

A Closer Look

An Assistive Technology Publication of Tools for Life,
Georgia's Technology Assistance Project
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Project ReBoot, Joy Kniskern and Christopher Lee, Tools for Life Project Managers

It is easy to say that Georgia's computer recycling program is not a new concept. For years, many Georgians with disabilities and various disability organizations throughout the state have shared in the dream of developing successful recycling services. Programs in Georgia, like Walton Options for Independent Living in Augusta, Earth Angels in Gainesville and Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC) in Stone Mountain have made major contributions to computer recycling in the Peach State. Without programs like these and others, ReBoot services would not have been able to grow successfully at the rate it has in such a short period of time.

As Tools for Life examined the development of a statewide recycling services, we saw that a recycling effort on a statewide scale would necessitate changes in organizational management, acquisition and deployment of equipment, evaluation and repair of equipment, training of participants, and ongoing evaluation of the program. These changes can be effected with careful planning, but the program still seemed to be missing a vital component, one that would lift recycling efforts in the state of Georgia to a new level and give the program clout with companies and agencies that are likely to be partners in our program. The search for the missing component did not take long; it was in front of us all along, but its realization came in the person of Carolyn Phillips, program manager for ReBoot. Through her insightfulness and persistent efforts, she has also forged working partnerships with groups throughout the state offering a simple solution to a complex problem. There was the key: partnership!

We at Tools for Life would like to thank our new and future partners. We truly believe that the Georgia computer recycling services is about to make the history books under the title of ReBoot!

ReBoot!

Carolyn Phillips, ReBoot Project Manager

ReBoot is Georgia's Computer Recycling Project dedicated to promoting independence for people with disabilities. The project is composed of groups and organizations from around the state. ReBoot's lead organizations are Tools for Life, Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC) and Touch the Future, Inc.

In an effort to address the problem of unused or underutilized computers, we restructured our distribution program and developed the ReBoot philosophy. The philosophy is that computers are "tools for life" and should be in the hands of Georgians with disabilities who are unable to acquire them by other means. We have implemented this

philosophy through:

Management: We recognize and are actively building a firm foundation of effective management in all aspects of ReBoot, from processing participant applications to organizing volunteers, to providing training on the equipment.

ReBoot Training Centers: These centers bring ReBoot to a local level. They are an invaluable part of our project by creating a statewide network of sharing and collaboration.

Volunteer Opportunities: Eighty-five percent of our program is run by dedicated volunteers, people with disabilities serving other people with disabilities. We also have volunteers from DeKalb College, and we are currently soliciting the aid of AmeriCorps volunteers.

Acquisitions of Equipment: We are able to pick up some equipment. However, it would be appreciated if the equipment was either shipped directly or dropped off at ReBoot's Equipment Depot and Repair Shop.

Evaluation and Repair of Equipment: All equipment is evaluated by trained technicians to make certain that the equipment meets ReBoot's standards. Technicians wipe the hard drives, clean of the old software, make necessary repairs, and load licensed software. **Deployment of Equipment:** The applicant can either pick up the equipment at their local ReBoot Center or at the ReBoot Equipment Depot.

Training of Participants: We offer basic computer training at all ReBoot locations. Some of our partners are able to offer excellent in-depth computer training on a variety of subjects, including upgrading the computer, surfing the Internet, and using software programs like JAWS and New Deal.

* Evaluation: We systematically evaluate all aspects (application process, equipment process, and training process) of ReBoot, note comments and make changes accordingly.

Adopt-A-Computer

YES!

I want to help a person with a disability receive a computer by making a donation of:

??\$15 ??\$25 ??\$50

??\$100 ? ??\$250 ? \$_____

Your donation is tax deductible.

Make Checks payable to Touch the Future, Inc.

Send to:

Touch the Future, Inc.

176 Mountain Brook Court

Marietta, GA 30064

Please contact Carolyn Phillips at

404-657-3057 if you have any questions about donations.

Thank You for making a dream come true!

Voices

from ReBoot

Georgia's Computer Recycling Project

"Everyone Wins with ReBoot!"

"Everyone wins with ReBoot!", one of our corporate donors proclaimed after setting up her next shipment of computer equipment. She explained, "Not only do we get to clean out our desks and closets of our older equipment, but, we get a tax deduction, we save the environment, volunteers get to learn about computer evaluation and repair, and Georgians with disabilities receive darn good computer equipment. What an idea!"

We agree. Thanks to our donors, statewide partners, volunteers, and participant/volunteers, these people are using ReBoot computers a young man in Macon is using a laptop attached to his wheelchair to communicate with his teachers, friends and family; a twelve year old who is blind in Forest Park, is using a computer with screen reading software to complete school work; a woman in Savannah is now able to find the most up-dated information about her rare disease from the internet; a literacy center in south Georgia is now using computers to teach people with learning disabilities how to read; and a 13-year-old boy with brain cancer was granted his wish to have a computer that he could use to write letters to his friends.

Behind every computer re-utilized through ReBoot there is a wish granted, a goal met, a story to be shared. From donor to participant and everyone in between - we all are winners, indeed.

