

RI Council on Assistive Technology
October 24, 2013 ~ 2:30 – 4:00 pm
TechACCESS of RI
110 Jefferson Blvd, Suite I, Warwick, RI

MINUTES

Attendees: Chair Michael Matraccia, Flo Adeni-Awosika, Margaret Hoye, Elisabeth Hubbard, Teresa O'Brien, Colleen Poliselli, Ying Sun.

Guest: Courtney Petrarca

Partners: Denise Corson, ATEL; Melanie Sbardella (in for Roberta Greene-Whittemore, ATAP Program Director); Lisa Labitt, EBEC; Lezlee Shaffer, and Allen Parent-Wetmore, PARI.

Excused: James Litvack, Dan Pieroni, Kim Wennermark, and Becky Wright. Kelly Charlebois, TechAccess. (Sophia Neirman, IL Rep – no longer at PARI)

Welcome: Meeting was called to order by Chair Matraccia at 2:45. Introductions were done by all attendees.

Approval of Minutes from July 25, 2013: Chair Matraccia made motion to approve minutes as is. Ying Sun seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

New Business:

2014 Meetings dates – Thursdays from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. were set. Location to be provided when determined.

January 23rd

April 24th

July 24th

October 23rd

ATAP Program Director's Report: Melanie Sbardella stated Roberta Greene Whittemore was coming back next week and is looking forward to being back. Melanie noted that the ATAP Partner Contracts end on 9/30/14, and they are planning to look at them in March.

Partner Reports (reports attached):

PARI: Allen Parent-Wetmore stated that they were closed down for the month of July so that inventory could be done. Numbers are down but they are picking back up. Goal throughout country for AT Program is to be self sustained. They are trying to gear PAAT program toward self sustainability by gathering other income sources, and partnering other local vendors who will purchase DME through them. In stage of figuring out amounts, pricing at reduced rate, also connected with online company who will put money into their account (CPAP machines, etc.) Trying to generate income.

ATEL: Denise Corson stated it was a busy quarter. She had been doing a lot of outreach activities with Courtney. She sent out 100 information packets to all Resident Service Coordinators. Denise commented she sent out about 1000 postcards with her new number on it. She added that Courtney had about 7000 flyers done for the year and she now needs to put labels over all with Denise's new number. Denise noted that he had her first Spanish Captel phone user. The Resident Service Coordinator didn't speak Spanish either and there was a Maintenance Worker who spoke Spanish helped. His whole family was in the Dominican and he hadn't spoken to them in years. He was very happy.

OSCIL: Lezlee Shaffer noted they have had a crazy spring and summer. Three staff members out on extended period of time causing chaos in the office. Other staff had shifted responsibilities to help. Lezlee said they are still doing home visits and assessments. She noted they suspended the visual impairment program, then added that program will start up again next month. OSCIL's Information & Referral Specialist is working on their newsletter, and it is full of AT articles. They obtained a 1-year grant for Options Counseling. Two people are doing outreach into nursing homes identifying people who want to transition back into the community. She added they are getting referrals from the ORS transition team. Another new hire is splitting her time between nursing home transition and youth transition services. Lezlee stated they are doing a lot of research to formalize a new program which will include a scheduled drop in center for a small pilot group with socialization, peer support, and an educational component (how to set up apartment, nutrition, etc.) Reutilization – Lezlee stated they were able to recycle a ramp and bath safety AT to consumers. Denise asked how nursing homes were reacting to this program. Lezlee said that they were flooded with referrals by one nursing home. They received 12 referrals in the same week. Lot of individuals referred to them had background with drug issues, BCIs, etc., and it was hard to find subsidized housing for them. The nursing home was happy to see them come in because they wanted

these people out. Some nursing homes are happy to see them and some not so much. One has a new Social Services Director that did not want to give OSCIL the OT/PT reports and questioned why they needed that information. They can get help from the Alliance for Better Nursing Home Care as well as the DLC. Chair Matraccia asked about drug use being a deterrent for transition. Lezlee responded it was for subsidized housing, especially those that have heavy drug history or sexual assault history. He noted he sits on the Open Doors Board. A discussion was made about the cycle there is for substance abusers, not being able to find the help they need, and abusing again. Lezlee also added that OSCIL's long time housing advocate Hal Fayerweather retired last month after 23 years.

