

RI Council on Assistive Technology
April 23, 2015 ~ 2:30 – 4:00 pm
Tech ACCESS of RI
110 Jefferson Blvd, Suite I, Warwick, RI

MINUTES

Attendees: Chair Michael Matraccia, Teresa O'Brien, Courtney Petrarca, Monica Dzialo, Flo Adeni-Awosika, Elisabeth Hubbard, Colleen Poliselli, and Tara Townsend

Guests: Pat Robert, Cathy Stern

Partners: Denise Corson, ATEL; James Litvack, OSCIL; and Kelly Charlebois, TechACCESS.

Excused: Kathleen Grygiel, ATAP Program Director, Margaret Hoyer, Bill Robinson, Daniel Pieroni, Lisa Labitt, EBEC, Bill Robinson, Ying Sun, Kim Wennermark, Melanie Sbardella, Becky Wright, and Robert Pires

Welcome: Meeting was called to order by Chair Michael Matraccia at 2:30 pm. Introductions were done by all attendees and welcomed Cathy Stern as a potential new member and Monica Dzialo, WIOA Rep.

Approval of Minutes from January 22, 2015: Michael Matraccia made motion to approve minutes with no changes. Teresa O'Brien seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

New Business:

Program Director: Kathleen Grygiel was not present. She is currently reviewing all the contracts with the partners.

New Members Needed: Potential new member, Cathy Stern, is a Behavioral Optometrist practicing in Canton, MA and works with special needs children as well as a sister and niece with special needs and visual impairments.

Monica Dzialo, WIOA Representative (Work Innovation Opportunity Act) known as WIA (Workforce Investment Act) spoke about WIOA and the emphasis on individuals with disabilities as well the specific disability identification sector. Part of that sector is Assistive Technology. Monica does workforce initiatives across the state that hires individuals with disabilities. She has been doing employment for approximately ten years. Previously, she

worked as a senior counselor for SBVI in job development and IT. Monica left the field of mathematics because there was no such equipment as brail printers or voice synthesizers. In the early 80's a company contacted her to test a new software program. The pre-requisites were you had to know programming and be blind.

She is pleased to watch the progression of AT and how it has opened a world of opportunities for individuals with disabilities especially for those blind and visual impaired. Knowing there is AT available enables individuals with disabilities to be as competitive as their co-workers.

Director's Report: No formal report. Kathleen Grygiel apologizes for not being present today but has sent the following information via Sharon DiPinto: Currently she is reviewing the partner contracts and work plans in conjunction with the quarterly reports.

ATEL: Denise Corson stated that the 1st quarter Device Demonstrations, ATEL did 74 demos to 117 participants. She spoke of a 90-year old client who recently went into a nursing home and was using a voice carry over (VCO) for many years and wanted to get a new replacement VCO. Denise introduced her to the new CapTel phone (captioning phone) which has a larger viewing screen. The old VCO phone has a very tiny screen to read. The client was thrilled to see technology had advanced.

In the category of Public Awareness, over the last quarter ATEL participated in three monthly Tech Access demonstrations on Wednesday nights. OSCIL, HAMILTON RELAY AND ATEL held two Lunch and Learn Workshops.

ATEL participated in approximately 14 other outreach activities in the last quarter. Letters were mailed to all the geriatric doctors in the state reminding them of the program and providing them with applications. Information was also sent to the RI Fire Advocates about the Freedom Alert product, emergency device. A demonstration was held at the Newport Fire Department as well as to let them know if they come across individuals living alone and they do not have emergency devices they can contact ATEL for assistance.

In State Financing, ATEL serviced 80 clients and issued 104 devices with a retail value of approximately \$13,000. One client moved into assisted living and she was the first internet CapTel user.

Legislative update: Attended a hearing last week trying to get wireless for the ATEL program. The hearing seem to go well. This was the third attempt.

TelTech, one of the vendors, has developed a program for state programs utilizing iphones and apps specific to people's disabilities. It comes preloaded and with training. This is a great opportunity but need to establish wireless service.

Other Activities: For those hard of hearing there are Sony "like" glasses which are captioning glasses. These are available at the Showcase cinemas and individuals can now go to any performance and the captions appear in the glasses.

Hamilton Relay contract has been extended for one year then goes out to bid for another four years

OSCIL: James Litvack reported -- OSCIL continues to see an increase in requests for services including homes visits and assessments for technology and home modifications. OSCIL received an increase in funding from the RI Foundation for Living with Macular Degeneration program. OSCIL was not selected to apply for Tufts Health Plan grant funding during the current cycle but will consider applying during second cycle, August 2015.