Letter of "Thanx"

Unedited letter sent by electronic mail

Thanx to the ReBoot program and the 486 computer I recieved from this program my life has been enhanced emmensely! Not only have my computer skills - such as installing hardware/software and use of dos functions- dramatically improved but I have obtained access to the internet with the assistance of my fiance.

Upon reciept of my hp 486/25vl my learning experience with computers was sent into overdrive. When I got home and opened the cpu I discovered that it had been connected to a network. Then the fun began!! I had to disable the network and re-install software:much of which I still have not been able to obtain because of its excessive financial requirements (I am still in need of some software in order to do the things necessary for me to reach my goals). I have installed windows95 on this system and then I ran "drivespace" to free up hard disk space in order to install a DOS based word processor and internet software.

Now comes the fun part-- I've installed a 33600 fax modem, a soundblaster 16bit soundcard with external speakers, a 24 speed CD-ROM drive and anadditional 16 mb of RAM.All a little at a time due to the expense of such items and my limited resources with which to acquire such nicities.

This past week I downloaded a "REAL AUDIO PLAYER" from the internet to assist in the viewing of and listening to news items available online--especially "BRAVES GAMES". In addition, I was able to assist my fiance and a couple of friends by downloading Fed.tax ext. forms from an online source--these forms are near impossible to find in the Atlanta metro area.

As mentioned before, I have had difficulty obtaining software that I need. A quality Word processing software for windows cost \$350.00 and MSOFFICE which has spreadsheet software necessary for getting my business running and completing some college courses in my major (Business Administration), and Powerpoint to assist me in preparing and presenting quality presentations-also necessary for completing my education- costs \$500.00.

Both prices are far beyond my financial capacity!!!! However, the problem with software is the only problem I have encountered thus far and I pray daily that the means to overcome this setback will present itself--if only the direction I must go to obtain these necessities!

Thank-You and God Bless You, Tools For Life, for allowing me the opportunity to better myself and become less a hindrance on those that support me and care about me!!!! Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin W. Clarke

Q&A about ReBoot

Georgia's Computer Re-Utilization Project

Q: How do I apply to receive a computer through ReBoot?

A: Contact the ReBoot Training Center nearest you and request an application.

Q: How long does it take to receive a computer if my application is approved?

A: At this time it takes about 4-5 months. As you know, our projects based upon donations of equipment. Most people only upgrade their PC. This creates a situation where we have enough PCs and keyboards, but a shortage of monitors, mice, power cords and assistive technology. Also, please, keep in mind that we do have a waiting list. Our volunteers are working as quickly as possible to meet the requests. Your patience is appreciated.

Q: Are there any requirements for participants?

A: Any person with a disability in Georgia is eligible to participate. The participant is asked to complete 20 hours of volunteer work as a way of contributing to the program. The participant must agree to participate in computer training and/or pass a basic computer skills evaluation. Please, consult with your local ReBoot training center for details. We also ask that all participants have a goal or a purpose for requesting a computer.

Q: How can I volunteer?

A: We need volunteers! See the announcement below for a listing of possible opportunities. Contact the ReBoot Center nearest you.

Q: Does any software come with the computer?

A: We have licensed software that we load on each PC. The New Deal software is an excellent package similar to Windows 3.1. It contains a word processor, database, spread sheet, calendar, file manager and some games. It costs \$20.00 with a manual.

Q: Do the participants pay for the computer equipment?

A: At this time we do not charge for anything other than the software package/manual. Because we do not charge, we are not able to purchase mice, printer cables, printer ribbons, assistive technology and many other supplies. If you have any suggestions of ways to solve this problem - let us know. We do welcome any and all donations!

We Need You!

Volunteers are key to the success of ReBoot. Please, contact the ReBoot Center in your community or call 404-657-3057 to volunteer. Some of the areas we need assistance in are:

- Computer Repair
- Office Support
- Data Entry
- Home-based Phone Support
- Technical Support
- Computer Training
- Acquisition/Deployment of Equipment - Local
- Acquisition/Deployment of Equipment - Statewide
- Equipment Depot Support
- Fundraising
- Marketing

The ReBoot statewide partners are bridging the gap by taking this project from the state level to the local level. This localization provides for more effective service, a better use of resources, and building a sense of community. The training centers are responsible for:

- accepting applications;
- deploying equipment; and
- training participants.

Each center is building its training program to fit the needs of its community. They all offer computer basics and some software training. Some are able to offer more advanced training. Augusta, for example, offers an extensive course on JAWS for Windows. Our evaluations conclude that our most satisfied participants are those that are active in their computer education. ReBoot Centers support such initiatives.

Your Old Computer Can Give New Life!

You Can Help!

We need working 386, 486 or faster computers (desktops and/or laptops), monitors, keyboards, mice, printers, accessories, and software. We are able to pickup some equipment. However, you can or drop it off or ship directly to FODAC - ReBoot's Equipment Depot and repair shop, located in Atlanta, Georgia. Your contribution is tax deductible.

