

RI Council on Assistive Technology
October 27, 2011 ~ 2:30 – 4:00 pm
TechACCESS of RI
110 Jefferson Boulevard, Suite I, Warwick, RI

Minutes

Attendees: Flo Adeni-Awosika, Kathleen Fresher-Samways, Elisabeth Hubbard, James Litvack, Becky Wright – RIDE (for Melissa McDonald), Michael Matraccia, Teresa O'Brien, Daniel Pieroni, Colleen Poliselli, Bill Robinson, Ying Sun and Kim Wennermark.

Partners: Denise Corson, ATEL; Roberta Greene-Whittemore, ATAP Program Director; Alan Parent-Wetmore, PARI; Lisa Labitt, EBEC; and Lezlee Shaffer, OSCIL.

Welcome: Meeting was called to order at 2:35 p.m. by ATAP Program Director – Roberta Greene Whittemore.

Approval of Minutes from 6/23/11: Kathleen Fresher-Samways made motion, seconded by Ying Sun to approve minutes with corrections made by Kathleen. Motion unanimously passed.

AT Project Director's Report: Roberta began her report by stating that the RICAT meetings are driven by the program. Roberta just completed working with the ATAP Partners on their 3 year work plans. The purchase orders are in process so that the Partners can receive their payments. She added it works out well this year, as it coincides with the State Plan required to be submitted in January 2012. Each Partner has been asked to look at the 2009-2011 State Plan and Work Plans compared to their current Work Plan to see what they completed, what was unable to be done, and what they can add to it. This will provide information for the new State Plan. Roberta then added that the next meeting will focus on Policy and Procedures for each Partner.

New Business (Roundtable)

- **Nomination and Voting for New Chairperson**
 - Michael Matraccia agreed to be new Chairperson. Dan Pieroni noted he had a wonderful 2 years as Co-Chairperson. Everyone thanked Dan for his service.
 - Teresa O'Brien made motion that Michael Matraccia be RICAT Chairperson, seconded by Ying Sun. Unanimous approval by show of hands. Motion approved. Congratulations Mike!!!
 - Kathleen Samways commented that it is great when previous Chair is available to provide assistance to new Chair.

- **Discussion and Voting on Revised Guidelines**
 - Roberta noted that revised guidelines had been sent out to everyone prior to meeting for review. One member, Kathleen Samways, had sent back a comment that she would like to still have "all ATAP Partners" provide an update at each meeting instead of changing it to "One ATAP Partner". That change was reverted back to how it had read before and the revised guidelines were resent to members for review prior to meeting.
 - Teresa O'Brien made motion to approve guidelines and Ying Sun seconded. Motion was unanimously approved. A copy will be sent to all with minutes.

- **ATAP Partners**
 - ATEL: Denise Corson reported that when reviewing her previous work plan, the office was located at Goodwill Industries on Houghton St. in Providence. At that location 95% of the clients came to the office to pick up the equipment. Now that they have moved to the ORS office located at 40 Fountain St., Providence, only 5% of the clients come to the office to pick up equipment, and 95% are home visits done by Denise

and her staff person, Pam Kling. She noted that they are now more customer-service oriented. Denise also noted that demonstrations have been pretty consistent lately. The year that they moved, demonstrations were at a minimum. Three years ago, they usually did 2 big events a month. There are several new devices this year including the CAPTEL phones, amplified phones, speech delay auditory feedback, and an electro-larynx device. It was also noted that with the CAPTEL phones that their buying power has increased because they have become a volume buyer thus costs went from \$400 to \$100 for each CAPTEL phone.

They are now trying to get the language changed in the law from single party landline to include wireless so as to better serve the current population. ATEL has also been working with Cox to develop a program that would give internet signals to the internet CAPTEL phone for users without the internet. They are hoping to launch by next year to all states. James added that Cox has a CAPTEL phone and they have been trying to see what the lowest signal that can be used. Roberta added that Rep. Eileen Naughton has been recruited on the ATEL advisory board.

