

A Closer Look

Increasing Access and Acquisition of Assistive Technology for Georgian's with disabilities

An Assistive Technology Publication of Tools for Life,
The Georgia Assistive Technology Act Program
Spring 2008

Sharing Success

SPOTLIGHTS - THE REBOOT™ PROGRAM.

The past 6 months have been fruitful for our ReBoot™ Computer and AT Reuse Program. ReBoot™ has shared its successes throughout the state offering each of the STAR Outreach Centers three scholarship Package “B” computers at no cost for their consumers.

THIS IS THE REBOOT™ WAY OF SHARING AND SAYING THANK YOU!

Special Announcement: Donations of higher end PC's to ReBoot™ have increased, mostly due to Vista Upgrades. Hence our computer packages have been upgraded! Call for a new application to learn these new specifications.

An example of this is our Package “B” systems. All ReBoot™ Package “B” systems now have a Windows XP Pro Operating System and Windows XP Office 2003. This version of office has the Outlook Tools (i.e. calendar and tasks), Word, PowerPoint and Excel. This is truly an exciting change!

Our growth and success warrants a thank you to each of you who have donated, referred and assisted consumers with accessing computers. Lifestyles today require computer literacy. Georgians with disabilities, seniors and the less fortunate are receiving the opportunity to cross the digital divide through the assistance of each of the computer programs of our partners.

Mark Your Calender!

Touch the Future/Transition and SERID

Conference and Expo

October 23-26, 2008

PreConference - October 22 and 23, 2008

Hilton Atlanta in Atlanta, Georgia

- Informative Workshops
- Interactive Displays
- Over 75 Exhibitors
- CEU and SDU Accreditation Offered

This collaboration brings together the rich traditions and innovations of two conferences – Touch the Future/Transition and SERID (Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness) – to create positive change in the lives of people with disAbilities.

www.touchthefutureandtransition.org

Director's Notes

by Carolyn Phillips

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” — Margaret Mead

Before 1997, there were several computer reutilization efforts that were well intentioned and tried to meet the needs of Georgians. However, each of these efforts struggled with various logistical issues.

Joy Kniskern led discussions during the Touch the Future Conference in Athens in April, 1997 that “focused on the vital nature of how computers benefited people with disabilities and that the initiative of Tools for Life on computer reuse should continue. In spite of logistical issues, consumers unanimously encouraged TFL to persevere.” That July, Lamar Polly, Pat Hewitt, Connie Freier and I started mapping out a strategic plan to create a successful, statewide PC Reuse Program. We knew we could not do this alone - the key was partnership!

In November, 1997, forty-three individuals gathered for a 2-day meeting to explore the National Cristina Foundation Reuse Model. After this meeting, TFL,

FODAC, Walton Options, Disability Connections and Tech-Able joined together to create ReBoot!

ReBoot started small and grew quickly. In August, 2001, ReBoot moved down the street from FODAC to expand services and merge with the ATRC to operate under Touch the Future, Inc. Joanne Willis became the Executive Director of TTF, Inc in 2003 and she continues to grow these programs.

In October 2006, RSA awarded TFL an AT Reuse Grant to create the STAR Network and further grow our AT Reuse efforts. ReBoot's innovative approach continues to receive positive attention. Leaders have visited from all fifty states and several countries including Australia, Brazil, China, Japan, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Scotland.

Tools for Life and its partners have a shared dream - to promote independence for people with disAbilities through AT and computer reuse. We are thrilled that this dream has been realized over 8,500 times and counting...one person at a time!

What's In Your Junk Drawer?

By Doris Chadwell

Get a Grip!

Does it ever seem that many items that you try to use slide around on a surface as though the surface was made of glass? If only the surface texture were more ... well, gripable. There are many helpful items available to provide a better grip and prevent the slippery, sliding dance. We will discuss two of them in this article.

“Grip It” is a thin plastic material available as shelf liners, strips, or rolls. It provides a gripping surface on either side, but is non-adhesive. You can easily use scissors to cut “Grip It” to size and slip it under plates, glasses, silverware, telephones, brushes, or any other item that slides around on a surface when you try to use it. You can wrap it around a drinking glass for a better grip, and even use “Grip It” to assist in opening a jar or bottle lid.

“Plastic Foam” is another lightweight plastic material helpful for gripping items. It is thicker than “Grip It.” You can wrap “Plastic Foam” around handles of tools, brooms, mops, rakes, and so on to provide cushioning on the handle and increase the handle's surface friction for a better grip.

