

RI Council on Assistive Technology
April 25, 2013 ~ 2:30 – 4:00 pm
Warwick Public Library
600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI

MINUTES

Attendees: Chair Michael Matraccia, Flo Adeni-Awosika, Margaret Hoyer, Elisabeth Hubbard, Sophia Neirman (new IL rep), Teresa O'Brien, and Daniel Pieroni.

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

Excused: James Litvack, Coleen Poliselli, Bill Robinson, Ying Sun, Kim Wennermark, Becky Wright - RIDE.

Welcome: Meeting was called to order by Melanie Sbardella at 3:05pm as Chair Matraccia was enroute to meeting. Introductions were done by all attendees. Sophia Neirman was introduced as the new Independent Living Center representative.

Approval of Minutes from January 25, 2013: Teresa O'Brien made motion to approve minutes as is. Dan Pieroni seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

ATAP Program Director's Report: Melanie Sbardella stated Roberta Greene Whittemore was still out on sick leave. Everyone wished her a speedy recovery and signed a get well card to be mailed to her. Melanie noted she did not have anything else to add.

Partner Reports:

OSCIL: Lezlee Shaffer reported that they had received funding for the Home Sweet Accessible Home Project grant. Funding provides money for AT and minor home modifications. She added that it can be used for rails/grab bars, etc. She added that although the funding has ended for the Hispanic Outreach they are continuing to provide outreach to the Native American communities with presentations in Westerly, Charlestown, and Wakefield being explored. Lezlee noted that OSCIL's nursing home transition specialist had resigned recently, and some consumers in the process of transitioning have been transferred to other OSCIL staff for services. They have received 14 new referrals after their presentations. Flyers have been sent out to senior centers about funding being available through a grant OSCIL received from RI Foundation to purchase AT and

safety equipment for those that are visually impaired. Melanie commented about the ICanConnect program for individuals that are blind and deaf. Individuals have to utilize technology. This program is managed through Insight. Margaret Hoye asked if individual had to be both deaf and blind. Melanie responded they did. Flo Adeni-Awosika questioned if they provided funding for hearing aids as hers were not working properly. Allen responded she could contact Gift of Hearing program through PARI. Teresa O'Brien also responded if she were a client, ORS might be able to assist her as a means of job retention. Melanie added that economic need would also be considered when through ORS.

EBEC: Lisa Labitt noted that 32 AT devices had been borrowed this quarter, and there were 13 AT device demonstrations. Lisa provided an anecdote about a high school student who was able to utilize an Apple I-touch device with a communication app on it at his employment site. His family was able to see if the device provided access to community activities and preparedness. ATAP through Lisa provided device training to 53 individuals through a professional development day for Cumberland High School district Teacher Assistants. Technical assistance was provided in collaboration with the Department of Education to Alternate Assessment students and Alternative Augmentative Communication students. Lisa is also active with RIVESP. Lisa also noted that Early Interventions has 12 centers and she does work at 3 of them. She will be doing a professional development day at Hasbro in June, and a ½ day professional development day at RIPIN for their new staff members and parent liaisons.

TechACCESS: Judi Carlson discussed the 2013 AT Conference. Within the next couple of weeks they will be meeting to start planning of it. They are having trouble getting a site. She noted that last year they had 47-48 vendors, user groups – individuals with disabilities using various AT devices, and the iPad playground where 15 iPads were set up with different accommodations. Judi also noted that if anyone is interested in helping, contact TechACCESS.

PARI: Allen Parent-Wetmore stated that things are staying pretty much the same. However, he has noticed more calls looking for information. He mentioned that Spaulding Rehab had contacted him regarding a 31 year old who was now a quadriplegic that did not qualify for any services. They are pooling resources to get what they can to help including ceiling lift system, ramps, and home health aids. Liz Hubbard commented that the Sherlock Plan might work for this individual.

Margaret Hoye added that whenever she goes to senior centers, she tells them to contact PARI, OSCIL and TechACCESS if they have questions or requests.

