



# The AT Messenger

....bringing technology to you

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## DATI Throughout the State...

### New Castle County

Delaware Elwyn

321 E. 11th St.

Wilmington, DE 19801-3499

(302)657-5647; (302)658-8860 (TDD)

Linda Heller, Director

Recently, I read in *USA Today* that approximately 32% of the computers sold in the United States are bought by people over 60 years of age. I think many people would be surprised by this figure! Our stereotype of older people may lead us to believe that they are less likely to use current technology because of a fear and unfamiliarity with computers. They have been in the habit of doing things the way they have done them for years. But the latest research and information regarding the use of technology and older adults requires us to drastically change our attitude!

Just recently in our center, we have received calls from older people who would like to use a computer whether or not they have a problem with vision or using their hands. Many retirees have used computers in their work and now are anxious to expand their computer hori-

zons. We have found that older people coming into our center are very excited about new technology and eager to learn how assistive technology can help them every day. Most had no idea anything even existed to meet their needs!

In a recent study of 57 disabled people over 74, researchers found that about 75% of the technical aids to help or enable a person to be independent in their own home were being used! And about 10% of the aids being used enabled that older person to be totally independent.

As people live longer and develop disabilities, the implications for assistive technology are critical. We must advocate to the government and health care community that assistive technology for older people will be cost-effective because it will:

- maintain independent functioning,
- postpone or eliminate the need for institutionalization,
- reduce the amount of personal assistance required, and
- enhance the older person's sense of control and well-being.

Therefore, let us not forget that we now have many "techno-literate" older adults

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who are motivated and excited about assistive technology and seek its possibilities to improve their quality of life. Let us work together in health care reform and other ways so that assistive technology will be a possibility for everyone!

## **Kent County**

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

The Delaware Division of Libraries (DDL) provides access to information for people with disabilities through special programs and promotes equalization of access to information through demonstration of adaptive technology. Placing today's information access technology in the home, workplace, and public library will supplement the materials provided through special programs by enabling faster access to more information.

DDL is a satellite site to the Kent County Assistive Technology Resource Center. On display at DDL is a computer workstation accessible by people with visual impairments provided by DATI. DDL encourages tours and appointments for demonstrations of the equipment by legislators, government employees, library directors and staff throughout the state, as well as the general public.

Patrons with visual impairments can scan print information into the computer using an Arkenstone Reader (see "AT Product Spotlight", page 4). This device enables patrons to hook up recorders if they

choose to record the information for home use. Braille readers can print the information using the Braille Blazer embosser. Training on the equipment and information on funding assistance are available through the Kent County Assistive Technology Resource Center.

Additional programs at DDL of benefit for people with disabilities include:

### **Phone Difficult Questions (PDQ)** 1-800-282-8622

This statewide toll-free telephone service provides assistance in finding answers to your questions using a wide range of information and library resources. PDQ can assist you in finding information for daily living, information on your hobbies, educational and cultural interests, and information on state government and current events.

### **Books By Mail** 1-800-282-8696

Popular paperback books are loaned to people who are homebound or institutionalized due to a physical disability or visual impairment. Large print books and high interest, low vocabulary books for new readers are also available.

### **Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped** 1-800-282-8676

Talking books and playback equipment are provided on loan through the mail to people who are unable to read standard print due to a temporary or permanent visual, physical, or reading disability.

*(Written by Annie Norman, Senior Librarian, DDL)*

## **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)  
Linett Fleetwood, Coordinator*

So how do you pass heavy, hot serving dishes at the dinner table? It's easy if you have a kitchen Roll-About. It rolls heavy dishes around the table effortlessly.

The Roll-About resembles a large ping pong paddle on one side while the other side has two caster wheels and a third foot for stability when stationary. It appears to be very durable and appealing to the eye.

Who would be a good candidate for the Roll-About? Large families with young children who have experienced an accident or two at the table while passing serving dishes would benefit. Persons who have had a stroke or are experiencing arthritis would definitely find relief with the Roll-About.

It can also be used in meal preparation by persons who walk with cane assistance. They can use the Roll-About to move pans, bowls, ingredients and utensils along the kitchen counter and from the stove to the refrigerator. By the same token, there might be a valid use for the Roll-About at the office. At less than \$25.00, the Roll-About would more than earn its keep.

In the next *AT Messenger*, we will highlight an embroidery hoop which is hands free and adjustable to any position.

## **ADA Coalition Receives Funding**

The Statewide Coalition on the Americans with Disabilities Act (SCADA) has contracted with the Mid-Atlantic Center in Arlington, Virginia to receive \$19,000 in federal funds for the 1994 fiscal year. The Mid-Atlantic Center receives its funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. If SCADA is able to document worthwhile utilization of funds, there is a possibility that the contract amount could double by next year.

Up until this time, SCADA has operated from contributions from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and donations in memory of former Chairperson Bill Mennella. Much work has been accomplished on a lean budget because most members work in related areas and can combine SCADA with their full-time job responsibilities. The Coalition encourages collaboration from everyone who is involved in the implementation of ADA. Thus, the membership is quite diverse with a knowledge base of all titles of the ADA.

