



The AT Messenger

....bringing technology to you

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Delaware Elwyn Launches New Statewide AT Service

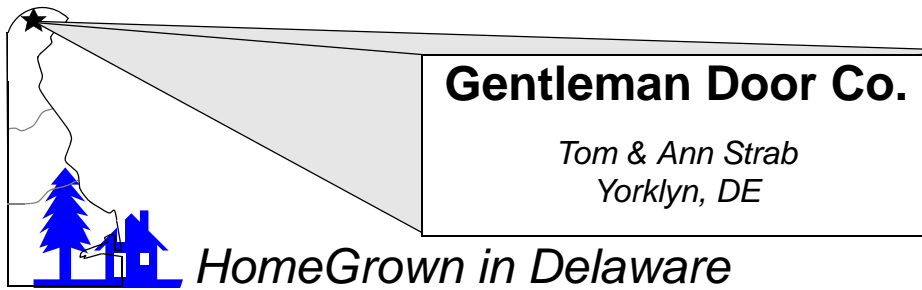
Beth Mineo, Ph.D., DATI Director

On Friday, April 7, Delaware Elwyn hosted an open house to celebrate the official start-up of the Mobile Assistive Technology Services Unit. The uniqueness of MATS is that the services are performed at sites where individuals use their assistive devices—places such as school, work, or home. Services include professional assessments, referrals for assistive devices, installation, training, help in finding funding sources, fabrication and modifications, and equipment repair and maintenance.

For Anthony Ferri of New Castle, who is retired from Dupont and has severe arthritis, the MATS is providing him with a computer system that can allow him to do such things as banking from his home. In order to save Mr. Ferri's energy, the system will have voice recognition and a word prediction program that allows him to cut down on the number of keystrokes needed for each word. Ferri's system is being funded through the Division of Aging. "Because our rehabilitation engineer can often fabricate the equipment, the price is significantly less expensive than many of the devices on the market," says Dora Brown, Coordinator of the MATS.

sources. The Mobile team will work with consumers and health care professionals to identify appropriate funding sources and determine eligibility for assistance. For more information, call Elwyn's MATS at (302) 657-5583.

Mobile Assistive Technology Services is a Medicaid-approved provider. The staff has access to information on a variety of funding



Tom Strab first introduced himself to DATI in 1992 when he invited Director Beth Mineo to tour a home that he had made accessible for his sister, who has multiple sclerosis. Because of the many innovative, practical, and inexpensive adaptations that Tom had incorporated into this house, he was invited to share some of his ideas in a session during the 1992 annual conference at Clayton Hall. One of the most exciting ideas presented at that session was a remote control door opener. Because of this invention, Tom has since gone on to win the Delaware Architectural Accessibility Award in 1993 and to establish the Gentleman Door Company in 1994.

Tom and Ann are now marketing "The Gentleman" door opener nationally for \$350 each. Standard features include:

- 2 function, hand-held remote control
- emergency exit feature in event of power failure
- striker release which unlocks and unlatches the door
- easy installation, no electrical work, no special tools
- all maintenance free and corrosion resistant components
- powered by either a small air compressor or bottled CO₂ (sold separately for approximately \$100-\$200)
- usability on interior or exterior doors
- door remains fully open until you choose for it to close
- doors may be held open for extended periods of time.

Tom currently has a patent pending on The Gentleman and is pursuing the development of a second unit designed to pneumatically open sliding doors. For further information, contact the Strabs at:

Gentleman Door Co.
Tom & Ann Strab
506 Dawson Tract Rd.
P.O. Box 77
Yorklyn, DE 19736
(302)239-4045

Congratulations, Tom and Ann, on a great product that's been "HomeGrown in Delaware"!