Public Awareness: Information and Referral Specialists continue to respond to requests for or information on assistive technology from consumers, family members, service providers via phone, email, OSCIL website and some walk-ins.

The quarterly newsletter was distributed by mail in March. There were several featured articles addressing AT, including the new captioning agreement for cinemas and open captioned performances at Trinity Rep.

Two articles were published in the Warwick Beacon about their programs including the Lunch and Learn Program which has been serving pizza and inviting guest speakers. The crowd has not been huge but those that have attended have received information and as a result have been getting services.

Transition Services: OSCIL provided assistance to seven individuals through the Community Living Options Program with seven consumers coming out of nursing homes. Cheryl Watason, Transition Specialist has been on board since December.

Reutilization: During the quarter 14 pieces of AT were able to be recycled through open-ended loans.

AT Inventory: Kathie Murtough, Coordinator, is working on the process of cataloging AT and working on a system for loans, record keeping and policies on short term and open-ended loans.

Other Activities: Melissa Rosenberg, AT Specialist is continuing to participate in the ATEL Advisory Board and also Tech night. They had a consumer approximately 70 years old who initially contacted OSCIL because she was interested in getting a hearing aid. As a result of that contact, OSCIL identified other things that would help her be more independent in her own home. In addition to the hearing aid, she also has a shower chair, handheld shower, and grab bars. The initial contact resulted in much more.

TechACCESS: Continues to offer monthly technology demonstrations. Over the winter, they saw a decrease in attendance but it appears to be increasing again. The trend people are most interested in is for the iphones and ipads.

Public Awareness: In the process of purchasing new equipment for the loan library. TechAccess is looking to obtain communication equipment to meet the increase demand in the area in terms of adult referrals. Two new ipads were added to loan library and several different types of cases. Recently purchased the ProxTalker and demonstrated that to a couple of families and during workshops. People responded well.

TechAccess continues to provide on-site professional development workshops for districts. There has been an increase in those requests. A lot of districts are providing internal professional development for their staff as opposed to sending teachers out. A newsletter that will go out to all the Special Ed Directors reminding them that TechAccess can participate in those on-site trainings. TechAccess is seeing a slight decrease in attendance for some of the workshops. A survey was sent to all RI teachers and therapists. Survey indicated two possible reasons for not attending: they are required to attend training within their district; and time which seems to be the more common factor.

Completed an AT overview class for CCRI and a couple of other colleges. Brought in their students and utilized the lab for a couple of hours with support to get an overview of the AT that is available.

Currently updating the TechAccess and Conference websites as well as designing a new brochure.

Approached and entered into a partnership with Bristol Community College to become one of their field placement sites. Received several submissions for full-day pre-conference workshops as well as conference workshops and have five registered vendors. Presentation deadline is May 8th. Hoping to have the entire program up and running on the website by the beginning of June. At this year's conference the hope is to get more people engaged in doing presentations around adult services, transition, and workplace support. The conference has focused on education and realized there is a great demand for the adult population. Specifically sort out presenters that will be able to bring these topics to the table. Completed the second cohort of the AT project with the Department of Ed. Had 15 teachers and therapists participating and delivered two of the sessions on-line. It was very successful. It introduces those individuals to the lab as a resource for loaning equipment. The individuals become familiar with what is available and utilize that.

EBEC: Not present

Roundtable: Denise addressed a comment about technology and how quickly it is moving. It is important that legislation addresses the importance of technology and giving people the appropriate technology that will help them. Some of the funding comes from the surcharge on the phone bill for RELAY. Denise met with Verizon there is concern if wireless technology becomes available, is there going to be a surcharge on everyone's wireless bill for RELAY services which is happening in a lot of the states. Denise stated only 10 percent of the funding comes from that and we would not utilize any of that 10 percent funding to purchase any type of wireless equipment. Denise met and explained with Verizon that we are not looking to increase, change or add onto people's cell phone bills. Human Carry Over is for people that do not speak, this service allows an individual to type to a relay operator and the relay operator would talk for you and then the person can hear through the speaker. However, the gentleman Denise refers to only speaks Portuguese. The device is only available in Spanish and English. There is no device that we carry that can assist with RELAY for another language. However, if an individual had an iPhone or i-product there are apps that could be used. This TelTech program has over a 100 different apps specified for people's disabilities. There is a whole foundation available but the need for wireless is necessary to help those clients we cannot assist.