SCADA has targeted several key areas relative to implementing the ADA in Delaware. A prime objective is educating people with disabilities about their rights under this civil rights law. Planned expenditures include transportation, sign language interpreters, and in-depth training for SCADA trainers. Additional high priority areas are communication vehicles (e.g., brochures) and grant writing to secure additional funds so that SCADA can expand its services. Presently a cadre of trainers can present information about Title I--Employment, Title II--Public Services, and Title III--Public Accommoda-

***cont'd on page 4***

### **A Computer That Reads**

*Ed Salisbury, AT Specialist, DATI Kent County Assistive Technology Resource Center*

The Assistive Technology Resource Center in Kent County houses equipment for people with low vision at its satellite site, the Delaware Division of Libraries in the Edgehill Shopping Center. With this equipment, one has the ability to have the computer read any printed material in a clear pleasant voice. This material may be books, magazines, newspaper articles, or even personal mail. The printed material may then be printed in large print or even Braille. This system takes advantage of technology called optical character recognition, or OCR. OCR is the means by which the computer distinguishes between words and pictures or graphics and decides whether the text is in columns like newspaper articles or across the entire page. OCR technology, when combined with a screen review program and speech synthesizer, allows the text to be read to the user. All of this technology is not new. What *is* new is the integration of all the technology to make a product

specifically designed for the visually impaired user that is not only easy to use, but affordable.

The heart of the equipment at the library is the Arkenstone Open Book Unbound software. Speech is provided by the DECTalk speech synthesizer. DECTalk allows the user to choose among ten male and female voices and even a child's voice. The user can choose a comfortable speaking rate and change such features as tone and volume. Once the material has been read, it can then be edited and printed in Braille or large print. At this time, there are at least six companies producing computer reading systems. Some systems can be installed on an IBM or compatible computer like the equipment at the library, while other systems are portable and self contained. For a demonstration of this equipment or information on similar equipment, contact Ed Salisbury at the Assistive Technology Resource Center in Kent County.

#### **ADA Coalition (*cont'd from page 3*)**

tions. Technical assistance and informational brochures are also available on these Titles.

If you have an interest in becoming a member of SCADA, or if you have ADA related questions, please call 1-800-344-9900; Box 121. Officers of SCADA are Diane Treacy (Chair); Bob Cichocki (Senior Vice-Chair); Gerard Landreth (Secretary); and Karen Jefferies (Treasurer).

#### **Looking for accessible real estate, office space, or other services?**

*MD News*, published by Wheelchair Access Inc., is a handy source of information about properties, items, and services for sale or rent in the Delaware Valley. For a free subscription, contact:

*MD News*  
P.O. Box 12  
Glenmoore, PA 19343  
Phone (610) 942-3266  
FAX (610) 942-0282

# FINANCING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

## The DATI Health Care Reform Summit & Beyond

*Ron Sibert, Funding Specialist, DATI*

It's hard to believe that so much has happened on Delaware's health care reform front in such a short period of time. In just the last issue, I discussed the need for the disability community to become involved in health care reform. Now I am happy to report that Delaware is on the move! Also, the DATI has the proud distinction of having paved the way for the remarkable progress that has been made on behalf of people with disabilities in Delaware.

Back at the end of January, representatives from several Delaware health care-related organizations and State agencies were invited to participate with the DATI in a national teleconference on health care reform. Mr. Allan Bergman, attorney and nationally renowned expert on disability law, spoke urgently of problems with proposed health care reform legislation. The audience was cautioned to beware of the pitfalls and gaps in the proposed reform measures for people with disabilities. Also discussed was how consumers and advocates should take action to help remedy the situation. As the Delaware participants met afterward to discuss what they had just heard, Dr. Beth Mineo, DATI's project director, recommended and laid the groundwork for a summit meeting of disability-related organizations. The gathering she proposed turned out to be a landmark event for the State. On January 24, approximately three weeks after the teleconference, the DATI hosted a Health Care Reform Summit meeting. Included were representatives of 17 of Delaware's major disability-related organizations, advisory councils, service providers and a major insurance carrier. Assistive technol-

ogy consumers and parents of children with disabilities were also in attendance. It was the first gathering of its kind in the State. I had the privilege of opening the meeting with a discussion of assistive technology's crucial role in health care reform and a brief overview of proposed federal health care reform models. Kay Holmes, Director of the Delaware Health Care Commission, then described the Commission's charge from the Governor and its proposed plan for Delaware. The plan itself is a local approximation of President Clinton's Health Security Act (HSA), but is far less comprehensive.<sup>1</sup> Ms. Holmes then led a rousing discussion in which she heard many of the unique health care concerns of people with disabilities in Delaware...concerns that she and other Commission members had not heard before. Finally, out of that discussion came the challenge for which the summit had actually been called. Ms. Holmes asked the organizations represented at the meeting to develop a unified health care reform position; one that

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1. Just in case you missed our last issue... HSA borrows many of its principles such as universal coverage, portability, etc. from the single payer model, but its financing and administration is based on that of managed competition. Managed competition, you may recall, creates a Health Care Alliance that collects money from industry and individuals and distributes that money to insurers based on the number of customers they are able to attract with the cost and quality of their policies. The Alliance would set and enforce minimum coverage standards, and furnish insurer performance reports to consumers.

