaking with legislators and people who need to hear this and maybe put into the new rules to address this provision of AT.

There is an abundance of roll-a-tors. The program is income based and working with those with the most need. A prescription is required. There remains a barrier for seniors on Medicare who may have the resources but not the knowledge on how to obtain this product.

Since the closing of PARI, Lorna Ricci has reported most of the programs at OSCIL have expanded by 83%. They served 401 consumers -- people with direct services. Of that 83% increase, the majority of those referrals are coming through for AT and home modifications. Also growing significantly are services for the deaf. OSCIL has two “generalists” that deal with direct skills training such as peer support issues, and benefits planning, OSCIL’s base services.

Lorna noted that the Nursing Home Transition Program is changing. OSCIL would like to work in tandem with the Department of Human Services who has a grant for transition services but it is a medical model. The language is “clinical function” in Medicare rules and would like to change it to “comprehensive assessment” to bring it back to the independent living model and holistic approach.

OSCIL has continued the PCA program which primarily effected doubling all the services including home modification program as well as impacting all the programs.

OSCIL still has three positions open. The youth program still needs to be developed; a new program director; and the YMCA program still needs to be developed.

The youth program addresses a strong connection with the high schools to recruit youths to go back and be peers in the high schools. Promoting “WORK FOR GAS” which offers a stipend promoting high school students to come and try to recruit youth with disability to go out and speak.

YMCA program would have a liaison connection with all the Y’s. OSCIL will hire a person who will be addressing that as a goal. They are looking at socialization and opportunities to connect with other people. This whole piece is an unmet need and continues to come up as part of strategic planning. If identified as a goal, this person will work with the local YMCA to get the individual connected. Individual must meet a financial need, and have a strong goal to participate in the program. Membership will be paid for three months to participate in an actual plan at the YMCA. The liaison within the YMCA will provide a printed report noting the amount of time(s) they attended and followed through with the plan. Participation in the program could be paid for up to a year if meeting the criteria. Program is for 18 years and up.

**TechACCESS:** Not in attendance. Report was submitted and is attached.

**EBEC:** Lisa Labitt reported that there seems to be much training in the schools from Pre-K to post-secondary with the focus on anxiety and mental health. She is seeing a niche for technology to get involved in this as well because sometimes children are using technology and sometimes that can help in school but sometimes technology is what is causing the anxiety and problems. Trying to address the needs of using assistive technology and technology in education. There is a site Lisa Labitt refers to by Dr. Michael Rich referred to as a Media-triton out of Boston Children’s Hospital.

**Device Loan:** Reported 13 device loans. Device loans remain consistent. Have more kids who are transition age 14-21 year old accessing and using devices such as wireless speakers, Go-pro cameras, and I-pad minis to help with employment, GPS, and transportation. Technology in the classroom is hitting 80% to 90% of the children. With such an influx of technology in the regular classrooms, it hits a lot of kids with learning disabilities, not all kids. Some technology tools need to be

adjusted and modified such as Chrome Books. Lisa been doing trainings on Chrome Books for Transition Age Students with Disabilities; and Chrome Books for All Learners. There are certain limitations with technology, this piece particularly, Teachers and para-educators (teacher assistants) need to learn the limitations of technology. The focus this quarter has been working with para-educators which is a more direct connect to students. Para-educators are the way to go for professional development.

Teachers of the visually impaired are happy with the new purchases for the lending library. One purchase is a literacy training tool which comes from Perkins School for the Blind. It resembles a large Light Bright and has been utilized by six teachers of the visually impaired since September.

Kathleen Grygiel inquired about the influx of training and need around the DOJ Consent Decree and ISA and the impact on transition age youth. Lisa responded that much of the training has gone through the Sherlock Center. There is a lot of information and training going through the transition centers. Each collaborative has a transition coordinator working with the Vocational Rehab staff. There are monthly transition advisory committees, each high school has been going to a collaborative. Two collaboratives have enlisted Lisa Labbitt for assistive technology. She added that she has been receiving more calls from counselors. It was suggested to reach out to Joe Murphy, Assistant Administrator for Supportive Employment for ORS. He conducts a monthly meeting with staff involved with supported employment specifically with individuals with intellectual disabilities. Good opportunity getting people sensitized to the role AT can play with this population.

Digital computer technology and digital literacy for kids: When asked if they know how to use a computer and internet, everyone answers they know how to do everything, but they do not realized the impact of what they are doing on-line stays with them. There is more teaching and training around that. (Digital and Literacy Handbook was passed around).