EBEC: Lisa Labitt noted that schools have been very busy. Lot of the focus for schools this year is early childhood, and Race to the Top funds. Good news is early childhood standards and education is getting a lot of new press and training. A lot of attention seems to be on behavioral and mental health. AT Devices loaned out has been low - believes some schools have been reutilizing devices. She is getting more high school kids with employment needs. Lisa talked about a couple of students she was able to help out – one needing a computer and the other needing organizational help. Device training is up. iPads are big. Appplecare is great if someone needs to change their operating system. Lisa also explained that she is involved with AIM, a 5-year grant that will encompass operating, maintaining, and expanding the system to coordinate and provide Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) to ensure that every RI student who is blind, has a visual impairment, or has a print-related disability has full and appropriate access to instructional and other academically-related learning materials in a timely manner, in accordance with federal guidelines. Trainings are being offered. Ten schools have district teams who are participating. After the last meeting participants go back with a plan that they will bring back to their districts – Train the Trainer model. Chair Matraccia asked how they chose the schools. Lisa responded it went out as a RFP (Request for Proposals) to all the Superintendents and Special Ed Directors. Lisa also stated that she participated in the RIDE Teacher Assistant Fall Conference. She noted the level of Teacher Assistants' knowledge has increased so much. At the conference they requested information about behavior, mental health, and behavior issues. Allen added in there is a font for children who are dyslexic that makes things more easily readable "Open Dyslexic".

TechACCESS: Kelly Charlebois was unable to attend but did submit a written report.

Roundtable: Liz Hubbard stated that RI DLC will be doing some outreach for AT. They are also working on the brochure for hearing aids – if you have one type of Medicaid it will cover them, and one that won't. Also went to OSCIL.

Next Meeting Date: January 23, 2014 from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m., TechACCESS of RI, 110 Jefferson Boulevard, Suite I, Warwick, RI.

Adjournment: Liz Hubbard made motion to adjourn at 3:45pm, seconded by Teresa O'Brien. Motion passed unanimously.

Attachments: Partner Reports

ATEL Partner Report for 10/24/13 RICAT Meeting

Device Demonstrations

We did 80 device demonstrations and had 127 participants.

Anecdote –

I provided a Captel demonstration to a man that is finishing his college degree and is looking for a job. Once I demonstrated how the Captel works, he told me that now he is no longer afraid to call for job interviews.

Public Awareness/Information & Assistance

We did 2 Technology Demonstration programs on *Technology and Communication Strategies for Persons with Hearing Loss: July 17th and September 11th.*

Presentations and Expos/Conferences:

7/10/13- We attended the General Federation of Women's Club of South County event.

7/11/13- We did a presentation at the Cranston Senior Center.

7/16/13- We did a presentation at the West Warwick Senior Center

8/1/13- We did a presentation at Temple David in Warwick

8/6/13- We did a presentation with the CDHH at St. Elizabeth's Terrace

8/13/13- We did a presentation at the Peace Date House in S. Kingstown.

9/10/13 – We did a Health Fair at the W. Bay Manor in Warwick

9/12/13- We did relay training at the Woonsocket Network RI.

9/16/13- We did a presentation at the North Bay Manor in Smithfield.

9/17/13- Attended the VR Summit at the Omni in Providence

9/19/13- We did a table at the Rehab Hospital of RI.

9/24/13 – We did a presentation at Westerly Senior Center

9/26/13- We did a table at the Lincoln Health Fair

State Financing

We serviced 97 clients and issued 106 devices with a retail value of approximately \$22,407.

Anecdote –

A deaf Spanish speaking man from the Dominican Republic received a Captel from our program. He lives in the states away from his family, so he was unable to communicate with his family anymore. The RSC recruited the Spanish speaking maintenance man to help set up the Captel in Spanish mode and train him on how to use it. He was overjoyed to be able to talk to his family again!!!

Other Activities

We sent out postcards with our new number to all ATEL clients over the last 10 years. We created a spreadsheet with RI RSC names, properties, addresses, emails and phone numbers, that was used to send about 100 informational packages to all of the RSC in the state with information regarding the ATEL program, including our new application, brochure and bulletin board sign, as well as, information regarding our outreach program with Hamilton Relay.

