The AT Messenger
bringing technology to you

Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI), Volume 10, No. 2, Spring 2002

Delawareans Join National Efforts to Save Assistive Technology Projects

Among those traveling to Washington for he March 21st hearing: (back row from left) Theda Ellis, Pat Maichles, Beth Mineo Mollica, Debbie Whitby Norman, Dawn Stewart, and Eden Melmed; (front row) Griff Campbell. Not pictured: Zoan Thomas El, Howard Shiber, Sonja Simowitz, and Joann McCafferty

Federal funding for 23 state AT projects will be eliminated this year unless Congress takes action very soon. Eleven Delawareans joined others from all over the country at a standing-room-only U.S. House of Representatives hearing in March, where they heard testimony emphasizing the AT Projects'

contributions to individuals with disabilities of all ages. Chairman Buck McKeon (R-Calif.) of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness agreed that the projects fill a unique role that is not likely to be picked up by the private sector should federal funding cease. Representative Patsy Mink (D-Hawaii), noting that this was the first House hearing on the topic in nine years, said that the elimination of funding for state programs would be "a disaster."

"We didn't know 13 years ago (when the precursor to the AT Act of 1998 was passed) where technology would go," says Paul Raskinski, executive director of the Maryland Technology Assistance Program, in noting the explosion of new technology. "Remember, none of us was using e-mail then." He recited a laundry list of assistive devices developed since then that have helped him lead a productive life despite his paralysis. "If we strike down the infrastructure we've build up, we'll have to start all over again," he noted.

Carol Novak of Tampa, Florida testified that her 25-year old son, who has cerebral palsy, uses a variety of AT—power wheelchair, accessible van, word prediction software, ceiling track life—and the cost of his technology, which will serve him for years, is less than the cost of a single year in a nursing home. Novak urged expanded funding for the loan programs, recycling of AT, and consumer training.

Delaware faces the end of federal funding under the AT Act next year unless the Act is reauthorized or new legislation is passed. On March 21st, AT users, parents and grandparents of children who use AT, and representatives from several advocacy organizations and state agencies traveled to Washington to express their support for continuation of the DATI. Letters from consumers, families, and agencies urging continued federal support for DATI were also sent to Congressman Mike Castle, who sits on the House Education and the Workforce Committee with jurisdiction over the AT Act.

AT in Schools: Students' Rights to Assistive Technology Under IDEA and Section 504

Eliza Patten, Disabilities Law Program

Assistive Technology (AT) offers promise to many students with disabilities in their efforts to benefit from educational programs. Individual rights to AT

devices and services for students derive from several major federal laws including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is probably the most important tool for students who need AT to maximize their educational opportunity—it is the only law tailored specifically to education.

Part B of the IDEA guarantees that all students aged 3-21 with disabilities have the right to a "free and public education" (FAPE). If a student has a disability which meets the definition of one of several disabilities enumerated in the statute, and as a result needs special education and related services, that student is eligible to have those services provided at no cost to herself or her parents. Schools are under an affirmative obligation to identify and evaluate all children with disabilities within their jurisdiction. The heart and soul of the IDEA is the written individualized education program (IEP), which is developed by school officials in conjunction—"as equal partners"—with the parents of the child with a disability and, where appropriate, with the child. The required content of an IEP is specified by statute, including the nature of the student's educational needs, the services to be provided, and specific goals for the student. Schools must ensure that students receive their education in the least restrictive environment (LRE), and that they are removed from regular education classes only when they cannot be educated successfully in the regular education classroom even with supplementary aids and services. AT services and devices are included in this definition, and these supports are to be provided in other settings, such as extracurricular or extended school year settings, in addition to the classroom.

Because there is no federally-approved list of AT devices and services covered by the IDEA, AT can be as rudimentary as a calculator or as sophisticated as an auditory FM trainer for a student who is hearing impaired. The legislative history adding AT to the IDEA stresses how these devices and services can assist a student to be educated in the least restrictive, or most integrated, environment.