ATEL: Denise Corson stated that they have been very busy over the past 3 months with a 50 % increase. Jeanne Panarace, former RICAT Chair, is returning to the

A TEL Committee; and they have Senate Representative, Hannah Gallo, on the committee as well. Denise noted that there has been a skyrocketing number of minutes used by captioned telephone services, and the FCC is requiring that for the next 180 days that new users of IP-based captioning services be registered/letter from audiologist. Denise noted that they have added 2 new phones to what they offer – both are cordless and have rechargeable AAA batteries in base and handset. Denise also discussed Project Endeavor – a program that had 3 extensions to its grant period but is set to expire at the end of the month – that provided deaf and hard of hearing Americans with access to broadband or high speed internet through discounted internet service plans/devices. She added that Cox Communications has a similar product however it costs \$30 month.

Roundtable:

Liz Hubbard commented that she has been referrals from vendors that United Health Care is denying a lot of AT requests. A lot of these are for wheelchairs. She is currently following 3 cases, adding that if anyone does run into this problem, they should contact her at RI Disability Law Center (RIDLC). Allen questioned if it was because of the 5 year limit and fixing wheelchairs. Liz responded that this time frame is a myth and if the wheelchair needs to be fixed, Medicaid should cover it. She added she would look up the regulations. Liz also noted the AT Lemon Law if the chair is new and problem happens twice in the same year. Both Allen and Lezlee asked if Liz could do a presentation on these issues.

Next Meeting Date: July 25, 2:30 – 4:00 p.m., TechACCESS of RI, 110 Jefferson Boulevard, Suite I, Warwick, RI.

Adjournment: Dan Pieroni made motion to adjourn at 4:00pm, seconded by Flo Adeni-Awosika. Motion passed unanimously.

Attachments: Partner Reports



OCEAN STATE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

1944 Warwick Avenue, Warwick, RI 02889 401-738-1013 (V)
401-738-1015 (TTY) 401-738-1083 (FAX) 1-866-857-1161 (Toll Free)

Report for April 25, 2013 RICAT Meeting

Highlights from Quarter: January – March 2013

- **Increasing Independence for the Visually Impaired.** Project ongoing and being promoted via OSCIL's newsletter and through collaborations with SBVI and INSIGHT. In this funding cycle the project is expanded to include consumers with various kinds of vision loss, in addition to those with Macular Degeneration. Funding will continue through 2013, providing money for AT and minor home modifications.
- **Demonstrations**
Home visits and assessments continue. Funding for AT & minor home modifications again made available through OSCIL's *Home Sweet Accessible Home Project*, with a grant from Tufts Health Plan Foundation.
- **Public Awareness, Information & Assistance:** OSCIL staff presented at a Polio Survivors Support Group Meeting in Westerly and provided staff in-service training at Bridgemark Addiction Recovery Services (formerly Kent House).
- The spring issue of OSCIL's quarterly newsletter, *Signs of Independence*, mailed to nearly 1,000 consumers and service providers statewide, included articles on RI Foundation *Increasing Independence for the Visually Impaired* grant, the iCan Connect campaign, the ATEL program, Adaptive Driving Programs and the Technology Demonstrations held at TechACCESS.
- **Native American/Hispanic Outreach:** While funding for our Hispanic Outreach program has ended, OSCIL is continuing efforts to outreach to the Native American communities. Presentations in Westerly, Charlestown and Wakefield are being explored.
- **Nursing Home Transition:** OSCIL's Nursing Home Transition Specialist resigned at the end of January leaving a vacancy in that position. Some consumers who are in the process of transitioning have been transferred to other OSCIL staff for services. Two consumers are actively working with OSCIL's Home Access Coordinator to complete home modifications. Two other consumers are working with OSCIL's Housing Specialist. In addition, OSCIL's Housing Specialist & Program Director collaborated with DHS' Transition Team to assist with transition of consumer from a Providence nursing facility back into the community. This joint effort enabled us to respond to

the availability of an apartment with very short notice and assist consumer in transitioning to her own apartment.

Case Study

Consumer is a 91 year old female residing in a subsidized apartment alone. She had a stroke about seven years ago resulting in paralysis on her right side. She ambulates with a manual wheel chair and self propels with her feet. Consumer was having difficulty hearing her television and doorbell. She also had a history of falls in her shower. OSCIL provided her with TV Listeners and a Pocket Talker. These devices will amplify her environment and increase her independence. After assessing her shower it was determined that she needed a roll in shower chair. This piece of equipment is very expensive. OSCIL staff contacted a medical vendor to see if her insurance would pay for it. It was determined that consumer was on a State waiver. After OSCIL staff completed and submitted paperwork supporting consumer's need for this equipment, it was paid for and provided. The consumer is now safer when showering independently.