Children Learn About Communication by Communicating

*Maureen T. Schweitzer, MA, CCC/SLP
Coordinator, Kent County ATRC*

Speech and language development is a complex process. It becomes even more complex when a child does not use speech to communicate his/her needs. There are so many unanswered questions related to why some children are not able to use speech to communicate. Once we get beyond the *why*, it is important to know what options these children have. My experience with a three-year-old describes some options and considerations.

Liz has a diagnosis of global development delay, which means that she has delays of an unknown cause. She can walk and run; she can feed herself, and recently, she learned to put her coat on. Her hearing is normal, and she follows directions pretty well for a child her age. She attempts to say a lot of words, and usually, you hear the first sound of the word, but many times the other sounds do not come out. When she was 2-1/2 years old, her parents were concerned with her development. At that time, Liz had started to show her frustration with her inability to speak by grabbing her face, which left bruises. She started receiving speech-language therapy, and although she continued to have difficulty getting her mouth to do what she wanted it to do, she learned to use signs and gestures. She was more successful at imitating signs and gestures than imitating words.

The use of sounds and words along with signs continued to be encouraged. After 12 months, Liz was able to say 20 words, and she knew about 50 signs. She did not always use the signs, but she knew them, and there was a decrease in her self-abuse. There were still many times when she became frustrated, and she showed it. At that time, Liz started attending Easter Seals' integrated pre-school

where she received occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech pathology services. New signs were added to her repertoire, but signs were getting more difficult, requiring greater manual dexterity and coordination. Liz had difficulty saying and signing two words such as "more cookie" due to the motor planning requirements. It was clear that she needed another option to assist her in daily communication.

Pictures of various toys, foods, and shapes were introduced so that when Liz couldn't say the word or make the sign, she could point to a picture to communicate her desires. Liz had no difficulty using a picture to represent her requests. Pictures were used to request songs during Circletime. Otherwise, it would have been difficult for her to request "If You're Happy and You Know It." The pictures were part of an electronic communication device, which spoke the message "If You're Happy and You Know It" when Liz pushed on the picture. Liz has learned to use her picture communication system to say other things she couldn't say verbally or with gestures. She continues to use a lot of sounds and is using more signs without much encouragement. She now also uses the communication device for the more complex language activities, such as asking questions, counting, and saying the names of her friends in pre-school.

She continues to use a combination of sounds and signs at other times. There has not been a decrease in her efforts to use speech, but there has been a decrease in her frustration. She has learned to express anger without hurting herself. With the use of a combination of sounds, signs, and pictures, Liz can express so much more than she could six months ago. She has learned a lot

Communication by Communicating (*cont'd*)

about communication by communicating. In fact, she is much better at demonstrating how much she knows. Liz recognizes and spells her name and is learning the other letters of the alphabet using her signs and communication device. By the Fall, I hope that Liz will have her own communication device to take to her new school and to use at home. These communication options will enable her to express basic needs and desires, ask questions, provide information, and converse. Her use of a communication device is not an end. It is her means to an education, to medical and social opportunities, to self discovery, to independence, and to feelings of self-worth.

Liz will continue to receive therapy services. Her speech (vocabulary) continues to increase, but she vocalizes only single words which do not allow her to demonstrate what she knows. Liz will continue to use a multi-modal approach to communication. Her parents are very pleased with her progress and the fact that assistive technology was introduced at her young age.

If you have a young child and are concerned about his/her speech and language development, call a speech-language pathologist to help you. They are communication specialists! If you have any questions about communication devices, call your local ATRC for product information, demonstration, or loan. The Kent County ATRC is celebrating **Better Speech and Hearing Month** on May 24 by offering a workshop on "Augmentative Communication—Everything That Talks." Call (302)739-6885 for more information.

New Staff at the NCCo ATRC

The New Castle County ATRC has recently undergone some personnel changes and we're happy to introduce the new staff there.

The new coordinator of the ATRC is George Himes. George is a native Delawarean who, through his professional experiences, has

developed a solid technical background in the areas of computer repair and technical support. Over the years, he has demonstrated his leadership and dedication to serving people with disabilities, most recently participating in a "think tank" project developing ideas and prototypes for people with disabilities. George enjoys music, classical movies, and bench-lifting.