The AT selected by the school must be appropriate to the needs of the student. Parents have a right to a formal, impartial review of the school's recommendations. Parents also have a right to an independent AT evaluation, at school expense, if the parent disagrees with the evaluation

obtained by the school, and the school fails to show that its evaluations were appropriate.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which served as the foundation for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Because the ADA does not provide any rights to students with disabilities beyond those which are included in Section 504, this article will not discuss the ADA. Section 504 casts a much broader net than the IDEA, prohibiting discrimination in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance and any programs run by the U.S. government. Thus, because all public schools and many private schools receive federal funding, Section 504 becomes an important enforcement tool for protecting the rights of students with disabilities. However, unlike the IDEA, there is no separate funding available under Section 504 to help schools comply with its requirements.

The definition of disability under Section 504 is much broader than the eligibility requirements of the IDEA. The statute defines an "individual with a disability" as:

> Any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities, (ii) has a record of such impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such impairment.

Students with disabilities are eligible even if they do not need any special education services. Thus, for example, students with disabilities who do not meet the criteria under the IDEA but who still need some specialized assistance or modifications in the regular education program, including AT, are covered by Section 504.

If a school determines that a student with a disability is not eligible for services under the IDEA, it must have a process in place to determine whether the student is covered by Section 504. Although the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled, in Southeastern Community College v. Davis (1979), that Section 504 does not require a recipient to undertake substantial revision of its program—holding, in effect, that the prohibition on discrimination is not a mandate for affirmative action—the Court did leave open the possibility that in certain circumstances a recipient of federal funds may be obligated to take affirmative steps to avoid discriminatory treatment, provided that those

steps do not impose undue financial and administrative burdens. A key distinction under Section 504 is that a school district is not required to make every part of its buildings fully accessible, but rather that it is responsible for ensuring that all of its programs are accessible to students with disabilities. This program accessibility mandate additionally requires that the school give priority to those methods that enable students with disabilities to participate "in the most integrated setting appropriate."

Section 504, like the IDEA, guarantees that students with disabilities receive a free and public education, but unlike the IDEA, it defines a FAPE as regular or special education and related aids and services that are designed to meet individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met. Like the IDEA, Section 504 favors educating students in the regular education setting unless the school demonstrates that, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, this cannot be achieved. Section 504 requires schools to develop a procedure to determine students' educational needs. These requirements are similar, but not identical, to the IDEA requirements. Prior to providing services, the student must be provided with a comprehensive, individualized evaluation, and once the student begins receiving services, there must be regular reevaluations. The student's needs must be specifically identified in writing, but there is no requirement that the school develop an IEP for the student.

If a student with a disability, who is not receiving special education services, needs an AT device to fully participate in a school program, Section 504 may require that the school provide the device as well as any training needed to effectively use it. The following is an illustrative, though not exhaustive, list of AT devices which could be funded by schools under Section 504, drawn from rulings by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR):

> • Modification and adaptation of a computer to enable a student with quadriplegia to use the computer without assistance. Colton Joint (CA) Unified School District, (OCR 4/7/95).

> • Classroom hearing assistive device and reduction of noise levels for a student with a hearing impairment. Cobb County (GA) School District, 27 IDELR 229 (OCR 5/22/97).

• Use of a computer for a student with a mobility impairment to access the library. However, the school was not required to install an elevator to make the library accessible. Newton (MA) Public Schools, 27 IDELR 233 (OCR 5/30/97).

• Use of a closed caption decoder for a student with a hearing impairment while viewing videotapes. Chapel Hill-Carrboro (NC) City Schools, 27 IDELR 606 (OCR 1997).

• Use of tutorial software and a laptop for a student with narcolepsy. Bacon County (GA) School District, 29 IDELR 78 (OCR 3/13/98).

• Use of an Arkenstone scanner to scan and read text for a learning disabled student. However, OCR determined that there was no violation of Section 504 when the student was not allowed to use the device for a State reading exam. Alabama Department of Education, 29 IDELR 249 (OCR 4/10/98).

