



CommunicATor

Summer 2010

601 East 18th Ave.
Denver, Co 80203
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assistivetechologypartners.org

Assistive Technology Partners envisions a world where all persons with cognitive, sensory and/or physical disabilities are engaged in life at home, school, work and play, without barriers and without boundaries.

Able Games 2010

The Second Annual AbleGames will take place on August 21st. It will host 20-30 children with severe



physical, sensory and/or cognitive disabilities ages 3-18. It targets children not able to participate in typical sports or organized adapted sports such as Special Olympics. The clinical and engineering teams at Assistive Technology Partners

have been modifying "off the shelf" gaming systems for access through a single switch. A Wii controller has also been adapted to allow a child who is paralyzed to control the game with head movement. Numerous computer games that can be controlled with switches will be available. The event is intended to level the playing field in competitive children's games. Come share the possibilities of what simple adaptations and AT can do to enhance the quality of life for children with disabilities.

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Check out ATP's New Website

ATP's website has been updated to comply with the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine's new web standard. It looks great. Check it out at www.assistivetechologypartners.org. If you currently link to ATP website, be sure to change the address on your website. Also link to Facebook and join discussions. Search for Assistive Technology Partners to find our Facebook page.

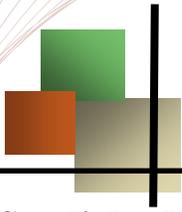
New ATP Employee

Please welcome Christina Wessling to the ATP family. Christina is our new Administrative Assistant who will work with the program faculty and staff to streamline administrative functions. Christina's previous work experience includes work with Jeffco Schools as a financial/enrollment secretary and with a large healthcare insurance company and a technology firm. She comes to us with a well rounded set of skills. In addition, Christina's father had MS for over thirty years and she is very familiar with the challenges that one faces with a disability. She is the first contact on the main phone line, feel free to contact her at 303-315-1280 or Christina.Wessling@ucdenver.edu



Christina Wessling

Assistive Technology Partners
BREAKING BARRIERS, CHANGING LIVES



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Clinic Spotlight: Meet Michelle

Michelle Wilson is a very busy young woman who relies on a variety of assistive technology (AT) devices to enable her to be mobile, to communicate, to work and to have fun. Michelle is 27 years old and has Athetoid Cerebral Palsy. She operates a power wheelchair with head movements so she can get around her home and community. Michelle is not able to speak, so she uses a speech generating device for communication and also to access her computer. This enables her to use email for communication instead of a phone, as well as make greeting cards for her church. Michelle came to Assistive Technology Partners' clinic for help with all her AT devices, which were not meeting her needs.

Wheelchair Seating/Mobility

Michelle worked with Kelly Waugh, PT, MAPT, ATP to determine specifications for a new power wheelchair. Because of her cerebral palsy, Michelle requires customized supports in her wheelchair to help keep her body aligned and comfortable. The goals for a new power wheelchair for Michelle were to improve the postural alignment of her body and head, decrease neck strain, and decrease the pain in her legs. Michelle was seen in our Wheelchair Seating/Mobility clinic three times in order to thoroughly evaluate and problem solve solutions to her complex postural support and mobility needs. During these visits, Michelle was seen by Kelly Waugh, PT in conjunction with Bert Lindholm, ATP from ATG Rehab (Michelle's Durable Medical Equipment supplier). Sessions included a trial of a newer power wheelchair to make sure that Michelle would be able to operate all of the functions. Utilizing an adjustable seating simulator, we were able to determine specific features needed to achieve her goals.

After receiving her new wheelchair, Michelle was seen for follow up sessions to make final adjustments and to ensure that all goals were met. Michelle and her parents are very happy with her new, improved posture. Her back is straighter and she is

able to hold her head up more easily. She has no pain in her legs and buttocks, and her headaches are less frequent. Michelle is more comfortable and stable, and ready to use all of her other technology with greater ease!

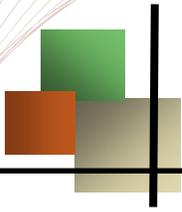


Michelle Wilson

Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC)

Michelle also worked with Shelly Elfner, CCC-SLP, to determine the most appropriate AAC system to support her communication goals. She had been using her DV4 communication device successfully for five years; however it was no longer addressing all of her needs. She was interested in emailing, reading books, listening to music, and text messaging in addition to communicating with family and friends. She had a thorough evaluation and successful trial with a DynaVox Vmax, which is both a communication device as well as a fully functioning computer. The new Vmax along with WordPower for Series 5 vocabulary software, a 100-location keyguard, a WiFi Compact Flash adapter, and a Bluetooth USB adapter were fully funded and sent to her house.