When the program started 30 years ago the average product was around \$500 per device now it's about \$75. Still assisting a bit more people per year but product price has gone down, and

we can now use a percentage of that to expand to wireless in a slow release and allow it to develop.

Career Development – Teresa shared that Chariho and Westerly are doing a great job at letting the students run their own meeting. The high school students go out with adult agencies and volunteer or does community work. The students start to develop and understand what adult life is going to be like. They start to sense why that cannot do certain things but they also learn they could do this instead. All the school departments should be doing this. These particular schools are doing a good job contacting the adult services ahead of time and getting work experiences beforehand.

Monica introduced Project Search which is individuals, school system and business collaborating together. Featured on Channel 10, the Providence School System is participating based on a business relationship with Miriam Hospital where a group of individuals with significant disabilities are learning appropriate job skills. They do a rotation so by the time they graduate they have employment skills appropriate for today's market. Monica handles the business component, partners with a school and then gets a business to host the kids. Currently, Monica has the Pawtucket School Department partnership with Care New England consisting of Pawtucket Memorial, Kent County and Women and Infants. Next year it will be the Cranston School Department partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield. This gives the students real life skills. The students have to be graduating and in their senior year. Michael Matraccia and Monica Dzialo will communicate further to try and establish a partnership with the Providence Police Department

Monica is also the Chair for the Career Development for the state ensuring it is accessible for disabilities.

Monica suggested contacting Kathy West Evans as a presenter at the AT Conference. In this country every state has a point-of-contact who is responsible for the development of business relationships throughout the state you reside. There are 80 VR programs and she is the contact person. Kelly and Monica will share her information and reach out to her.

Announcement: Accessible RI will be hosting the 25th Year Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) on May 8th. The event is free.

Next Meeting Date: July 23, 2014 from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m., TechACCESS of RI, 110 Jefferson Blvd, Suite 1, Warwick, RI.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm

Attachments: Partner Reports

RICAT MEETING
Thursday, April 23, 2015
ATAP Partner Reporting: TechACCESS of RI
Highlights from Quarter: January - March 2015

Demonstrations

We continue to offer monthly Technology Demonstrations, with a focus on Technology for those with Blindness/Low Vision, Alternate Computer Access, and Tablet Technologies. We have seen a decrease in attendance for these demonstrations, but believe it is due to the winter/weather.

Public Awareness, Information & Assistance

- We are in the process of purchasing new equipment for the loan library (primarily AAC) to meet the increased need in this area. We have added 2 iPads to our loan library, along with several different types of cases. We recently purchased a new low tech AAC Device called the ProxTalker.
- We continue to provide on-site Professional Development workshops for districts. There has been an increase in requests recently.
- We recently completed a survey of RI teachers and therapists regarding the decrease in attendance at workshops offered at TechACCESS. The data indicates that many people are required to attend trainings provided within their district. Time was also mentioned as a factor.
- We have completed an "AT Overview" class for CCRI (Newport campus).
- We are updating both the TA website and the Conference website. We are also designing a new brochure.
- We have entered into a partnership with Bristol Community College to be one of their field site placements.

Updates

- The Assistive Technology Conference of New England has received submissions for full day pre-conference and conference workshops. We also have 5 registered vendors to date.
- The second cohort of our AT Project with RIDE began in March, with 15 teachers/therapists participating. Two sessions were delivered online. The group has consistently utilized equipment available in the lab and has been encouraged to use the loan library to trial with their students.

Respectfully Submitted: Kelly Charlebois





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Report for April 23, 2015 RICAT Meeting

Highlights from Quarter: January – March 2015

- **Demonstrations**

OSCIL continued to see an increase in requests for service including home visits and assessments for AT and home modifications since the closing of PARI. As of January 2015, OSCIL received an increase in funding from RI Foundation for our Living with Macular Degeneration program: \$65,000. OSCIL was not selected to apply for Tufts Health Plan grant funding during the current grant cycle as THP has shifted their funding away from Programs and towards collaborative initiatives. OSCIL will consider applying for Tufts funding for cycle 2 which opens in August 2015.

- **Public Awareness, Information & Assistance:**

OSCIL's Information & Referral Specialist continues to respond to requests for information on AT primarily from consumers, but also from family members and service providers by phone, email, via OSCIL's website and from occasional walk-ins. OSCIL's quarterly newsletter, *Signs of Independence*, was distributed by mail in March and also available for download from OSCIL's website. The Newsletter featured AT related articles including new captioning agreement for cinemas, open captioned performances at Trinity Rep, evening AT Demos at Tech Access, accessible prescriptions available through Caremark/CVS. OSCIL's Facebook Page also featured many postings with information about AT. Two articles appeared in the Warwick Beacon newspaper (both the print and online versions) about OSCIL's Lunch and Learn Program and OSCIL's Walk-in Tuesdays initiative.