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# CONSUMERS ENDORSE NEW STATE DISABILITY PROGRAM

About 20 people with physical disabilities made their way to Dover's Legislative Hall on March 10 to express their support for expanding State services for adults with physical disabilities. These people, who came from all across Delaware, were joining forces to persuade the Joint Finance Committee to accept a proposal being presented by the Department of Health & Social Services. At the heart of the plan is the reorganization of the Department's Divisions of Aging and Social Services into one new Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities. This new Division would continue to provide services found currently within the Division of Aging. Additionally, it would create a case management focal point for long term care services to adults with physical disabilities. Such a single point of entry for services to people with physical

disabilities is presently nonexistent in Delaware's social service system. Consumers' testimony indicated that they supported this landmark opportunity because it would establish a way to finally be eligible for assistance.

The scope of services proposed in the new Division covers the full range of long term care issues faced by consumers. Among these, assistive technology is identified as a resource to be explored in enhancing a person's quality of life. Further development of this approach may again rely on consumer support to push it to the forefront as a need in both service delivery and ongoing planning. Achieving access to assistive technology may rest, in part, with a consumer advisory group which would work with the Division Director. The new organizational structure also calls for staff training to address the handling of strictly physical disability issues. It will be important to ensure that information on assistive technology is included in this training.

Devices Available		Devices Wanted
<p><b>For sale:</b> Geriatric reclining chair. Brand new, cushion upholstered, w/ adjustable footrests, attachable lap-tray, casters for moving. \$600 (Item 2-3-01)</p>	<p><b>For sale:</b> Quickie II manual wheelchair, standard adult size, refurbished like new. \$500 (Item 2-3-04)</p>	<p>Snuggle Seat baby stroller that can be used as a car seat. Will pay if reasonable.</p>
<p><b>For sale:</b> Bathtub bench for sitting in shower. Brand new. \$100 (Item 2-3-02)</p>	<p><b>For sale:</b> Voice Dialer telephone, Programmable voice activated telephone that dials any given number when the corresponding name is spoken into the phone. 5 years old. (Item 2-3-05)</p>	<p>Wheelchair transport vans(2). Must be in good shape, looking for reasonable cost.</p>
<p><b>Free!</b> Pediatric parallel bars for child's walking therapy. Works fine, assembled. (Item 2-3-03)</p>		<p>Portable wheelchair ramp for navigating wheelchair up and down 1-5 steps.</p> <p>IBM-compatible PC w/ monitor, keyboard &amp; mouse. Will pay up to \$200.</p>

Call DATI Central Site at (302)651-6790 for further information or to place your free ad!

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 \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

<b>I am a:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Person with a disability (please specify): _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Family member of a person with a disability <input type="checkbox"/> Friend/advocate/colleague of someone with a disability <input type="checkbox"/> Professional working with people who have disabilities (please specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Interested citizen <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ _____	<b>Accessibility Needs:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Braille <input type="checkbox"/> Large print <input type="checkbox"/> 15/16 Audiotape <input type="checkbox"/> 1-7/8 Audiotape <input type="checkbox"/> ASL Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Tactile Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<b>I would like to be involved in:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Technology users peer network <input type="checkbox"/> Service provider network <input type="checkbox"/> Funding initiatives <input type="checkbox"/> Presenters network <input type="checkbox"/> Project governance (boards & committees) <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy activities <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer work as: _____ _____
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Send completed application to: **Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative**  
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

### Financing AT (*cont'd from page 5*)

would represent the interests of Delaware's citizens with disabilities. She would then see that this position received the full consideration of the Delaware Health Care Commission.

Response to the challenge was swift and sure. The organizations quickly formed a coalition and selected Lynne Howard of the Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (DELARF) as chair. Next, a follow-up meeting was scheduled for one week later. At that meeting, the coalition

defined its mission, and agreed on the name **ACTION FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE - A Delaware Coalition of Advocates for Persons with Disabilities**. The coalition has held three meetings since then. After several drafts and much deliberation, a position paper calling for comprehensive health care coverage for all has been generated. The position paper is to be presented at the May 5 meeting of the Delaware Health Care Commission. DATI mission accomplished...just in time for more to come.

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## **Mark Your Calendars...**

The annual DATI Conference is scheduled for October 21-22, 1994 at the Dover Sheraton Conference Center. "Planning for Independence" is being co-sponsored with the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. Sessions will cover health care reform, estate and financial planning, assistive technology for all ages, advocacy, housing and transportation, funding, and much more! Ed Roberts, President of the World Institute on Disability, is slated as keynote speaker. And, once again, the Exhibit Hall promises to display numerous products and services for the benefit of conference attendees.

Reserve October 21 & 22 for the DATI/DD Council Conference—and be sure to tell your family and friends about it, too!

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