Michelle is successfully using her AAC device to communicate her thoughts and ideas. She was also set up with a Bookshare account, which provides a variety of books in electronic format. She is able to download books of her choice and then her device reads the book to her. Michelle has already finished reading several books! She is also using her technology to email and to listen to her MP3 music files. The next goal is to set up a cell phone connection, so that she can use her device to send text messages and share their stories



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Prompting Systems for Employees

The engineering team at Assistive Technology Partners has been working on an innovative project funded by the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) as part of the RERC-Workplace Accommodations Grant. This project explores the use of two different task prompting systems that could aid an individual with a disability in successfully performing work tasks. Task prompting is similar to creating a check list to make sure the proper steps are performed in the correct order for a job.

The task for the study involves packaging Chocolate First Aid Kits. The first aid kits contain chocolate bars and other candy that are currently sold in gift shops throughout the United States.

Two types of prompting systems are being compared. One provides auditory prompts for every single step the person needs to take in order to complete a work task. The user is required to hit a button after every prompt to move to the next step. The second system uses context-aware sensors and only provides a prompt if someone gets 'stuck' or needs assistance. It is much more automated than the first system; requiring less work on the part of the user. The sensors 'know' what the user is doing and can step in if assistance is required.



The results of this study will be valuable in helping individuals with cognitive disabilities be successful in a variety of employment settings.

Early Intervention Videos

Our early intervention team has been busy working on a web-based training program for early inter-

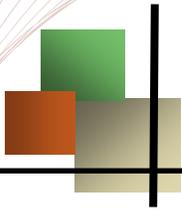


vention providers as well as improving the Tech for Tykes web site. An important part of that effort is the development of video clips about the use of AT for young children.

We are following the adage that a picture is worth a thousand words, and a video is worth even more!

Thanks to a few families who are willing to volunteer their time, we are capturing insights on the impact AT can have on young children with disabilities and their families from a personal perspective. The videos provide a great opportunity to learn about what has worked well for these families, as well as what the challenges have been. The videos include an interview with the parents and footage of the children using technology. The outcome will be an educational and inspirational product. We're excited about this new endeavor.

**To be added to the
CommunicATor distribution list or
to request a hard copy, contact
[http://medschool.ucdenver.edu/
atp](http://medschool.ucdenver.edu/atp) or 303-315-1280**



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SWAAAC Celebrates the 2010 Summer Symposium

The SWAAAC project functions as a central Assistive Technology (AT) resource to families, educators and related service providers in Colorado's public schools. Utilizing an established infrastructure, SWAAAC provides a wide variety of cost effective, readily accessible services to teams across Colorado. Services are delivered via phone, email, website, discussion forum, telephone conferencing, WebEx meetings, tele-rehabilitation, distance and on-site training and consultation at three Assistive Technology Partner offices (Denver, Colorado Springs and Grand Junction).

The 2010 SWAAAC Summer Symposium: Assistive Technology Assessment ended the 2009 – 2010 school year on a high note. Over 200 participants attended and represented 82 Administrative Units and/or organizations. One graduate credit through the University of Colorado Denver was made available for symposium participants attending both days.

Dr. Ed Steinberg, Director of Special Education and Assistant Commissioner, delivered a captivating keynote address at the award ceremony. Dr. Steinberg spoke to the value of the statewide SWAAAC project and expressed appreciation for the work of the SWAAAC Central Office and the AT teams in the field. Following Dr. Steinberg's keynote address, three districts provided AT success stories. Dave Karisny, Team Coordinator from Mesa Co. Valley – 51, spoke about his innovative use of Share-Point to promote collaboration. It provides a central location for sharing written resources, websites and correspondence. Donna Samuels, art teacher for Adams 12, presented pioneering concepts for inclusion of children with disabilities in art curriculum through the use of AT. Sue Loeffler from the Denver Public School District provided an overview of their AT service delivery model and exciting results of AT use in the classroom. Ten SWAAAC team members were recognized during the keynote presentation and re-

ceived awards for their outstanding contributions. Award recipients included:

Lifetime Achievement Award

Dave Karisny, Mesa County SD

Alison Montana, Adams 14

Sandy Hall, Falcon 49

SWAAACtastic Award

Michelle Thomas, Adams 12

Donna Samuels, Adams 12

Catalyst for Change Award

Valerie Knafelc, Colo.Springs District 11

Robyn Kellogg, San Juan Boces

Rookie of the Year Award

Kim Lingold, Falcon 49

Making a Difference One Student at a Time Award

Jocelyn Mertens, Douglas County SD

Deb Perl, Widefield

Upcoming Training Opportunities

Your Phone and You: an AT Toolkit in your Pocket

September 17, 2010 8:00am - 3:00pm

Boardmaker Plus v. 6 - Beginners

September 20, 2010 8:00am - 12:00pm

Boardmaker Plus v. 6 - Intermediate

September 20, 2010 1:00pm - 5:00pm

Introduction to Classroom Suite 4

October 4, 2010 8:00am - 12:00pm

Classroom Suite 4 - Next Steps

October 4, 2010 1:00pm - 5:00pm

Distance Education Training: SWAAAC 101

November 8 & 9, 2010 9:00am - 4:00pm

Do-It-Yourself Toy Adaptations for Children with Special Needs

November 16, 2010 2:00pm - 5:30pm

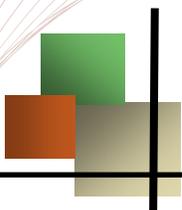
For more information, go to
www.assistivetechpartners.org



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SETAC Happenings

Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) evaluations and device training have been frequent happenings at the Southeast Technical Assistance Center (SETAC), thanks to referrals from service providers in the community. The picture (left) shows the Proloquo2Go software. One of many examples of communication software.



Due to renovations at the School of Excellence, the SETAC office has moved across the street to the Pikes Peak BOCES administrative offices building (4825 Lorna Place). The phone number for SETAC is the same, (719) 380-6229 and the new fax number will be announced soon. In the meantime, faxes for SETAC can be sent to the Denver office fax at (303) 837-1208.

The Colorado Springs SWAAC team members and private speech-language pathologists will hold their quarterly meetings at SETAC this year. A variety of topics are planned including device demonstrations and brainstorming sessions. Feel free to contact Heather, heather.lyons@ucdenver.edu, or Julie Ford, julie.ford@asd20.org, for more information. The first meeting will be Friday, September 17th at 8:30 and will feature short presentations by the new Dynavox Technologies representative for southeast Colorado, Grant Hankins, and an Assistive Technology Partners' team member. Other topics include current AAC devices, upcoming trainings and the Tech for Tykes program. This event is open to the public.

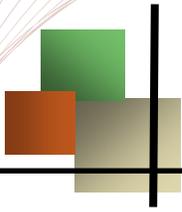


Review the learning lab schedule and visit SETAC for one of the upcoming labs. On August 12th, we'll

be discussing "TextHelp! Read & Write GOLD". Call Heather Lyons at (719) 380-6229 or email Heather to register. Hope to see you at the new office soon!

WESTAC Office

- A presentation on the Assistive Technology Partners Adaptive Home Display was given to Adult Resource for Care and Help Advisory Council (ARCH). ARCH is excited about bringing the Adaptive Home Display to Grand Junction, hopefully as soon as September 2010. "The ARCH provides a place where people can turn for help and information on the full range of long-term care support options in Mesa County. Information is available at: <http://wc211.mesacounty.us/volunteers.cfm>
- WestAC has been staffing booths at Low Vision Expos in Montrose and Grand Junction and the Caregivers Toolbox Conference in Grand Junction.
- A presentation "AT for Students with Hearing Impairments" was given at the consortium meeting, a group comprised of individuals who work with students with disabilities in higher education, in June. The attendees were amazed at the amount of technology available for people with hearing impairments.
- Hospice and Palliative Care of Western Colorado invited WestAC staff to give a presentation to their social workers. A wide variety of AT was demonstrated.
- "An Introduction to Dragon NaturallySpeaking" presentation was given at the international AHEAD conference held in Denver in July. Many of the participants had never seen this voice recognition software and were surprised to learn how effective it could be with people with learning disabilities.



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You're never too old to learn something new!

Come see what educational opportunities are available

Monthly, Assistive Technology Partners offers free learning labs that are open to the community. Every second Thursday of the month (with exceptions of the months June and December) at 2:30, faculty hosts a brief lecture on an AT topic. Hands-on opportunities follow with an array of related technologies for participants to try. Questions regarding the type of technology presented or the services provided can be answered by an Assistive Technology Specialist after the talk. Call to register 303-315-1280.

If you have a topic you are interested in learning more about, we have an ever expanding catalog of courses that cover all areas of AT that vary from 2-3 hour lectures to 3-day workshops. The nationally recognized faculty members are able to provide trainings upon request.

Learning Labs for the rest of 2010:

- August 12th Introduction to TextHelp
- September 9th Adaptive Telecommunication Devices for Limited Hand Function or Hands Free Use
- October 14th Do-It-Yourself Toy and Game Modification
- November 11th Smart Pen for Struggling Students
- December No Learning Lab

Visit our website to find the details of all our educational offerings at www.assistivetechpartners.org or call for more information at 303-315-1280.

Contact Assistive Technology Partners

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