- **Transition Services:** During the quarter OSCIL provided assistance to 7 individuals through its *Community Living Options Program (Nursing Home Transition)*, with 7 consumers transitioning.

Cheryl Walason, OSCIL's new IL/Transition Specialist, has been onboard since December and has spent several weeks training, reviewing both NFT and YA transition training materials. A new eight week program for young adults (18-24) transitioning into independent living is tentatively scheduled for April; curriculum and program design are being revamped.

ATEL Partner Report for 4/23/15 RICAT Meeting

Device Demonstrations

We did 74 device demonstrations and had 117 participants from 1/1/15 – 3/30/15.

Anecdote –

Audrey had been a deaf client of ATEL for many years, and had used the old 711 Relay system, with a Dialogue VCO telephone. The VCO system required the user to dial 711, have the operators place the call, requires both parties to use special lingo like (GA) Go Ahead and (SK) Stop Keying, and the operator must type what the caller is saying to the VCO user. It is a very cumbersome and intrusive process. When her daughter moved her into the nursing home, she wanted a replacement VCO, I told her about her the Captel phone. She wanted to try it, so I set it up; the next week I get a call from the daughter stating are you sure there is an operator on the phone this is the best conversation we had in years!!!

State Financing

We serviced 80 clients and issued 104 devices with a retail value of approximately \$13,071.

Anecdote –

Sarah told me you can use me as an example to any people who are thinking of getting a Captel Phone. I am lost without it!

Public Awareness/Information & Assistance

We did Technology Demonstration programs on **Technology and Communication Strategies for Persons with Hearing Loss**: 1/14/15, 2/11/15 and 3/11/15. Also, we began a new demonstration from 12-2 PM at OSCIL, **Lunch and Learn, Removing Barriers to Independence**, pizza and light refreshments will be served. The new demonstration is a lunchtime workshop for elders, individuals with disabilities and their care givers that focus on assistive technology which can improve access at home, work and in social settings. As well as, home accessibility that helps consumers with home modifications and the acquisition of adaptive equipment as part of their independent living goal to remove barriers to independence: 2/24 and 3/25/15.

Presentations and Expos/Conferences:

- 1/5/15- Sent ATEL informational letters and applications to RI Geriatric Doctors' offices.
- 1/6/15 and 3/10/15- Monthly networking meeting for senior providers at the Atria in Lincoln.
- 1/13/15- Monthly networking meeting for South County at Brightview Commons
- 1/21/15 - Monthly Seniors Rules Networking Meeting for South County Providers

1/22/15- Did the first of four presentations at the Newport Fire Dept. on the Freedom Alert to help promote elder care safety.

1/29/15- Sent letters and emails to RI Fire Advocates/Fire Chiefs about the ATEL Program and the Freedom Alert, for safety of elderly.

2/12/15 - Monthly North West Links senior networking meeting

3/4/15- Did a presentation at Arbor Hill

3/5/15- Did a booth at the Alzheimer's Conference

3/18/15- Did a presentation at Douglas Manor

3/20/15 -Did a booth at the Leading Age Conference

3/26/15- We did a booth at the Barrington Senior Center

3/27/15- Did a booth at the BIARI (Brain Injury Assoc. of RI)

3/28/15- Did a booth at RISHA (RI Speech and Hearing Association)

3/31/15- Did a booth at the annual Chamber of Commerce after hours Expo

Other Activities

Legislative update - Representative Naughton refiled last year's wireless bill H7068. Current bill H5068 was heard 4/10/15. This bill would include wireless telephones in the adaptive telephone equipment loan program that services the needs of persons who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, severely speech impaired, or those with neuromuscular impairments. There were no objections to the bill at the hearing and is currently being held for further study.

New devices for HOH Update

Denise stated that the Showcase Cinemas in Warwick now offer Sony 'like' Glasses, which allow for Hard of Hearing and Deaf individuals to see caption in their glasses.

Relay contract update

The PUC extended the Hamilton Relay contract by 1 year, since it just completed year 4 there is a 1 year extension allowed. Next January the PUC will be putting out n RFP to Hamilton and Sprint, the only vendors at this time.

Respectfully submitted:

Denise Corson