Dr. Mary Ellen Buning Joins ATP

Please join ATP staff in welcoming Mary Ellen Buning, Ph.D., to Assistive Technology Partners. Dr. Buning is an occupational therapist with a doctoral degree in Rehabilitation Sciences with an emphasis in assistive technology. She joined the staff on March 17 after receiving a major pre-service preparation grant ATP recently received, as well as other programs.

The five-year-preparation grant is designed to address the shortage of trained personnel to meet the technology needs of children. ATP will train 60 graduate students to work with children who have low-incidence disabilities, and will develop the first Doctoral program in assistive technology at UCHSC.

Graduate Students

Continued from page 2

The technology, “AT is a fairly new field,” she says, “so there’s not a lot of hard data demonstrating its effectiveness. When the students return to their communities, they will be collecting data about ways that AT improves the lives of people with disabilities over the long-term.”

Donor Appreciation Night August 4

A reminder that Assistive Technology Partners’ first Donor Appreciation Night will be held at the beautiful Denver Country Club on Thursday, August 4, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Everyone who has donated $50 or more to ATP in 2004 or 2005 will be on the guest list, so there’s still time for you to donate and be invited!

Advisory Council Chair Bill Caile and his wife Sara, who are hosting this special event, promise a grand time for all and urge you to call Miya Adams at 303-315-1280 to donate. Or send your tax-free donation to CU Foundation/Assistive Technology Partners, 1245 E. Colfax Ave., Suite 200, Denver, CO 80218.

Donors will be invited to explore the Adapted Home, which will feature assistive technology for every room in the home and the classroom, and for people of all ages, will be featured at the Collaborative Assistive Technology Conference, June 9-11. Advisory Council members are invited to attend the opening keynote address at 8:30 a.m. on June 10.

A special “Adaptive Home” will display assistive technology for every room in the house – kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, living room and office. A new feature, an “accessible classroom,” will be of particular interest to educators.

The conference will be held at the Westminster Westin Hotel, 10600 Westminster Blvd., near the intersection of Highway 36 and 104th Ave.

The exhibits and adapted home and accessible classroom will open to the public for $5 on Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

On Friday, June 10, at 8:30 a.m., Advisory Council members are invited to attend the opening keynote address by Darren Jernigan, director of governmental affairs at Permobil, Inc. Mr. Jernigan has had an impressive career and presents a unique perspective on living life as a quadriplegic. Following the keynote address, Advisory Council members are invited to explore the Adapted Home exhibits. Please plan to join us!
Major Challenge for ATP’s Seating/Mobility Clinic

ATP has taken on a major new challenge: to care for people formerly served by the ATP Seating and Positioning Clinic at Children’s Hospital. This clinic provided wheelchair seating and positioning services for persons with severe disabilities. The hospital has closed the clinic as part of a financial austerity move to construct its new hospital on the Fitzsimons campus.

Rather than leave children and adults who have severe disabilities with no place to turn, ATP has committed to provide services at our Wheelchair Seating and Mobility Clinic. Dr. Cathy Bodine, director of ATP, says, “These are people with profound needs. Many lack insurance and few can afford to pay for the intensive, sophisticated services provided by our internationally known clinicians. Serving so many additional clients is an important commitment and a huge responsibility.”

Assessments at ATP’s Wheelchair Seating and Mobility Clinic are complex and very time-consuming. Noting that just one client takes a full day, may involve up to three highly trained specialists and costs a minimum of $450, Dr. Bodine estimates that ATP will need to raise $200,000 to break even on the Clinic this year. “The fund-raising of our Advisory Council and supporters is even more important now than in the past,” she says.

Exercise Research in Progress

We know we should exercise regularly, but most of us – including people with disabilities – find it hard to exercise on a regular basis. What would encourage people with disabilities to stick to an exercise regime? That’s the topic of one research project in which ATP is engaged.