Both of these brand-name products are easily available as similar items under

other brand names and even generic equivalents.

Dealing with sliding objects on a slippery surface can be frustrating. Using tools or garden implements with uncushioned handles can contribute to strain and fatigue in your hands and arms and aggravate some conditions such as arthritis. Using materials such as “Grip It” and “Plastic Foam” eases your use of everyday items, lessens the possibility of fatigue, and reduces the chances for accidents.

AT Spotlight

By Liz Persaud

knfb Mobile Reader . . .

knfb Reading Technology, Inc. recently announced the latest innovation in print accessibility. The knfbReader Mobile and kReader Mobile software packages now run on a multifunction cell phone (Nokia N82) that reads mail, receipts, handouts and many other documents. This device is so simple to use! The Mobile Reader products can be activated and ready to use with the touch of a single button. A photo of the print to be read is taken allowing character recognition software along with high quality text-to-speech to read the document out loud. At the same time, it displays the print on the phone’s screen and highlights each word as it is spoken. This mobile reader reads most printed documents, such as letters, pages in a book and address labels. It also easily recognizes U.S. currency. The Mobile Reader transfers text files to and from computers or Braille note takers and has the capability to store thousands of pages using flash memory.

The knfb Mobile Reader is currently priced at \$2,295 and includes the software, phone, and installation.

For more information on the knfb Mobile Reader, please visit www.knfbreader.com.

Data Corner

By Connie Freier

Tools for Life, the Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRC’s) and the STAR (Southeastern Technology Access and Reuse) Network have an increased need for Assistive Technology, reused computers and durable medical equipment (DME). Data submitted into the online database reflect current statistics for each of these

programs. This is required by the National Information System for Assistive Technology (NISAT), a data collection instrument and performance report for statewide Assistive Technology Programs. Data collection procedures continue to be updated with information that allows Tools for Life to grow and develop new programs such as the STAR Network. The following statistics were taken from the data.

January 2007 - December 2007

New Persons Assisted (Direct Service) 3737

Public Awareness and Information and Assistance

(individuals, family members, education, employment, *community living, etc.*)

- ◆ AT Device or Service 2,429
- ◆ AT Funding 924
- ◆ Disability Topics 1,321

Total Persons reached **4674**

Training/Technical Assistance Classes (Groups)

(AT Funding/Policy/Practice; ATProducts; Information Technology/Telecommunication Access; Transition; *other related topics.*)

Total Persons reached **832**

Training/Technical Assistance Classes (Individuals)

(AT Funding/Policy/Practice; ATProducts; Information Technology/Telecommunication Access; Transition; *other related topics.*)

Total Persons reached **735**

Vocational Rehabilitation

Clients assisted **580**

Loaned Equipment

Total number equipment items checked out **497**

ReBoot (Georgia’s Computer Reutilization Program)

Total number computers “ReBooted”
from inception of program (1994 – 2007) **7000+**

STAR Network

42	Visits
180	Calls
29	Training sessions on STAR Training Modules
13	STAR Processes Documented
32	Collaborative Meetings
19	Referrals
438	Requests for DME/Computer and AT Deliveries
382	DME/Computer/and AT Deliveries
113	DME Donation Pickups
362	DME/Computer and AT Equipment issued and trained
788	Computer and AT Donation Pickups

CAP

Wounded Service Member Initiative

by Martha Rust

Did you know that Georgia is now one of the top ten states with the most wounded soldiers? According to www.icasualties.org by the time this article is written, 848 soldiers from Georgia have been wounded and many of them are returning to active duty.

Now, there is help for those needing assistive technology. The Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) provides assistance through the Wounded Service Member Initiative. CAP supports wounded service members by providing needs assessments, assistive technology, and training throughout all phases of recovery and transition to employment. Through this program, service members with injuries related to dexterity (upper extremity amputees), cognitive difficulties (traumatic brain injuries), vision loss, and hearing loss can receive such assistive technology as: compact keyboards, screen magnification software, PDA's and other assistive devices for daily living (ADL's).

You can find more information about the CAP Wounded Service Member Initiative by visiting the website, www.tricare.mil/cap/wsm.

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Tools for Life data and resources are made available to everyone on the web at www.gatfl.org or call 404-638-0390 for more information. Individuals and groups advocate for funding that is needed to increase availability of additional state-of-the-art assistive technology equipment that would greatly increase daily living for persons with disabilities.

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