- OSCIL: Lezlee Shaffer reported that OSCIL's work plan encompasses 4 staff members: I & R Specialist, AT Specialist, Nursing Home Community, and Lezlee. OSCIL activities will be like previous work plan. Demonstrations are a major portion of their work plan and include home visits with seniors, IL assessment, research AT, order and deliver AT, and provide instruction.

Transition services – community living option – they work with area rehab/nursing facilities to help individuals transition back into community. Initial focus

was younger adults with disabilities to see if medical condition was stable, if with AT, modifications etc. they would be able to transition back into home. When they work with someone in a nursing home that has been there for a long time, it can take up to two years as they need everything. Moving ahead to do some promotion on their nursing home transition program.

Public Information and Awareness – they have a full time person that does this. She works with hospital discharge workers, rehab facilities, other disability related facilities. They are very active in the community with various events and presentations. This year they are also pursuing promotion at bus shelters. They have targets bus shelters around hospitals and rehab centers to promotion community living program, other locations into the Hispanic community to target populations they have not been involved with and also general population will be the bulk.

Coordination and collaboration – OSCIL has always been big with collaboration with other disability agencies. Tufts Health Plan gave them an additional \$40,000 for AT purchases. Tufts focus is “Fall Prevention for Seniors” so they are able to provide ramps, walkers, transfer benches. They are also actively involved with “Warwick 13” – a group of service providers in Warwick that work together to better coordinate services for people living in Warwick. Lorna Ricci is the contact person for “Warwick 13”. Just new this year they have a staff member on the ATEL board and are working with the MS Society. They have a small fund for AT for people with MS and OSCIL is collaborating to assist payment for this AT. Also work with West Bay Community Action Program who also receives money from Tufts Health Plan.

Kathleen Samways questioned how many people can't transition from nursing home. Lezlee responded that about 32 people were seen last year and about 10 of those could not transition safely based on level of care needed and input from family.

Teresa O'Brien asked if OSCIL was associated with 211. Lezlee responded that they get referrals from them all the time and they are a satellite location for The Point.

Colleen Poliselli asked if they need to meet income guidelines. Lezlee responded not for general services, only for home modifications and if they want them to purchase AT for them. If person is over income, they still go out and assess and give them information on what they need to purchase.

Denise Corson asked if they ever had nursing homes that would not let the patient transfer out and if so what did they do. Lezlee responded they have had that happen and that they called RI Disability Law Center.

- PARI: Allen Parent-Wetmore reported that the main focus of the PAAT (PARI's Affordable Assistive Technology) Program is to get durable medical equipment donated, cleaned up and out to people. Allen noted that this year's work plan is similar to last years. He is hoping that numbers will increase over the next year. Last year they recycled 514 devices.

Device Exchange Program – major devices are stair glides and ramps for the home.

Device Loan Program – Until last year only did short-term loans. Now they are documenting and collecting data for loans for evaluation.

Device Demonstration Center - They try to keep one of everything in stock. This year the number of people has increased - a lot of them coming in off the street to try things out.

Information & Referral – Allen noted he spends a lot of time in the office on the phone helping individuals looking for certain pieces of equipment.

Public Awareness – advocating for the disabled community.

Very little amount of donations need to be thrown away. Wheels to the World is an organization that gives wheels to every 3rd world country. They donate parts, wheels and chairs.

This year they started selling new equipment with the hope that it will come back to them when person needs to buy new equipment. PARI is trying to expand the PAAT program, however it is hard keeping inventory. They started this year with collaboration between an assistive technology vendor and nursing home for hospital beds.

Mike Matraccia asked how they kept the prices as low as they do. Allen responded through negotiating with the vendors. PARI is not dictated by guidelines of Medicare/Medicaid for costs.

Colleen Poliselli questioned if this was for certain items. Allen responded just about everything.

Denise asked about vehicle modifications. Allen stated he has received some adaptive hand controls.