Lisa noted she will be co-presenting with Melanie Sbardella at the ATIA (Assistive Technology Industry Association) in Orlando, Florida. The session is “On-the-Job with Mobile Technology - a Go-Pro Perspective”. Wanted to show kids visual

supports in a new way and how a Go-Pro can be used for service professionals and for peer support -- teaching other kids on how they can approach a job a little more interesting.

**Roundtable:** Elisabeth Hubbard spoke about trying to do more outreach to different organizations for AT funding, particularly regarding issues getting wheelchairs. Suggestion was made to outreach to BROWN Medical School, specifically the Physician Training Program.

**Announcement:** Courtenay Petracca noted that ATEL is actively trying to pass a bill through legislation and it is scheduled to be heard in the House on February 3, 2016 at the RISE (4:00 ish) of the State House. She encouraged everyone to come out and sign the Letter of Support for this bill.

ATEL will provide the device and applicable application for the individual's need; the consumer is responsible for the service provider and the financial expense incurred for that service provider.

**Next Meeting Date:** April 28, 2016 from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m., TechACCESS of RI, 110 Jefferson Blvd, Suite 1, Warwick, RI.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm

**Attachments:** Partner Reports

# **ATEL Partner Report for 1/28/16 RICAT Meeting**

## Device Demonstrations

We did 66 device demonstrations and had 110 participants from 10/1/15 – 12/31/15.

**Anecdote** –Her son-in-law convinced her to get a Captel phone since they live out of state and are having great difficulties communicating to the point they are considering moving her to assisted living. However, when I explained the different models, with and without Captions, he told me she didn't have internet and her elderly friends would never call the 800#. I told her son that she might not even need captions, maybe just a simple landline phone would work. I installed it and she had no trouble speaking with her son-in-law. He called a few days later saying he can't believe how much the situation improved with his mother-in-law and that he is so grateful for our program.

## State Financing

We serviced 74 clients and issued 82 devices with a retail value of approximately \$12,358.

## **Anecdote** –

I installed a telephone for a lady that had rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory polyarthopathy. She didn't want a speakerphone that would be easier for her to manipulate but a cordless phone. She told me "you just program the phone and show me and I can make it work, I'm very determined" She could barely use her fingers but we found a way to make it work, by utilizing her thumb and shoulder she was able to hold and dial the phone.

## Public Awareness/Information & Assistance

We did Technology Demonstration programs on **Technology and Communication Strategies for Persons with Hearing Loss**: 12/9/15 and demonstration from 12-2 PM at OSCIL, **Lunch and Learn, Removing Barriers to Independence**: 10/28/15, 11/18/15 and 12/9/15.

## **Presentations and Expos/Conferences:**

- 10/6/15- Presentation at Winslow Gardens
- 10/8/15- Booth at the Prime Time Expo at the Warwick Mall
- 10/16/15- Booth at the Senior Agenda Collation Expo
- 10/21/15- Seniors Rule Networking Meeting
- 10/22/15- Quarterly RICAT Meeting
- 10/22/15- Booth at the Better Bottom Line Conference
- 10/23/15- Booth at the National Federation of the Blind Conference
- 10/30/15- Attended Info and Resource Conference for Seniors Police and Fire Advocates
- 11/4/15- Annual CDHH Coffee Hour/booth
- 11/10/15- Monthly South County networking meeting of elderly service providers
- 11/12/15- Monthly Networking Meeting of Senior Providers for Johnston/Providence area
- 11/20/15- Yearly TechACCESS AT Conference
- 11/23/15- Presentation at Blackstone Falls Elderly complex
- 11/24/15- Presentation at Elmwood Adult Day Services/Spanish speaking in Providence
- 11/21/15- Courtenay Petracca discussed RI Relay and the ATEL Program on WPRO.
- 11/14/15- Providence Business News did an article on "Nonprofit boost access to tools for disabled." Mentioning all the ATAP Partners.
- 12/7/15- Did a presentation for staff at the Zambarano Hospital
- 12/8/15- Monthly Networking Meeting for Elder Care providers.

## ATEL Committee Update

ATEL received Recognition Award for its commitment to promote state's program through demonstration and education for the Deaf and HOH of RI. ATEL added two new members to the Advisory Committee, but unfortunately one of the new members passed away this month. ATEL's legislation to be able to provide wireless devices was reintroduced by Representative Naughton, House Bill 7014, and Senate companion Bill S2051, was introduced by Senator Coyne. The hearing in the House is scheduled for February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.