The OCR accepts complaints concerning individual students or groups of students where allegations concern: procedural violations; lack of accessibility; failure to provide agreed upon services; or discrimination. However, individuals who seek to challenge the decision of the Section 504 Team on such matters as the accommodations or services to be provided must appeal to the due process hearing provided for by statute.

Thus, Section 504 offers students with disabilities who are not eligible for special education services under the IDEA opportunities to receive the AT supports which may allow them to more fully meet their potential. In addition, because technology is always changing, the AT devices students may benefit from are often devices which did not exist years or even months earlier. The law recognizes the dynamic nature of technology by not restricting the list of "approved" AT devices. Thus, both the IDEA and Section 504 provide important funding sources and enforcement tools to increase the likelihood that the educational needs of students with disabilities will be met.

Introducing New Staff
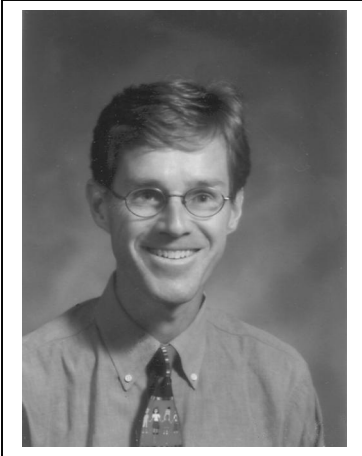
I'm Tom McDonough, DATI's new Funding & Policy Specialist. I joined DATI in late October 2001 and am eager to assist persons with disabilities in resolving assistive technology funding problems. Immediately prior to joining DATI, I taught elementary school for two years, first at Wilmington Friends School (5th grade) and then St. Paul Scho ol (4th grade) in Wilmington. While at Wilmington Friends, I also coached middle school football, wrestling, and baseball. However, the majority of my career (14 years) has been spent practicing law here in Delaware.

For 2 1/2 years, I represented clients in Special Education, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and other matters for the Disabilities Law Program (DLP) of Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. This position with the DLP also involved presentations to persons with disabilities about various legal and advocacy issues. Thereafter, I was an Assistant United States Attorney for nearly 10 years. I prosecuted violations of federal law such as money laundering, narcotics, bank robbery, public corruption, arson, firearms, and other crimes. My primary responsibility during much of my tenure in the United States Attorney's Office was as Lead Task Force Attorney for the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force. Shortly after graduating from law school, I also served as a Deputy Attorney General for the Delaware Department of Justice's Civil Division handling prisoner litigation, labor arbitration, and contract review.

My legal and education background should enable me to help DATI's clients as a Funding and Policy Specialist because it is consistent with DATI's twin emphases of systems change and advocacy on behalf of individuals. (It should be noted that I am not practicing law in my position at DATI and none of my comments in this article or at any other time should be regarded as legal advice.) Our mission at DATI is to change the technology-related infrastructure in Delaware in those instances where it is cumbersome and presents barriers to technology access. In satisfaction of this objective, much of my time during the past 5 months at DATI has been devoted to revising our "Guide to Funding Resources for Assistive Technology in Delaware." We envision this funding guide to be used as a "recipe" by case workers, persons with disabilities, and others so that the often complex process for

accessing assistive technology through public and private funding sources can be simplified.

I have also provided information and referrals to persons with disabilities, and those acting on their behalf, who have called DATI for assistance. Many of these callers have experienced difficulty securing funding for home and vehicle modifications, computer technology, assistive listening devices, and other areas of assistive technology. Although DATI may not always have an easy solution, given the current tight budgets of many funding sources, we encourage such calls and stand ready to help you.

