Adapted Home Exhibit Travels the State

Assistive Technology Partners’ Adapted Home Display is a unique exhibit that features a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, living room, office and recreation room filled with devices to assist individuals with disabilities. Items on display range from low-tech items that can be bought in any hardware or department store to high-tech innovations such as talking microwaves and computer software for people with more complex disabilities. Among the items displayed were refrigerators, dishwashers and ovens that are wheelchair accessible, walk-in bathtubs, electronic communication devices, one-handed computer keyboards and much more.

The Adapted Home Display provides members of the community the ability to tour the home, see and experience 1,000+ items first hand, to talk to individuals who can assist them in obtaining information about options and choices available to them. The goal of the Adapted Home is to ensure an opportunity for the public to learn about the benefits of technology for people with disabilities and the elderly.

This summer and fall ATP had the privilege of taking the Adapted Home to two locations in the state. The Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Colorado, ARCH (Adult Resources for Care and Help) and Home Care of the Grand Valley brought the Adapted Home to Grand Junction for a return exhibit covering three days - August 16-18. More than 100 people attended the event at the Mesa County Fairgrounds.

The Independence Center of Colorado Springs also hosted the Adapted Home for two days - October 5-6 - where a record 700+ individuals attended the event at the Freedom Financial Services Expo Center.

ATP wants to thank all the volunteers and vendors who not only gave of the their time, but donated furniture and appliances to complete the exhibit. ATP
This fall, Assistive Technology Partners, Peak Parent Center and the Colorado Department of Education hosted the US Department of Education’s “Education Drives America” bus tour. September 18 brought Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Sue Swenson to Denver and ATP. Ms. Swenson spent the evening with parents and students from across the state to discuss technologies and strategies that help transition students with disabilities from an educational environment toward independent living, employment and higher education. The highly engaging roundtable format produced inspiring success stories and revealed remarkable student dreams for the future. Olivia Urbalejo, eloquently described the impact Audible.com (Audio book collection) and a variety of literacy support technologies has made on her ability to access literature and pursue her dreams of becoming a writer. Zach Korbel and Max Grange spoke of developing careers as motivational speakers. Using his Augmentative Alternative Communication device, Max shared with the group how technology has created opportunities for greater independence and community engagement. He explained with confidence, “You could look at me as someone who is dependent on others, or you can see me as a person who is good at using technology. My gift in life is being good with technology.” All three of these young adults were stellar examples of how ambition and a bit of technology, can overcome significant disabilities.

Parents also described some of the other challenges that remain. Acquiring assistive technology and achieving successful implementation at home and in the classroom requires resources and collaboration. Peg Brown-Clark, Colorado Department of Education, Assistant Commissioner of Exceptional Student Services, addressed parent’s concerns. She commented on state resources available through district SWAAAC teams and the state’s overarching commitment to inclusive education for students with disabilities.

The US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, suggested bringing the bus tour to Denver as a result of the pioneering programs offered at ATP, SWAAAC and PEAK. Ms. Swenson explained, “Denver is the first place to be, because we think there is a chance for the federal government to learn something from you. What can we be doing differently? How can we be supporting these programs so they will work better for you?”

By evenings end, parents, students, educators and administrators were asking for more time to share their experiences, strategies and technology solutions to support students as they transition from school environments to life after high school.

For more information on transition planning for students with disabilities, visit the CDE website at http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/Transition.asp.