Respectfully submitted:  
Denise Corson

## **RICAT Meeting: 1/28/2016 EBEC Quarterly summary**

The ATAP Children and Youth Resource Center located at East Bay Educational Collaborative provides a Lending Library of Assistive Technology Devices and a Demonstration Center for school age children, educators and families.

### **Device Loan: 13**

**Anecdote:** Rhode Island Transition Academies have been utilizing the AT Loan library prior to purchasing technology for their young adult students. Popular items for loan this quarter include; *blue tooth wireless speakers* for vocational experiences, *Go pro Camera* for video job training and experiential visual supports during employment , *I pad mini* for transportation traveling and google Maps GPS training for bus routes and independent travel experience.

### **Device Demonstration: 17**

#### **Anecdote:**

Rhode Island College- Sherlock Center Teachers of Vision Impaired (TVI s) have been utilizing demonstrations for families and self exploration, including the hand held portable magnifiers: **Ruby HDXL**, and the **Amigo** portable magnifier.

### **Device Trainings: 5**

#### **Number of Participants: 40**

- Digital Literacy at the Elementary Level
- Blended Learning using the Microsoft Surface pro 3
- Chromebooks for Transition age students with Disabilities
- Chromebooks for all learners
- Para Educators: AT 101 for Students with disabilities
- Reading Technology Tools for Learning Disabilities
- Communication options for Autism and expression using I pad Apps

## **Info. & Assistance 102**

**Anecdote:** A high School student has been well equipped by a district. He is a proficient user of AT personally and academically. In his Junior year HS, he now has multiple assessments/college boards to take without using the daily AT that has profound impact on his work. Many tools have Wifi connectivity and therefore not allowed as an accommodation during testing, extended time does not at all meet his needs. Low tech tools will slow this person down during Mathematics portion of the assessment. Working with family, Prentice and the district to meet his specific needs. Currently uses an i pad, large monitor with Smartboards within several classrooms, chromebook adapted to vision specs modifications, Low tech magnifier, and Ruby HDXL for portability. also uses his i phone with multiple Apps. Excellent example of coordination between TVI, Orientation Mobility and district team including Family. Student is starting the College search process with the self advocacy skills necessary for success and learning.

The Transition Advisory Council in the East Bay Region and West Bay Area as well as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are a steady source of activity for EBEC AT Resource Center and Training

Respectfully submitted: Lisa Labitt 1/27/2016



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**Report for January 28, 2016 RICAT Meeting**

***Highlights from Quarter: October-December 2015***

• **Information & Assistance & Public Awareness:**

- OSCIL's Information & Referral Specialists responded to 109 requests for information on AT, primarily from consumers, but also from family members and various other health service providers. These requests were via phone calls, emails, via OSCIL's website and Facebook page and also from walk-ins.
- OSCIL took part in the following events: MS Dream Center Health and Wellness Fair, Prime Time Expo, MS Society Annual Meeting and Expo, All Access Libraries event, New England AT Conference.

• **Demonstrations**

Thirty two (32) demonstrations of AT devices or equipment were done during the quarter with the majority in the Community Living category.

• **Device Loans – Short Term**

During this quarter, OSCIL loaned out 4 items as short-term loans. These included a transport wheelchair, Alert Master Smoke Alarm, Shake Up Smoke Detector and Commode.

• **Reuse - Open Ended Loans.** During the quarter OSCIL gave out 34 pieces of AT through open-ended loans. AT included the following:

- Bed Rails
- Visual AT
- Magnifier
- Wheelchair
- Shower chair
- Reacher
- Toilet Risers
- Long handled dressing AT

- Tub Transfer Bench
- Slide Board
- Leg Lifter
- Car “Handy Bar”
- Rocker Knife
- Cutting Board
- Automatic jar opener
- Adjustable Table
- Clamp-on vegetable peeler
- Adapted embroidery hoop
- Counter tilt mixing bowl
- Pot Strainer
- Donated ramp

These items enable consumers to address barriers to independence and eliminate the necessity of having to purchase these items.