The National Consortium on Universal Design for Learning

By Grace Meo, CAST, Inc., Peabody, Massachusetts

In 1999, CAST launched the National Consortium on Universal Design for Learning as a national partnership of educators, schools and experts committed to improving access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities, and indeed all students, through the application of the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Since that time the Consortium has developed into a community of educators, administrators, educational support personnel, parents, students, and policymakers who are committed to the integration of Universal Design for Learning into classroom practice. At present, the Consortium has a membership of approximately 1700 professionals. The Consortium serves as a bridge from research to practice: taking research conducted by the National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum (NCAC) and other CAST initiatives and translating it into new curricula, instructional approaches, and learning models in classrooms throughout the country. The Consortium seeks to establish Universal Design for Learning as an integral element in the field of educational practice nationally. The Consortium will advance this vision by embedding UDL into educational theory and pedagogy and by aligning the work of the Consortium with other promising educational initiatives that address the needs of diverse learners and their teachers. With this vision in mind, the Consortium will provide an applied research information base for the theoretical framework of UDL as well as a dissemination vehicle to reach a broad range of educators throughout the country.

The goals of the National Consortium on Universal Design for Learning were to:

• Create and support a community of educators, connected virtually, who are working to advance the understanding and practice of Universal Design for Learning.

• Research and develop promising instructional strategies, curricula, technology tools, and instructional and professional development models.

• Implement promising instructional approaches, methods and materials in Consortium classrooms.

• Evaluate these models in terms of their feasibility, replicability and expected outcomes.

• Disseminate promising practices and models to schools and educational professionals.

The National Consortium is implemented via the three following components:

Direct Practice Partners Program: Direct Practice Partners are schools and districts selected to participate in classroom-based direct service projects that focus on implementing innovative technology tools, classroom materials, instructional approaches, and curriculum planning based on the UDL framework.

Affiliate Partners Program: Affiliate Partners are a virtual community of educators and other professionals who are committed to Universal Design for Learning and to the sharing of ideas and suggestions with other educators.

Professional Development: The Consortium offers a variety of professional development opportunities to bring the UDL message to educators, including ongoing contracts, teacher trainings and workshops, online professional development modules, conference presentations, and information disseminated over the Consortium Web site.

To join the Consortium as an Affiliate Partner, eligible to receive news and information about the UDL Consortium, participate in forum discussions, and be considered for beta testing of CAST products, please complete the application posted on the Web site (www.cast.org/UDL/), or email Grace Meo at: gmeo@cast.org to request information.

Bodypoint Designs Loans Positioning Equipment to the ATRCs

Bodypoint Designs recently began distributing Jenx positioning "furniture" in the United States. In order to gain wider access to users in Delaware, Bodypoint has provided the ATRCs with three pieces of positioning equipment for long term loan. The New Castle ATRC now has a Giraffe positioning chair, a Ladybug long sitter, and a Monkey prone to upright stander. These pieces of equipment are available for use by consumers across the state for a two week loan period. If you would like additional information, or brochures about the equipment, please contact the New Castle ATRC 302-328-ATRC.

New Equipment Added to DATI Inventory

For most Delawareans, the DATI's Assistive Technology Resource Centers are their only source of equipment for trial use periods or other circumstances in which AT is needed for a short time. We are grateful to the Delaware Department of Education for the grant funding that enabled us to add the following equipment to the DATI inventory:

Talk Trac, AbleNet
Battery Adapters, Access First
Gemini Classic Bundle, Assistive Technologies
Four Frame Talker, Attainment Company
AT Solutions: For IEP Teams, Attainment Company
Access to Math, Don Johnston
Away We Ride, Don Johnston
Biggy, Don Johnston
Blocks in Motion, Don Johnston
Circletime Tales, Don Johnston
Co:Writer 4000, Don Johnston
Discover:Board, Don Johnston
Discover:Board Keyguard Bundle, Don Johnston