Lezlee Shaffer
OSCIL Program Director

ATEL Partner Report for 4/25/13 RICAT Meeting

Device Demonstrations

We did 107 device demonstrations and had 112 participants.

Anecdote –

I did a Captel demonstration for a lady who lives alone, and only living family member lives in California, and has a terminal disease. I helped her apply to Project Endeavor, since she did not have internet access and the Captel 840 is incompatible with Verizon FIOS. She had been communicating via a weekly letter, making sure each was ok; they were both extremely excited to be able to talk to each other again.

Public Awareness/Information & Assistance

We did 3 New Technology Demonstration programs on *Technology and Communication Strategies for Persons with Hearing Loss*: January 9th, February 13th and March 13th.

Presentations and Expos/Conferences:

1/31/13- I did a presentation at Charlesgate Assisted Living

2/7/13 – I did a presentation at Saconnett Bay Manor

2/28/13- I did a presentation at the Village at Waterman Lake.

3/13/13 –I did a presentation at Wild Berry Apts.

ATEL was also featured in the OSCIL's newsletter and mentioned in Primetime Magazine's article "Changing Lives with Technology."

State Financing

We serviced 132 clients and issued 135 devices with a retail value of approximately \$33,900.

Anecdote – I am in the process of contacting all our clients that are <90 that we have not seen in at least 5 years. One of these individuals had significant hearing loss in the 7 years since he first received equipment from ATEL. He was no longer using the phone, but had his wife make phone calls from him. He called his out of state granddaughter who he is extremely close to and hadn't spoke to in some time, and he was amazed at the fact that not only did the screen tell him what she was saying but even that she was laughing. He asked her are you laughing at me? She said she was because she couldn't believe she was actually having a conversation with him after all these years....and she was so happy!!!!

Other Activities

ATEL Committee -Laura N. Peterson had to resign from the committee due to a long term conflict with our Thursday morning's meetings; however, Jeanne Panarace has accepted her vacated position. Jeanne was an original founding member of the ATEL program, which was created due to the "Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Telephonic Devices for the Deaf."

Also, we have had a long time vacancy for a representative from the Senate. However this week, we have added another exciting addition to our committee, Senator Hanna M. Gallo. She is not only a member of the Senate but also a Speech Language Pathologist which is a perfect fit for our LAST vacant position.

Federal Communications Commission Temporary Requirements ruling due to the misuse of Internet Protocol (IP) Captioned Telephone Service (CTS)- due to the recent months sky rocking minutes used by IP CTS, growth that if unchecked , could exacerbate the potential harm to the Fund and the legitimate users of TRS. Per a recent FCC ruling, for the next 180 days all new users of IP-based captioned telephone services need to be registered to ensure that the captioning service is used by people who truly need the service. The FCC's goal is to protect the service funds from accidental use by people who do not need captions to communicate over the phone. Also, effective March 7, 2013 you will need to press the Captions on button to turn on captions at the start of every call; the captions will no longer come on automatically. Furthermore, you can no longer offer referral for rewards for individuals to receive an IP Captioned Telephone.

New Products -the Clarity XLC 3.4, and Clarity XLC2 are both cordless phone with amplification up to 50dbls. Also, both have rechargeable AAA batteries in the base and handset, so easy to replace if necessary, and will work if power goes out (as long as phone service is working). These phones also have Talking CID and tone control.

Project Endeavor/Sprint CradlePoint- Project Endeavor is a program of CSD, funded by a two year contract with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). This program focuses on providing deaf and hard of hearing Americans with access to broadband or high speed internet through discounted internet service plans and internet devices. In December, the program added a new service/product, for people who do not already have Internet access; qualified applicants can receive the CapTel 840i plus high speed broadband Internet service through Sprint for just \$50 (\$25 a year for a 2-year plan). This service/product is set to expire 3/30/13. The internet service is provided by Sprint through an Integrated Broadband Router that retails for about \$400, and internet service for about \$50 per month. I have installed about a ½ dozen of these, and it is a great temporary fix for people who don't have the internet; however, very pricey for people that would like this option, once this program expires. Cox Communications does have a similar product, a Gateway Modem/Router, which is about \$30 total per month for the Modem/Router with internet service, but could save \$10 with a bundle.