- **Technical Assistance - Transition Services:** During the quarter, OSCIL provided assistance to 6 individuals through its Community Living Options Program (Nursing Home Transition). Three (3) were successfully transferred and 1 is in the process of being transitioned. Two (2) withdrew from the Program due to individual circumstances.
- **Other Activities.**
  - OSCIL’s AT IL Coordinator continues to participate in the ATEL Advisory Committee and ATEL’s Technology Night training.
  - OSCIL continues to offer monthly Lunch & Learn opportunities regarding AT and other topics of interest to our consumers and the general public.
  - OSCIL began a collaboration with the United Way 211 Outreach RV to provide outreach on OSCIL’s premises on a monthly basis.
- **Case Studies**
  1. Consumer is a 65 year old male residing in a 2-family tenement, owned by his family. His sister lives with him and is his caretaker. Consumer has a cognitive disability and has had multiple small strokes. He ambulates with a Rollator independently. He has gait issues that increase the risk of falls. He stated that he can't get into the tub because he needs something to hold onto. Two grab bars were installed in the shower. He also stated that he has trouble holding onto utensils. We provided him with wide handled

utensils. With a prescription from his PCP, we were able to provide this consumer with a transport wheelchair to make getting to his appointments easier and help to keep him more independent. We also added a ramp to the back of his home for emergency egress and appointments.

2. The consumer is a 64 year-old male who lives in subsidized housing with his 10 year-old son. The consumer has orthopedic disability resulting in impaired strength keeping him from performing several tasks of daily living, including meal preparation, toileting and dressing. He wanted to be able to prepare meals for himself and his son, but was often unable to lift up the pots and pans or open jars because of the weakness he experienced in his hands. Another task he struggled with was getting his lower body dressed, or picking items up off of the floor because he was unable to bend forward. He was also having trouble with mobility in the bathroom and was unable to rise up from his low toilet. For this consumer we provided him with light weight cookware and an automatic jar opener, long handled dressing equipment, and a toilet seat riser. When he saw the automatic jar opener he was very pleased and said “I don’t have to wait for my son to get home from school to open up jars for me”. He said that he would also have to have his son pick up items from the floor for him, but was happy he could be more independent using the reacher. Overall this consumer was excited that simple AT could provide him with the independence he wanted during his daily living tasks.

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**RICAT MEETING**  
**January 28, 2016**  
**ATAP Partner Reporting: TechACCESS of RI**  
**Highlights from Quarter: October, November, December 2015**

**Demonstrations**

We continue to offer monthly Technology Demonstrations, with a focus on Technology for those with Blindness/Low Vision, Alternate Access, and Tablet Technologies.

*Anecdote: During this quarter we had a request from an Occupational Therapist who was looking to determine if a student could activate a switch to engage in play with switch-adapted toys. She was interested in seeing a variety of switches and switch adapted toys. Several devices were demonstrated for her and she was provided with information about where to obtain the devices she was interested in purchasing.*

**Public Awareness, Information & Assistance**

- We provided an overview of our Services to the Counselors at ORS along with other ATAP Partners.
- During this quarter, we completed Cohort 3 of our Project AT with RIDE.
- In November, the Assistive Technology Conference of New England was held in Warwick:
  - Nearly 500 participants from 17 states and Canada
  - 31 presentations over 2 days
  - 47 Vendors
  - 12 *Bringing Access to Life Expo* guests

**Device Loans:**

- During this quarter, we loaned 23 AT devices to either individuals with disabilities, or Representatives of Education. While there were several loan categories (vision, hearing, daily living, and computers), the highest loan category was learning, cognition, and developmental.

*Anecdote: This quarter we loaned a tablet eye gaze device to a Speech-Language Pathologist who wanted to explore the potential use of eyegaze technology for communication for one of her students. The student was significantly physically involved, with only minimal volitional head movement. The SLP also loaned a mounting system that allowed her to position the eyegaze device in a variety of positions to meet the physical and positional needs of the student. At the conclusion of the trial, the SLP reported that the student had experienced success with both the device and the mounting system. He was able to calibrate the device and begin using it to select from one of 2 icons on the screen via eyegaze.*

**General Updates**

- We continue to purchase equipment for our Loan Library. Based on recent inquiries, we have purchased a smartwatch and an android tablet. We have also purchased a device called TouchStream (<http://www.touchstreamsolutions.com/>), which is a system that provides assistance managing medications, chronic health conditions, appointments, and activities of daily living.
  - We are working on a grant with the University of RI around wearable technology for individuals with autism.



- We are working with the New England Institute of Technology to develop AT Courses for their BS in OT/PT program.
- We will conduct a Spring Cohort (4) with RIDE, which will be hosted at East Bay Educational Collaborative and supported by Lisa Labitt. We are also in the process of developing a Cohort for Teacher Assistants.
- We have begun planning for the 2016 ATCNE, which will be held on November 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully Submitted: Kelly Charlebois