Draft:Builder, Don Johnston
Switch Interface Pro, Don Johnston
Monkeys Jumping on the Bed, Don Johnston
Press to Play Bundle, Don Johnston
Simon Skills, Don Johnston
Start to Finish Books: Famous Short Story Set, Don Johnston
Teach Me to Talk, Don Johnston
U Kan Do Little Books, Don Johnston
Write:Outloud Upgrade, Don Johnson
Co:Writer Smart Applet, Don Johnston
Multi Sensory Motivational Center, Enabling Devices
Fireman Ladder Climber, Enabling Devices
Large Oval Texture Switch, Enabling Devices
Marching Bear, Enabling Devices
Penguin Roller, Enabling Devices
Sunny Yellow School Bus, Enabling Devices
Cheap Talk 4 with Overlay Options, Enabling Devices
Portable IMPACT Handheld, Enkidu
Portable IMPACT Tablet, Enkidu
Lollipop Switch Set, Flaghouse
WYNN Wizard with Scanning, Freedom Scientific
Chattervox Voice Amplification System, Harris Communications
IntelliKeys USB Windows 2000, IntelliTools
IntelliMathics, IntelliTools
Math Pad Plus (Windows), IntelliTools
Reading: Animal Habitats, IntelliTools
Reading: Balanced Literacy, IntelliTools
Reader: Story Kits, IntelliTools
IntelliPics Studio, IntelliTools
Micro Mini Keyboard, Keyboard Alternatives and Vision Solutions
Quicktionary Reading/Talking Pen, LS&S
Boardmaker for Mac, Mayer Johnson
Boardmaker Upgrade for Windows, Mayer Johnson
Speaking Dynamically Pro for Mac, Mayer Johnson
Speaking Dynamically Pro for Windows, Mayer Johnson
Countoured Professional Keyboard, Options by Infogrip
Gold Touch Keyboard, Options by Infogrip
Roller Plus Joystick and Adapter Box, Options by Infogrip
Roller Plus Trackball and Adapter Box, Options by Infogrip
Kidsball Trackball, Options by Infogrip

Little Fingers Keyboard, Options by Infogrip
Ergo-Arm Supports, Options by Infogrip
Vantage and accessories, Prentke Romich Company
Pathfinder and accessories, Prentke Romich Company
Sound Puzzle Box, Southpaw
VERAsystem (scanning and reading system), Freedom Scientific

Section 508 and the Classroom

Dan Fendler, AT Specialist, Kent & Sussex ATRCs

In the Fall 2001 edition of The AT Messenger we covered some basics regarding the new Section 508 regulations. As a quick review, Section 508 mandates that any Electronic and Information Technology (E&IT) that is purchased by the Federal Government must be considered accessible. Some examples of E&IT include, but are not limited to, copiers, fax machines, information kiosks, computers, software and operating systems, web sites, and telecommunication products.
So, you might ask, what does this have to do with me? As an educator, why would I need to be concerned with Section 508? The answer is simple. If you have recently received funding from the Department of Education or any other agency related to the Federal Government to purchase new equipment or software, that equipment or software may be subject to the minimum standards set by Section 508.

While many of the rules for evaluating accessibility have not been finalized, there are guidelines that can help you determine whether the E&IT you are considering is accessible. I will cover some of these guidelines here and let you know where you can find more information about others.

What is Universal Design?

The phrase Universal Design is often used when referring to accessible technology. Universal Design creates products usable by all people, including those with disabilities. Products developed using Universal Design principles have built-in flexibility and compatibility with respect to specific environments and contexts, and offer more choices for everyone.

One common example of Universal Design is curb cuts. Originally designed to help people in wheelchairs negotiate curbs, curb cuts are a blessing for people wheeling a stroller, bike, suitcase or cart. Today, an encounter with an uncut curb is, thankfully, rare. Although we are still figuring out how to best implement them, the long term effect of Universal Design concepts on technology will make it easier for all of us to use E&IT products.

How do we know which E&IT products are accessible?

Easy. Look for Universal Design in action! Section 508 provides minimum standards for accessibility. As a result, products designed by following the universal design principles are often more accessible than the products designed to simply meet Section 508 standards. For the purposes of this article, I'll cover several categories outlined in 508 standards, particularly those that apply to the classroom.

Accessible Software

Accessible software should support a user's choice of input methods, including keyboard, mouse, voice and assistive devices. For example, users should have the option of using a mouse only, a keyboard only, or combination of both. Users of voice recognition should be able to provide input to any software application using voice recognition software.