- EBEC: Lisa Labitt reported that this is the 16th year East Bay has been providing AT devices and services for children and their families.

Lisa explained that training teachers is one of the biggest challenges. She works statewide even though she is located at EBEC at Northern RI Collaborative, West Bay and Providence. They have team meetings every month to talk about assistive technology, demonstrations, vendors come in. However, it is difficult to get teachers out of the classroom.

Lisa noted they are making new purchases of equipment. Technology gets old quickly. They will be getting new software and technology. EBEC is coordinating more with TechACCESS so there is not so much duplication and they are able to track inventory as well. The Equipment and Lending Library are the big opportunity for families, teachers, and schools to try out for assessment purposes or just to try items out and educate themselves. 39 schools districts in RI.

One challenge Lisa would like to address is working with very young children. She feels it is really important and critical to work with adaptive devices. Head Start Programs, Early Intervention, pediatricians have all been very hard areas to get AT devices in.

Still works with the same connections – RI Dept of Health, Dare to Dream, RI Dept of Education has transitions centers and transition academies. She has worked quite a bit with students aged 17-21 going on to secondary training.

Device loan, demonstration and training are her primary focuses.

Kathleen Samways wondered how people accessed Lending Library. Lisa responded that people call her, it is on the ATAP website, schools get through special education directors. They are trying to get together a photo library of devices. Roberta Greene added that we have been talking about creating list and hooking into websites, and that is a goal they need to achieve.

Bill Robinson added that school bus transportation for students with special needs is important and that with budget time coming up, people need to be aware of what cuts are made.

- TechACCESS: Roberta reported for Judi Carlson who was out sick today that TechACCESS is working on the AT Conference being held November 30th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick. There will be a new format – Freestyle. Presentations, vendor presentations and user demonstrations. So far there are 130 people registered, but they are not worried as most registrations come in the last 2 weeks prior to conference. There are 45 vendors 13 workshops, AT for Daily Living, Employment, Vocational, Educational, mini presentations.

TechACCESS also received money as other partners did to upgrade their loan library. With James Litvack and Denise Corson doing ATEL demos here other people are signing up and visiting demonstration center. TechACCESS has extended space here for ATEL for an administrative charge making it more consumer friendly. They have been inviting vendors in for these presentations.

- **ATAP State Plan Update**

- Roberta commented that she had asked all the partners to review the past 3 year work plan to give a snapshot

of the direction they are moving in over the next years. Part of today's report will be the basis of the state plan that they will be putting together. Any additional input, suggestions, comments about activities they should be involved in, what they've done well, etc. to submit it to her. Kathleen Samways stated she would send information about the DD Council so that something could be put in the state plan with regards to them.

- **Roundtable**

- Michael Matraccia brought up an article that had a 6 month old with an IPAD and a book. Lisa said she had seen that too. 2011 High School graduates are the 1st class of digital natives! She stresses technology is fantastic but it needs to be balanced with communication. Several members stated that technology has invaded the way of regular communication.
- Kathleen Samways brought up Ying Sun's students and a project they had completed and presented at the Advocates in Action Conference. A student team worked with Rebecca at West Bay who was using a head pointer for computer access. The students improved design for her. Also developed tips used for IPADs. They will be doing the presentation at the AT Conference as well.

- **2012 Meeting Dates**

- January 26th – Warwick Public Library, 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI
- April 26th – Warwick Public Library, 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI
- July 26th – TechACCESS of RI, 110 Jefferson Boulevard, Suite I, Warwick, RI
- October 25th – TechACCESS of RI, 110 Jefferson Boulevard, Suite I, Warwick, RI

Adjournment

Motion was made by Teresa O'Brien and seconded by Ying Sun to adjourn meeting at 3:55 pm. Motion passed.

Next Meeting: January 26, 2012 from 2:30 – 4:00 pm at Warwick Public Library, 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI where they will review the State Plan updates and will then begin working on Policies and Procedures.