Tammy Lotharp, administrative assistant, is also a native Delawarean. She has a B.S. degree in General Business and looks forward to obtaining an MBA in the near future. Tammy's background and experiences extend into such areas as systems support, production management, and business administration. In addition, she is active in Sigma Zeta Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc. and she enjoys walking, aerobics, and reading.

Be sure to stop in to the New Castle County site at Delaware Elwyn and introduce yourself to George and Tammy!

Conference Date Change

In the last edition of the *AT Messenger*, it was announced that the DATI annual conference was slated for October 4, 1995 at the Sheraton in Dover. We have since learned that the Governor's Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities had scheduled their annual luncheon for the same date, so we quickly switched gears so that many of you would not have to make a difficult decision about where to spend that day. The new date for the DATI conference is Thursday, September 28, 1995 at the Clayton Conference Center on the campus of the University of Delaware.

There is still time to submit proposals for presentations at the conference. If you would like to present a topic with which you have expertise or know of someone that might be interested, please complete the proposal on the next page and send it to the DATI Central Site Office. We appreciate your input!

DATI Annual Conference
Session Presentation Proposal

Title of Presentation _____

Presenter(s) _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone __ (____) _____ Fax _ (____) _____

Abstract of Presentation _____

Method of Instruction _____

Return form to: DATI Training Activities Committee
 University of DE/A.I. duPont Institute
 P.O. Box 269, Wilmington, DE 19899
 Phone: (302)651-6790 (V); (302)651-6794 (TDD)
 Fax: (302)651-6793

FINANCING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Questions and Answers on Funding AT

Ron Sibert, Funding Specialist, DATI

People often call me to ask questions about funding devices or accessing services, and many of our discussions point up some important principles that I think are very much worth sharing.

QUESTION: I am a 53 year old guy with a not-so-obvious disability. My collapsed nasal passages make it difficult for me to breathe, so I fatigue easily. I receive Social Security disability benefits, and I have a modest pension. Still, my total monthly income is under \$1000 per month. I am currently in school working on my doctoral thesis, and I need a word processor, but I can't afford one on my income. I was told that Social Security might pay for it under a special program. Is that true? If not, where do I go from here?

There is a special work incentive program for people who receive Social Security disability benefits (SSDI), but I don't think it's the best strategy given your current situation. First of all, SSDI benefits exist for people with disabilities who are unable to earn above what the Social Security Administration calls the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level, which is about \$500 per month. When work becomes possible, these benefits continue through a nine-month trial work period¹ and an additional three month grace period. Income may exceed the SGA level. Equipment that a person needs in order to work may be deducted from earnings in a way that reduces income below the SGA level. In that case, the person

1. The 9 months are not necessarily consecutive, and earned income must be \$200 in a given month in order for it to be counted as one of the nine trial months.

remains eligible for SSDI benefits. What presents a problem in your case is that you are not purchasing the equipment during a time that you have been or plan to be employed (a program requirement). Another requirement of the program that might be problematic for you is that the equipment must be used to establish or maintain employment. The IRWE program is a *work incentive* program, and is not necessarily geared to career enhancement. Of course there are always exceptions and it rarely hurts to try, but be prepared for some resistance if you decide to take that route. However, I would suggest looking into another, perhaps more feasible alternative.

Since you are not employed, and the word processor's intended use is for education/career development, the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) would be a better way to go. Once you are enrolled, a DVR counselor will assist you with developing an individualized written rehabilitation plan (IWRP). Ideally, that plan should contain any equipment or services that will help you meet your vocational goals and objectives. DVR must then provide or facilitate access to whatever equipment or services you and the counselor have identified in the IWRP. Speak with the VR counselor about including the word processor in your plan.