Respectfully submitted: Denise Corson

RICAT Meeting Summary October 24, 2013
East Bay Educational Collaborative

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: Number of devices borrowed this quarter: **11**

Anecdote: A high school student loaned a notebook computer & software for his workplace internship at a printing company in the East Bay. This student was able to use the computer to produce graphics/ printed design and templates to be brought to his vocational placement site. His Transition Plan that incorporated school skills and employment goals.

Device Demonstration: 7

Anecdote: Westerly young man was able to receive information on I pad settings and accessibility features on mobile devices (GPS) that would enable him to safely travel to work and keep on track with his scheduling and work tasks. Time management tools, Apps and organization were the predominant demonstration focus. ORS staff and family member participated.

Device Training: 26

- I PAD Basics
- I PAD Accessibility for students and educators

Technical Assistance:

1. RIVESP Advisory Team member Rhode Island Vision Educator Services to fill any gaps and continue working with school districts to best meet the needs of students with vision impairment.

TechACCESS of RI, in collaboration with the RI Core AIM Leadership Team (Lisa Labitt ATAP Representative) 2013-2018 5 year plan/Scope of work. The work for the RI 2013-2014 AIM Initiative will encompass operating, maintaining, and

expanding the system to coordinate and provide Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) to ensure that every RI student who is blind, has a visual impairment, or has a print-related disability has full and appropriate access to instructional and other academically-related learning materials in a timely manner, in accordance with federal guidelines. AIM Accessible Instructional Materials training will be provided to 10 district teams that have answered an RFP sending 2 individuals per district to come to TechACCESS, participate in 4 training sessions and subsequently produce a personal district plan to promulgate AIM steps. AIM orientation, Bookshare Learning Ally, and development of district plans are scheduled through December 2013.

2. RIDE Teacher Assistant Network Fall Conference 9/28/2013

Respectfully submitted: Lisa Labitt 10/22/2013



OCEAN STATE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING		
1944 Warwick Avenue, Warwick, RI 02889	401-738-1013 (V)	
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Report for October 24, 2013 RICAT Meeting

Highlights from Quarter: July - October 2013

- **Demonstrations**

Home visits and assessments are continuing but at reduced capacity due to absence of OSCIL's AT Specialist. Two of our new staff members (Options Counselor and Transition Specialist) are being trained to conduct assessment visits and will respond to referrals until our AT Specialist gets back. OSCIL is awaiting a decision on our Tufts grant application for AT funding with notification expected by November 1.

- **Increasing Independence for the Visually Impaired.** Project currently suspended until AT Specialist returns to office. Funding will continue through December 2013, providing money for AT and minor home modifications. A new grant application has been submitted for 2014.

- **Public Awareness, Information & Assistance:** Only one presentation during the quarter, again to due to the absence of our AT Specialist. OSCIL's Home Access Specialist presented at a post-polio support group meeting. OSCIL will be taking part in several senior/disability events taking place in October & November.

The fall/winter edition of OSCIL's quarterly newsletter, ***Signs of Independence***, is in process and will be distributed in mid-November. Articles are included on a variety of AT resources including NFB Newline; Liberty Mobility, a local resource for used scooters and power wheelchairs; MDA's AT Loan Closet; DEA's Guide to Services for Seniors and Adults with Disability manual now available in Braille; Women's & Infants Hospital's Audiology Department services, and a write-up on stairlift vendors.

- **Options Counseling** (Sue Shapiro & Jennifer Brandon): In June, OSCIL received a thirteen month grant from the Dept. of Elderly Affairs to provide options counseling to individuals currently residing in nursing homes who want to consider community living options and to those persons in the community who want to explore and plan long-term care options. Grant runs through June 30, 2014.
- **Transition Services**: Through September 30, OSCIL was able to successfully transition seven consumers back into the community, with several others in process. As of October 1 OSCIL has expanded its transition services to include youth services. Sage Neto, OSCIL's IL/Transition Specialist will continue to work with nursing homes residents and also develop a pilot program to address needs of youth transitioning into community living.
- **Reutilization**. During the quarter OSCIL was able to recycle a ramp and bath safety AT to consumers in need of these items, eliminating the necessity of their having to purchase these items.