RICAT Meeting Summary April 25, 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: **32**

Anecdote: A Tiverton educator was able to borrow alternative writing technology devices for her classroom(s), as an accommodation for several students. A Lack of technology resources in the elementary level cause students to reduce their productivity. They learn keyboarding and soft word processing skills on a simple device, thus can focus on writing and content.

Device Demonstration: 13

Anecdote: Working with an ORS/Office of Rehabilitation Services Counselor, family and employment support agency, A High School Student with communication needs was able to utilize and train on a portable Apple I-touch device using a communication app at his employment site. His family had the opportunity to see if the device would provide more access to community activities and personal safety preparedness.

Device Training: 53

Cumberland School district provided professional development to their Teacher Assistants in all classrooms Elem. Middle and High school levels with an Assistive Technology Basic 101 training. Resources, materials and some hands on low tech. training tools were sampled.

Technical Assistance:

ATAP continues to be engaged with the Department of Education providing technical assistance to Alternate Assessment Students and AAC Alternative Augmentative Communication students via a network of RI specialists.

Participating districts: Newport, Providence, Coventry, North Kingston, Cranston Barrington Exeter West Greenwich, RISD were some registrants. Also TechACCESS, RIC staff, State Autism consultant RITAP, Early Childhood educators, and RIDE staff were available to promulgate Assistive Technology and Augmentative Alternative Communication resources and plans moving this group forward. (on-going)

Early Intervention @ Hasbro continues to use this center and plans on a full day professional development for staff June 4th

RIPIN also has a ½ day professional development for their new staff members and parent liaisons in May

Respectfully submitted: Lisa Labitt 4/22/2013



Device Demonstration:

Free, public demonstrations continue to be offered every Tuesday from 2 until 3:30. The average attendance has been 5-7. Although this is a nice small group and participants get more individual attention, we would like to increase these numbers. We have been thinking about new ways to get the word out, especially to our adult and aging Rhode Islanders. Two vendors have left a total of 9 devices for long term loan to the demonstration program. There were 33 demonstrations to individuals looking for a specific device.

Device Loan:

Charging a small loan fee has not inhibited anyone from getting a device and we will continue to trial this for the summer. Our loan time has been increasing and we need to ascertain whether this is because people really are using the devices or whether they are simply forgetting to get them back to us promptly. 4 Communication devices were purchased for the loan library through a small grant.

TechACCESS continues to operate as a satellite for the ATAP ATEL program, making it easier and more convenient for people to pick up and drop off phones

Training/Exhibits

TechACCESS provided a variety of training workshops for targeted groups. Varied programs from January to March totaled 933 participants.

2013 CONFERENCE

The ATAP Assistive Technology Conference Committee will be meeting soon to start planning for the 2013 conference ! We are looking for people who would like to help us work with the PROGRAM, VENDORS, USER GROUPS, IPAD PLAYGROUND, CHAIR DUTIES, ACCOMMODATIONS, ETC.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE BE INVOLVED, CONTACT TECHACCESS!

Judi Hammerlind Carlson
TechACCESS Director

RICAT Meeting Thursday, April 25, 2013
ATAP Partner Reporting- PARI PAAT Program
Reporting Period January 1, 2013 thru March 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.

104 recycled devices were sold to consumer and their families at an estimated cost savings of over \$7300.00 dollars. This equipment consists of durable medical equipment used in daily living and mobility activities.

6 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 \$12,000.00 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.

2 accommodation loans were 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.

5 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.

21 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.

132 1/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

PARI was contacted this week regarding a gentleman, who this year had experienced a spinal cord injury resulting in quadriplegia, leaving him at this time with limited use of only his right wrist. He is scheduled to return to his home within the next two months and due to the suddenness of his disability and inability to qualify for medical assistance, he and his family face enormous costs to adapt his home. Working with the representative from his current rehabilitation facility and his family, the PAAT Program is coordinating the usage of recycled environmental modification equipment to expedite his return and minimize his out of pocket expenses. We are hoping to provide a ceiling track system, an environmental control unit and a ramp or lift system. PARI has also started his application process for enrollment in the State PCA Program and the State Home Modification Program. We have also offered to provide any peer support and counseling services he may wish to utilize. He plans on returning to his job as an engineer once he leaves the rehabilitation center and continue to raise his two young children; we hope that the assistance we can offer provide him the access to independence he desires.