QUESTION: My 6 year old son has cerebral palsy and uses a special walker that was purchased through Medicaid to help him get around. He has since outgrown his walker and his posture is being compromised. Is my son entitled to a new walker? Also, his IEP [individualized education program] calls for physical therapy

services to be provided by the school district to help increase his range of motion, yet his doctor says that his range of motion is decreasing due to insufficient activity. Can you speak with someone at Medicaid and at the school on our behalf?

As long as your son's doctor will certify in writing that the walker no longer meets his medical needs (or is causing harm) and prescribes a replacement walker, Medicaid is likely to cover it under the EPSDT [Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment] program. Simply forward the doctor's analysis and prescription (be sure to keep a copy for your own records) to a medical equipment provider that handles Medicaid claims. The dealer will usually complete a form for the doctor's signature, and deliver the walker shortly after obtaining the necessary paperwork and Medicaid's approval. If you need a listing of Medicaid equipment providers, contact Medicaid's central office in New Castle at (302) 577-4900.

Next, in your son's case, physical therapy has been identified as a necessary related service by the IEP team at school. The question is whether or not or to what extent the therapy is actually being provided. If it is occurring as described in the IEP, and it's not enough, perhaps the IEP team should reevaluate the type and amount of treatment. If the amount of therapy specified on the IEP is not being provided, the school would be in violation of state and federal law. In such cases it is advisable to file a complaint in writing to:

The Exceptional Children's Team
Delaware Dept. of Public Instruction
John G. Townsend Building
P.O. Box 1402
Dover, Delaware 19903-1402
(302) 739-4667

The complaint should include a statement that the school has violated a requirement of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and a description of the services that were promised in the IEP but not delivered. If possible, attach a letter from your son's doctor documenting how his condition has been affected as a result of insufficient treatment. Within 60 days following receipt of the complaint, DPI must have investigated the situation, reviewed all relevant information, and issued a written decision that addresses each point in the complaint.

Finally, unless there has been a history of limited access to or denial of services, acting on one's own behalf is often the most direct and efficient way to go. We at the DATI generally try to help by providing enough information and training for individuals and families to proceed on their own. This approach enables people with disabilities and their families to develop crucial advocacy skills and to establish productive working relationships with service providers. Give these suggestions a shot, then feel free to call if you need further assistance.

New Division Has AT Funds Available

The Division on Aging and Services for Adults with Physical Disabilities has funding earmarked specifically for assistive technology and home and vehicle modifications for qualified Delawareans. There is a \$5,000 limit per person per item and a \$20,000 lifetime maximum. For further information, contact the Division at (302)577-4791.



Delaware Recycles AT

Recycling has become a part of our everyday lives. The DATI **Delaware Recycles AT** Program is a service that helps individuals needing assistive technology to obtain it from those who no longer have a use for it.

Delaware Recycles AT is an information exchange service. People contact our offices to let us know that they have AT that they no longer need or that they are looking for a particular type of AT. We consult our database to see if we have prospective matches for their needs and, if so, we pass on that information. Once the two parties have made contact, they assume full responsibility for all arrangements involved in the exchange. Occasionally we are asked not to give out a name and phone number. In such cases, we act on the person's behalf in making the initial contact.

There is no cost to use **Delaware Recycles AT** or to have a listing in the *AT Messenger*. Owners of available items have complete discretion to donate or charge whatever price they wish. Likewise, people seeking devices are free to negotiate the terms of the exchange.

The program is primarily for Delawareans, although we do take inquiries from neighboring states. The program is designed to facilitate equipment exchanges between individuals and not for the sale or procurement of equipment by vendors or distributors.

The DATI assumes no responsibility for the condition of any products exchanged through this information service. It is the responsibility of the owner to provide accurate information about product specifications and condition. Additionally, terms or arrangements made for any product exchanges are the sole responsibility of the exchanging parties.