For websites with more information regarding assistive technology and transition visit: http://swaaac.com/Files/FormsandDocuments/TransitionChecklist.pdf and http://www.fctd.info/show/newfig.
Say Hello to Our Students

ATP is home to some great University student employees and interns. Our newest student is Daniel Caris. Dan is a master’s student in Public Administration at the University of Colorado Denver, with a concentration in local government administration. Upon completing his degree, he aspires to work for a municipality in an administrative role. He received his Bachelors of Science in Public Administration/Business Administration at the University of Arizona where he interned with Tucson’s City Manager’s Office. He readily attributes his passion for public service to his internship experiences. During his time at U of A, Dan worked for the Disability Resource Center. This position exposed him to the application of assistive technologies in higher education, developed his understanding of accessibility needs and cultivated an appreciation and respect for the talents and resolve of students with disabilities. At ATP, Dan works with the SWAAAC program which provides professional development and technical assistance for public school service providers across the state. He also supports the management of the statewide assistive technology loan bank consisting of nearly 2,000 AT devices and resources. Some of his other interests include travelling, cooking, sporting events and spending time with his friends and family.

Adrienne Wood has been working at ATP since the Spring semester. Adrienne is conducting a clinical research internship at ATP under the mentorship of Dr. Patricia Heyn. Currently, Adrienne is in her last semester undergraduate degree in Health Care Management at Metropolitan State College of Denver where she will be graduating in the fall of 2012. One of her areas of interest is to develop career skills in the area of health care research. She has plans to pursue a graduate degree in Public Health at the University of Colorado Denver. She will be graduating with honors from Metro State. When she is not working or going to school, she enjoys reading, running, travelling and spending time with her family and friends.

Save the Date

The sixth annual Déjà vu Rendezvous event, celebrating those in the construction industry will be held on Friday, May 17, 2013 at Mile High Station in Denver. UMB Bank will once again serve as the presenting sponsor. Together, the construction industry will have raised $1 million to benefit the work of Assistive Technology Partners.

For more information, please contact Cathie Greig at 303.592.5461.
As a first year teacher in elementary education, Rueben Moore is in the middle of a steep learning curve, a curve which is made more difficult by the fact that he has a significant visual disability. Rueben's vision is far from typical. He has a condition called motion blindness which makes lines and text on a page appear wavy to him. Reading cursive handwriting is particularly exhausting, as is reading graph paper or being in a room full of posters and art hung on the walls. Sound like life in most elementary classrooms doesn't it? Challenging yes, but Rueben has had a lifetime of experience successfully dealing with similar challenges.

Unfortunately, the technology that had worked for Rueben in the past didn't seem to fit well in his new environment. So Rueben turned to ATP for help. Clinicians worked with Rueben to identify his teaching strengths, discussing what an ideal classroom might look like and identifying technologies that would assist his visual disability while at the same time improve his ability to educate his students. In order to support Rueben's needs, the decision was made to throw the notion of a "traditional" classroom out the window. Rueben is not a traditional teacher and he needed a decidedly non-traditional approach in terms of the technologies employed in his classroom.

Rueben needs big...big text, magnified worksheets and a large screen for viewing student work. Larger is better. It makes it easier and less exhausting for him to read. He also needs to be mobile so he can interact with his students. A model classroom was designed in which he uses a portable device with a camera which can take a picture of anything and display it on a 100” screen in the front of the class. A second device was added that can display his teacher notes, textbooks and other educational materials on another screen for his personal use.

That portable device turned out to be an iPad that utilizes the camera to snap pictures of student work so he can read it in real time on the large screen rather than having to take it back to his desk to use a more traditional video magnifying device. A separate technology, the “Eye-Pal Vision” from AbiSee Inc., which can take a picture of a textbook page, magnify it and read it out loud was also selected. This enables Rueben to have quick access to his lesson notes, curriculum materials and textbooks.

Rueben is a "techy" person who took our recommendations and ran with them. He painted a screen on the wall using special reflective paint, setup an iPad as suggested and installed the Eye-Pal and 60” LCD screen for his teacher notes. The result is a marvel of educational technology that came straight from our original blueprint. Rueben's classroom is nothing short of transformational. He can see and discuss student work on the big screen in real time. He is able to take pictures of worksheets and instantly email them to parents for practice at home. His students can work collaboratively using the ipad and display their work for all to see. Most importantly, Rueben can move around the class and interact with his students rather than being tied to his desk.