Case Study #1 ~ Consumer is a 56 year old male residing in a subsidized apartment with his wife who is also disabled. The consumer has diabetic neuropathy and severe back pain. He contacted OSCIL requesting a safety assessment and a seat lift recliner. During the intake/assessment visit it was revealed that consumer was unable to stand up for more than a few minutes at a time due to the pain in his spine. He is using an electric scooter and a walker to assist with mobility, and had already acquired a prescription from his primary care physician for a recliner. OSCIL's AT Specialist also recommended AT for dressing (handy bar, long handled shoehorn, and reacher) and a tub transfer bench. Consumer reports he now feels much safer and more independent.

Case Study #2 ~ Consumer is an 87 year old woman who was referred to OSCIL by her neighbor. She owns a mobile home situated on a large corner lot in a park and has to maneuver up/down four steps to enter/exit her home. Consumer is an above the knee amputee who relies on a manual wheelchair in her home, but can

also transfer and cautiously walk a short distance with a rolling walker. During our visit to her home, the consumer reported having difficulty entering/exiting her home. She set a goal of being able to get out of her house to visit her neighbors, attend community events, go shopping and get to doctor appointments with her daughter. Following the intake/assessment visit, it was determined that consumer could benefit from a ramp; however, little funding remained until the beginning of the new fiscal year and consumer was scheduled to be placed on a wait list for new funding. A ramp became available through a donation. Because the cost to relocate and minimally retrofit the used ramp to this consumer's home was significantly cheaper than the cost of installing a new ramp, OSCIL was able to move forward with some unexpended funding to complete this project.

The consumer is very pleased with the results and is now able to enter and leave her home safely and independently.

Lezlee Shaffer
OSCIL Program Director

Thursday, October 24, 2013
ATAP Partner Reporting: TechACCESS of RI

Highlights from Quarter: July-September 2013

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.

Public Awareness, Information & Assistance

- We have completely redone the agency website (www.techaccess-ri.org).
- We will be developing new brochures and marketing materials.
- We have been asked to participate in a CVS Employee Day to support their understanding of how to support employees with disabilities, as well as customers with disabilities.
- We will be participating in "A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities".
- We continue to support the I&R calls received at TechACCESS as well as the Equipment Loan Program.
- We provided two AT Overview Presentations: to Providence College graduate students and to Johnson & Wales students.

Updates

- We continue to seek out and apply for grants that will support our programs (adult and children). We received \$1,000 from a local Walmart Store.
- We continue to offer Professional Development to educators, therapists and families.
- To support RIMAC (RI Materials Access Center) and in line with our Contract with the RI Department of Education, we have created a pilot program to train districts in Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM). We have 7 districts (14 professionals) currently participating.
- During July and August, we ran a program in collaboration with SBVI with the goal of training a group of individuals in the use of their iPad to access their college curriculum. The feedback was very positive.
- We provided 3 trainings for RISTE (RI Society of Technology Educators) on the iPad.
- Renewal notices for our Membership Program were sent out. We currently have received both Professional and Organizational Memberships.
- We had a presence at the RI Teacher Assistance Conference. We have staff who are presenting at the RIDE Technology Conference.

Respectfully Submitted: Kelly Charlebois

RICAT Meeting Thursday, October 24, 2013
ATAP Partner Reporting – PARI PAAT Program
Reporting Period July 1, 2013 – September 30, 2013

Device Recycling and Exchange (Reutilization):

The PAAT program provides DME (durable medical equipment) assistive technology equipment to people thru two primary methods, device recycling and device exchange.

60 recycled devices were sold to consumer and their families at an **estimated cost savings of over \$4260.00 dollars**. This equipment consists of durable medical equipment used in daily living and mobility activities.

3 exchanged devices were provided utilizing an exchange database maintained by PARI through which devices are exchanged at no cost to the consumer. The only financial obligations of the recipients are installation charges, if applicable. This equipment consists of stair glides, vehicle modifications and electric hospital beds providing an **estimated cost savings this period to consumers of over \$10,000.00 dollars**.