Here is a listing of just some of the items cur-

rently available through **Delaware Recycles AT**:

Devices Available:

Manual wheelchairs(4) in various adult styles.

Bathtub Bench, never been used. Allows for sitting in shower. \$100.

Outdoor stair lift for transporting seated persons up/down stairs outside of home.

Simmons electric-powered adjustable position bed, no mattress. 4 yrs old, works fine.

Invocare patient hydraulic lift for transferring person in/out of wheelchair, bed, etc. \$500 or best offer.

Commode chairs (3 styles) provide alternatives to conventional toilet.

Kurzweil Model III Reading Machine reads text aloud for users with visual impairments. Includes control unit, scanning unit, tapes and instructions on tape or in print.

Windsor Feeding Machine serves bites to user's mouth. Controlled by user. Includes carrying case. \$600-\$700.

Child-size 3-wheel electric scooter. Price negotiable.

Devices Needed:

Portable, collapsible wheelchair ramp for navigating up/down 1-5 steps.

IBM-compatible computer w/LP-DOS & 386 processor. Would like 80 Mb hard drive & 4 Mb RAM and capability to accept hardware / software to accommodate a visual disability. Willing to pay.

3-wheeled electric scooter for little or no cost (can offer geriatric upholstered reclining chair w/ foot rests, lap tray, and casters for trade).

Power lift chair to help user rise to a standing position. Limited ability to pay.



Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative

Publications List & Order Form

The following publications are available from the DATI Publications Office. All prices include shipping and handling. Please be sure to indicate the items you wish to purchase and include a complete mailing address for shipment.

<u>Funding Fact Sheets</u>						
Set of five fact sheets providing overviews of the policies and practices of five major funding streams in Delaware relative to assistive technology. Can be ordered separately or as a set.		Single Copy	2-9 Copies	10+ Copies	Qty Ordered	Total Amt
FS-1	Public Schools	Free	\$1.00 ea	\$.50 ea		
FS-2	Medicaid	Free	\$1.00 ea	\$.50 ea		
FS-3	Medicare	Free	\$1.00 ea	\$.50 ea		
FS-4	Voc Rehab & Independent Living	Free	\$1.00 ea	\$.50 ea		
FS-5	Social Security	Free	\$1.00 ea	\$.50 ea		
FS-6	Set of Five		\$5.00 set	\$2.50 set		

<u>Guide to Funding Resources for Assistive Technology in Delaware</u>					
Comprehensive guide to the primary resources for assistive technology funding in Delaware. The guide contains information on eligibility, coverage policies, and application procedures. The material is assembled in a binder with index tabs for convenience.		1-9 Copies	10+ Copies	Qty Ordered	Total Amt
FG-1	Funding Guide		\$5.00 ea	\$4.00 ea	

<u>Delaware Assistive Technology Resource Guide</u>					
Guide containing detailed information about the assistive technology resources for services provision and consultation in Delaware. Service providers are indexed by the types of AT in which they specialize and the types of services they provide. Consultant information contains detail on individuals' experience and training relative to different aspect of AT. The materials are assembled in a binder with index tabs for convenience.		1-9 Copies	10+ Copies	Qty Ordered	Total Amt
RG-1	AT Resource Guide		\$5.00 ea	\$4.00 ea	

<u>Independent Living Brochure Series</u>		Any Quantity	Qty Ordered	Total Amt
Five colorful brochures describing the benefits of assistive technology for activities of daily life.				
IL-1	You Can Get There From Here <i>(Reaching and mobility aids)</i>	<i>Free</i>		
IL-2	Zip It Up <i>(Clothing adaptations and dressing aids)</i>	<i>Free</i>		
IL-3	Around the House <i>(Housecleaning and storage)</i>	<i>Free</i>		
IL-4	Cleanliness Is Next To... <i>(Personal Care and Grooming)</i>	<i>Free</i>		
IL-5	What's For Dinner? <i>(Cooking and dining)</i>	<i>Free</i>		
IL-6	Set of Five Brochures	<i>Free</i>		