Sometimes technology works and sometimes it doesn't. In this case it changed the game. The parents of Rueben's students were amazed by the technology and by their improved communication with their child's teacher. Meanwhile his students love the technology and look forward to working together on the iPad. Things have worked out so well that several of Rueben's colleagues have noticed and inquired about his setup.

Educating a classroom full of boisterous 4th graders is no easy chore, yet Rueben has met the challenge with the right technology and a little help from Assistive Technology Partners.
Check out the New Resources on the SWAAAC Website

The Colorado Department of Education and Assistive Technology Partners support a network of 67 Assistive Technology (AT) teams in school districts across the state of Colorado. These statewide Assistive Technology Augmentative Alternative Communication (SWAAAC) teams are interdisciplinary groups comprised of education professionals from disciplines such as speech language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, special education and psychology. They provide AT services in schools and classroom settings within their districts, enabling students with disabilities to achieve full access and participation in all educational opportunities.

The SWAAAC website is a valuable AT resource to SWAAAC members and the general public. It is so popular, it receives over 60,000 hits per month. The website offers information on professional development, training opportunities, assistive technology resources and district/BOCES team coordinator contact information. The Central Office SWAAAC team strives to add new state-of-the-art resources to the website each month. This year, SWAAAC members from across the state have been contributing their own resources to share on the website. Here are just a few of the new resources you will find:

- **iPad Considerations for the IEP Team** - Developed by the SWAAAC Advisory Group
- **Documenting AT in the IEP** - Link to Boulder Valley School District assistive technology pages
- **AT Referral Packet** - Resource provided by Thompson School District
- **Assistive Technology Implementation Plan** - Resource provided by the Mountain BOCES
- **Graphic Organizers Resource** - Developed by the BVSD Assistive Technology Team
- **Speech Recognition-A Discussion** - Developed by BVSD Assistive Technology Team

For additional resources please visit the SWAAAC website: [www.swaaac.com](http://www.swaaac.com)

**CO/WY Consortium Meeting**

Denice Roberts of ATP WesTAC hosted the Consortium of Support Programs for Students with Disabilities, Representing Postsecondary Institutions in Colorado and Wyoming to have their September meeting at the ATP office in Denver. Thirty people from across the state attended the bimonthly meeting which included a tour of the ATP facility led by Maureen Melonis and an iPad presentation given by Jim Sandstrum.

**ATP Trainings in Grand Junction**

ATP offered two training sessions in Grand Junction in October. On October 2, Maureen Melonis presented "Way Cool ‘Apptivities’ - There's an App for That!: Implementing the iPad & iPod with Individuals with Disabilities". Truly a Western Slope training, attendees were from Grand Junction, Hayden, Delta, Meeker, Glenwood Springs, Basalt and Craig. It was a lively presentation with one individual with a visual disability who wanted to see if she could use an iPad. She was excited to discover using an iPad was a possibility.

On October 5, Kelly Waugh came to Grand Junction to present "Wheelchair Seating Assessment: Determining Critical Features of the Body Support System". Participants were presented with an overview of wheelchair seating principles, body support parameters and seating assessment procedures. The course taught a client-centered approach to problem solving. This workshop was well attended with attendees from Grand Junction, Denver and Texas.

**Assistive Technology Awareness Week**

October 14-20 was Assistive Technology Awareness Week in Colorado. ATP, along with other members of the Colorado AT Coalition, highlighted AT Awareness in a variety of ways. ATP held Open Houses at the Denver, Grand Junction and Colorado Springs offices along with an open house at the Bellwether Nutrition & Rehabilitative Services office in Pueblo.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation held an open house on October 11 in honor of Disability Awareness Month. The American Council of the Blind of Colorado held the Raisin’ Cane event on October 15 in downtown Denver. The group challenged downtown employees and City/State officials to a blindfolded walk down the 16th Street Mall to support and increase awareness about eye health, accessibility and blind/visually impaired issues.