Ship to:

Carolyn Phillips / ReBoot

c/o Friends of Disabled Adults and Children

4900 Lewis Road

Stone Mountain, GA 30083

If you need more information, please contact

Carolyn Phillips, ReBoot Project Leader.

Phone: 404-657-3057

Fax: 404-657-3086

E-Mail: tfl6@america.net

Speech Recognition and Touch Screen Make PC Banking More Accessible

Home Financial Network, Inc. (HFN), the leading developer of private-branded Internet banking software for the middle/mass market, announced two innovations in home banking: the incorporation of speech recognition and touch screen technologies in its Home ATM(R) software. The announcement was made at the Faulkner & Gray Home Banking Forum in Atlanta, Georgia. The inclusion of speech recognition and touch screen technologies for Home ATM enables HFN's bank partners to serve those consumers who find the traditional methods of interfacing with a computer -- namely via keyboard or mouse -- simply too difficult or too imposing. In particular, by providing voice and touch screen navigation, banks can serve those constituencies that arguably have the greatest need for home banking: the elderly and those with physical limitations.

"By using the human voice to replace all keyboard and mouse commands, millions of consumers who value the benefits of financial automation, but have been unwilling or unable to achieve the benefits through conventional means, can now do so with great ease and little or no training," said Daniel M. Schley, chairman and CEO of Home Financial Network. "Touch screen technology provides yet another simple and intuitive approach for dealing with technology. Whether the consumer is elderly, physically limited, or technology-terrified, the end result will be a further expansion in the number of consumers seeking remote banking services from our partner banks."

With the speech recognition-enhanced version of Home ATM, users are able to perform all program navigation and execute all financial functions simply by speaking into a microphone connected to the PC. Recent advances make speech recognition technology fully capable of interpreting the basic command structure of focused applications such as Home ATM, with little training and a high degree of accuracy. Users are able to access their accounts and perform a wide range of banking transactions with the same fluidity as if they were speaking to a teller. When integrated into Home ATM Bill Pay, the same technology will allow users to voice-select a payee and record the amount to be paid simply by speaking.

Home ATM's speech recognition enhancement is being developed using the Dragon Naturally Speaking speech engine from Dragon Systems, Inc., and IBM's Via Voice technology. "Speech recognition makes home banking easier and faster for Home ATM customers because they can focus on the tasks at hand rather than the interface. Home banking is an ideal application for speech recognition, with obvious appeal to a broad market," said Roger Matus, Vice President of Marketing for Dragon Systems, a leading provider of speech recognition technology. Touch Screen Technology's Home ATM enables users to navigate the program and execute all banking and bill payment functions simply by touching the large "ATM command buttons" on the screen. This version of the product is not only quick to learn, but also exceptionally easy to use. To execute any program command, it's simply a matter of "point and smudge."

Home's touch screen technology uses ELO IntelliTouch controllers, designed for surface acoustic wave (SAW) touch screens. The company will soon add AccuTouch controllers for touch screens that rely on capacitive and resistive technology. Home ATM's large on-screen buttons and simplified command structure provide an ideal environment for touch screen usage.

For more information, contact your banking institution; Ann Marie Lochner, Lochner & Hawk at 908-852-3656; or Tom Dittrich, Home Financial Network at 203-341-7403 or Web site: <http://www.homeatm.com>.

The Warm Springs TRC:

A Team Approach to Assistive Technology

Lisa Moore, Tools for Life Coordinator

Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation (RWSIR)

An assistive technology device is any item, piece of equipment or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of persons with disabilities. An assistive technology device can be high tech or low tech.

Assistive technology can enable an individual to participate more inclusively at school, at home and in the community. It promotes independence and reduces the need for paid assistance. Employment is also obtainable, increasing a person's earning potential and quality of life.

The Warm Springs Technology Resource Center (TRC) is one of seven centers in Georgia that brings consumers closer to assistive technology. We are a resource for Georgians with disabilities, families, friends, and service providers who are interested in seeing, learning and experimenting with new and existing assistive technology devices.

We are located at the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation (RWSIR) in rural Warm Springs, Georgia. This comprehensive rehabilitation facility was founded in 1927 by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. A beautiful and accessible campus provides an excellent setting for recovery, learning and personal growth.

In addition to the services offered by the Warm Springs TRC, assistive technology rehabilitation services are available in the areas of Orthotics/Prosthetics, Seating and Mobility, Augmentative Communication, Computer Access, Environmental Control, Aids for Daily Living, Recreation and Leisure, Architectural Modifications and Adapted Driving. The inter-disciplinary team of service providers at RWSIR is committed to helping people become more independent in their daily lives with assistive technology.

A team approach works effectively in identifying and obtaining assistive technology. The Warm Springs TRC works closely with consumers, service providers, public and private agencies, and other Tools For Life Technology Resource Centers to improve timely access to assistive technology devices and services. If you would like to visit the Warm Springs TRC or request information about assistive technology, please contact us at 706-655-5099.

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