<u>Independence Through Technology Video</u>		Any Quantity	Qty Ordered	Total Amt
An introduction to the many ways in which assistive technology can impact lives. The video contains information about the DATI and other AT resources in Delaware.				
IV-1	Independence Video	\$10.00 ea		

Order information

Your mailing address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Number of items ordered _____ Total Amount Enclosed _____

All publications also available in large print, braille, or audiotape. Please indicate preference.
Please make all checks payable to the **University of Delaware/DATI** and mail completed order form to:

**DATI, University of Delaware/A.I. duPont Institute,
P.O. Box 269, Wilmington, DE, USA 19899
Phone: (302)651-6790; TDD: (302)651-6794; Fax: (302)651-6793**

Be sure that you don't miss a single issue of the *AT Messenger*. If you're not on the project's mailing list already, clip this form and send it in today!

DATI Mailing List Application

Name _____ Title _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

Phone: Business _____ FAX _____ Home _____

<p>I am a:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Person with a disability (please specify): _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family member of a person with a disability</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Friend/advocate/colleague of someone with a disability</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Professional working with people who have disabilities (please specify) _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Interested citizen</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Accessibility Needs:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Braille</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Large print</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15/16 Audiotape</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1-7/8 Audiotape</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ASL Interpreter</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tactile Interpreter</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spanish</p>	<p>I would like to be involved in:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Technology users peer network</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Service provider network</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Funding initiatives</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Presenters network</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Project governance (boards & committees)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer work as: _____</p> <p>_____</p>
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Send completed application to: **Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative**
 University of DE/A.I. duPont Institute
 P.O. Box 269, 1600 Rockland Rd.
 Wilmington, DE 19899
 Phone: (302)651-6790 TDD: (302)651-6794 FAX: (302)651-6793

Mentor Program Begun for Science, Engineering, & Math Students

A unique mentoring program for students with disabilities interested in science, engineering, or math (SEM) is looking for mentors and students. If you are an SEM professional, a student with a disability, or have a special interest in disability issues, your participation is invited.

This mentor program is part of a project at the Applied Science & Engineering Laboratories and is funded by the National Science Foundation. The program is designed to allow students and mentors to communicate through

the Internet and participate in both individual and group discussions on SEM and disability topics.

If you would like to take part in this project, please contact us for further information at:

SEM Project
 Center for Applied Science & Engineering
 University of DE/A.I. duPont Institute
 P.O. Box 269
 Wilmington, DE 19899
 Phone: (302)651-6830
 Fax: (302)651-6895
 TDD: (302)651-6834
 Email: sem-info@asel.udel.edu



*Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative
Applied Science & Engineering Laboratories
University of Delaware/A.I. duPont Institute
P.O. Box 269
Wilmington, DE 19899*



DATI Throughout the State...

New Castle County

*Delaware Elwyn
321 E. 11th St.
Wilmington, DE 19801-3499
(302)657-5647; (302)658-8860 (TDD)*

Kent County

*Easter Seal of Del-Mar
Kent County Community School
Carver Rd.
Dover, DE 19901-2716
(302)739-6885; (302)739-6886 (TDD)*

Sussex County

*Easter Seal of Del-Mar
Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center
600 N. DuPont Highway, Suite 100
Georgetown, DE 19947
(302)856-7946 (voice or TDD)*

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Applied Science & Engineering Laboratories
University of Delaware/A.I. duPont Institute
P.O. Box 269, 1600 Rockland Rd.
Wilmington, DE 19899
Phone: (302)651-6790
TDD: (302)651-6794
FAX: (302)651-6793

Beth Mineo, Director
Ron Sibert, Funding Specialist
Bob Piech, Consumer Activities Coordinator
Donna Bacon, Education & Training Coordinator
Sonja Simowitz, Staff Assistant
Gregg Stum, Research Programmer

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