Device Loan:

The PAAT program provides two types of device loans, short term accommodations and very short time loans of durable medical equipment for the purposes of evaluation.

Accommodation Loans:

The objective of this loan service is to provide a short term accommodation while an individual's own equipment is being repaired or are if they are in need of equipment which might be prohibitive to purchase for short term use, such as a portable ramp, electric wheelchair, scooter, transport wheelchair or patient lift. The loan is provided with a \$10.00 charge for each week with an average loan term length of two weeks. Instructions on proper usage and care of the equipment are provided as well as follow-up assessment of the loan.

1 accommodation loan was provided this period.

Evaluation Loans:

The objective of this loan service is to provide the consumer or therapist with the opportunity to bring an assistive device to evaluate in their home environment. Often equipment designed for a particular use does not work in every environment or with every consumer. The ability to simply take one or two types of equipment home and try them prior to purchase rather than accessing all of one's concerns in the showroom and making an

immediate decision promotes the right choices being made regarding assistive technology equipment.

8 loans for evaluation were provided this period.

Device Demonstration Center

The PAAT program operates a demonstration center within our sales area, attempting to provide at least one example of all the durable medical equipment that is available through recycling or exchange. Consumers, families and service professionals are able to compare and gain and understanding of the choices available concerning assistive technology equipment.

2 demonstrations of equipment were provided this period, often to families who were for the first time facing the need of assistive equipment. As an example of one of the benefits we provide, after having determined Flora T. did need crutches and properly fitting her we sat at the computer to watch instructional videos of the proper techniques for walking as well as ascending/descending stairs until she felt comfortable.

Information and Referral

Often, quite often actually, people call PARI in need of equipment or services that aren't available nor provided by PARI. In those instances the PAAT program will provide *any* information possible, including referrals to appropriate agencies, searching for the lowest price on a specialty tub transfer chair, calling a therapist to clarify a consumer's needs or simply providing a Denise's number at ATEL to obtain an assistive telephone. Many of the phone calls we receive require just listening to and asking questions of the consumer or family member, determining what their needs are and trying to help as much as possible.

70 I/R's provided this period.

Public Awareness

The PARI PAAT Program (PARI's Affordable Assistance Program) raises awareness among individuals with disabilities and their families to the availability of assistive technology equipment and its ability to remove barriers to independence. Awareness activities include participation in informational exhibits and demonstrations we provide in rehabilitation and support group settings. Additionally, PARI distributes informational pamphlets describing the PAAT program to further enhance awareness of assistive technology and provides information through our website,

www.pari-ilc.org. PARI is also an active demonstrator/vendor/participant in several conferences throughout the year as well as an active presence in statewide legislation hearings and public events. Bi-annually we co-host an Independent Living Conference with Ocean State Center for Independent Living, promoting the public awareness of disability related issues.

Coordination & Collaboration

PARI Independent Living Center collaborates with ATAP partners and other disability related groups to promote the value of, and access to assistive technology; assisting individuals with disabilities and their families in advocating for the acquisition of AT. This is accomplished through regular attendance and participation in ATAP partner meetings, participation in the ATAP advisory committee (RICAT) meetings, active involvement throughout the state with PARI staff service on boards and planning committees of disability-related agencies as well as participation in community events targeting individuals with disabilities. PARI also provides annual logistical assistance and publicity for the Governor's Office on Disabilities public forums held throughout the state.

Community Relationships

The PAAT program has established relationships with several community agencies which have allowed us to find homes for donated items not usually accepted by PARI, such as:

Blackstone Valley Community Health Care

Nebulizers, Ensure liquids and medical disposables

Wheels To The World

Manual wheelchairs, parts, walkers and pediatric equipment.

The Wheelchair Recycler

Electric wheelchairs and scooters we cannot pass on.

Currently

We are currently forming formal partnerships with two local home modification vendors, a local durable medical equipment vendor and an online respiratory company to provide monetary support to the PAAT program through the purchase of stairglides, ramps, electric hospital beds and respiratory equipment such as sleep apnea devices which have been donated to the PAAT Program. This effort is aiming towards the eventual goal of growing the PAAT program into a self-sustaining operation.