Funded under a five-year grant from the National Institute on Disability Research and Rehabilitation, U.S. Department of Education, ATP’s research into recreational technology for people with disabilities has three phases. The first phase, which has just concluded, offered a fitness program on adaptive equipment located at ATP, but included no special stimulation. The second phase, which is now under way, combines a fitness program with stimulation such as TV and music. Phase three will combine exercise with a “virtual reality” (computerized) buddy.

The grant will enable ATP’s staff to develop the computerized virtual reality system that will ultimately be available for use by people with disabilities across the United States.

A three-phase research study, funded under a five-year federal grant, will allow ATP to determine ways to encourage exercise by people with disabilities.

ATP Plans Adapted Computer Games

For children with severe disabilities, participation in competitive activities such as softball, checkers, a spelling bee or even Special Olympics is simply not possible. Yet these children enjoy play and competition as much as their non-disabled peers.

ATP staff have participated in the development of adapted computer games in the past. Using adapted computer technology, software and switches, AT specialists leveraged the playing field so that children with disabilities (up to age 21) could compete against each other, their siblings and peers. As can be imagined, the games were very popular with both the children and their families!

ATP would like to conduct the Adapted Computer Games in the fall of this year, but needs to raise $25,000 to make the event a reality. If you can help sponsor the Games, please contact Mya Adams at 303-315-1280. As always, your donation to ATP is fully tax-deductible.

Twelve Graduate Students to Study at ATP

As noted in the last issue of this newsletter, Assistive Technology Partners has been awarded three prestigious federal grants. One is designed to provide graduate-level training to address the shortage of trained personnel qualified to provide assistive technology to children with low-incidence disabilities.

Twelve graduate-level students from the fields of education and occupational, physical and speech therapy have enrolled in the program and will begin their studies at ATP in the spring term. Each student will receive 18 credit hours in advanced AT training as well as a $10,000 stipend for their year of study. A total of 60 students will be trained at ATP over the next five years.

Maureen Melonis, assistant director and education coordinator for ATP, says the students are all interested in conducting research on the effectiveness of assistive technology for people with disabilities.

Dr. Bodine Presents at International Conference

ATP’s very own Dr. Cathy Bodine has once again been internationally recognized for her expertise in assistive technology. Most recently, she was a featured speaker at the First International Conference and Clinic on Fragile X Syndrome, held March 21-24 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The conference, which was sponsored by the UAE and the Dubai Autism Center, attracted more than 400 specialists from across the Middle East.

While attending a major international conference in the United Arab Emirates, ATP’s Dr. Cathy Bodine demonstrated how to do assistive technology evaluations. Physicians and other specialists learned how AT can make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

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During the conference, Dr. Bodine presented at a plenary session and worked to teach clinicians to conduct assistive technology evaluations. Thirteen individuals from Egypt, Syria, Iran, Iraq, and other Middle Eastern countries brought their loved ones to be part of the evaluations. “There is little expertise in AT in the Middle East,” Dr. Bodine says, “and families are desperate for help. I was glad to be able to help them while also teaching others how to do these specialized assessments.”

Please see Students on page 4

People who need expert assistance with wheelchair seating to be mobile receive that specialized care at ATP. An estimated $200,000 is needed by ATP to care for patients formerly served at Children’s Hospital.

Physicians and specialists from a wide range of disciplines attended the international conference in Dubai at which Dr. Cathy Bodine was a featured presenter. Participants at the conference are seen in the photos at left and above.
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April Open House a Success

Many thanks to all who attended ATP’s April 20th open house and helped make it a success. Advisory Council members, donors, clients, family members and staff had a most enjoyable evening.

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Mail: 303-315-1280
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TTY: 303-837-8964
Fax: 303-837-1208
www.uchsc.edu/atp

Advisory Council Members

Email: info@atp.colorado.edu
Cathy Bodine
JC Bourque
Bill Cale (Chair)
Sara Cale
Martha Davis
Mike Dino
Lisa Heppner
Kenneth Johnstone
Dennis Matthews
Debra Mckewney
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