Accessible software should support the user's choice of output methods including display, sound and print. For instance, users should have a choice of seeing what is on the computer screen or using a screen reader to read it to them.

Accessible software should be flexible and allow users to customize their interface, like selecting a larger font, and should keep the settings consistent.

If would like to get your hands on software that is accessible, check out Digital Frog's web site at www.digitalfrog.com. You can download free trial software The Digital Field Trip to the Rainforest (AT version).

Accessible Web Design

Web sites should be usable by all visitors, including those that use assistive technology. Careful attention to simple, consistent navigation and presentation is key.

The following web locations have specific guidelines that can help you develop an accessible website or determine if a web site is considered accessible:

www.w3.org/WAI/

or

www.access-board.gov/sec508/508standards.htm

Quick tips to make accessible web sites (from the W3C/WAI web site):
- Images & animations. Use the alt attribute to describe the function of each visual.
- Image maps. Use the client-side map and text for hotspots.
- Multimedia. Provide captioning and transcripts of audio, and descriptions of video.
- Hypertext links. Use text that makes sense when read out of context. For example, avoid "click here."
- Page organization. Use headings, lists, and consistent structure. Use CSS for layout and style where possible.
- Graphs & charts. Summarize or use the longdesc attribute.
- Scripts, applets, & plug-ins. Provide alternative content in case active features are inaccessible or unsupported.
- Frames. Use the noframes element and meaningful titles.
- Tables. Make line-by-line reading sensible. Summarize.
- Check your work. Validate. Use tools, checklist, and guidelines at http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG

For complete guidelines and checklists, see www.w3.org/WA/. The checklists contain checkpoints that are prioritized as follows:

- Priority 1 is a MUST DO
- Priority 2 is a SHOULD DO
- Priority 3 is a MAY DO.

If you would like to test your web site to see how it stands up to Section 508 regulations, here are a few tools (all free):

WAVE: www.temple.edu/inst_disabilities/piat/wave/

Bobby: www.cast.org/bobby

A-Prompt: aprompt.snow.utoronto.ca/

You may also want to view your pages with a text-only browser (Lynx), turn off the graphics on your browser, or view your pages with a screen reader.

For those of you who create web pages for your individual classes, there are a few things that you can do to help make your pages more accessible, and make it a potential learning experience for your class. The first is to use alt tags. These are simply text description of pictures that you can include in your html code. You can also put captioning on any digital video with a software program that is available for free. It's called MAGpie (the Media Access Generator, developed by CPB/WGBH National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM). You can download a copy at their web site: ncam.wgbh.org/webaccess/magpie/

Make sure to synchronize the captions with the video (it's easy to do – just takes a little typing).

Accessible Desktop and Portable Computers

Universal design principles should also apply to computers. Computers should accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. They should communicate necessary information effectively (regardless of ambient conditions or user sensory abilities), and should be able to be approached, reached, manipulated and used regardless of the individual's body size, posture or mobility.

As I mentioned earlier in this article, the long term effects of accessible E&IT will be beneficial to everyone. If you have any questions or need additional information, please give me a call.

To Contact DATI's Central Site office or the ATRC

closest to you, call 1-800-870-DATI

Press
#1 for English or
#2 for Spanish,

then press

#3 for the Central Site office
#4 for the New Castle County ATRC
#5 for the Kent County ATRC
#6 for the Sussex County ATRC

TDD callers: Do not press #1 or #2 and your call will be answered on a TDD line at the Central Site office.

Service Dogs are the Ultimate in Assistive Technology!

By Jody Tate

I suffered two strokes in May 1998, which resulted in significant mobility, balance and coordination deficits. For the first year and a half after my strokes I relied on use of a wheelchair for my mobility. From there I progressed to use of a rolling walker for about eight months. I progressed to a quad cane and then a single prong cane. However, during this entire time I continued to use my wheelchair for going long distances (over one-quarter mile) and shopping trips. Now I use my service dog, Huggy Bear!

I felt certain that Huggy Bear would enhance my life but I never expected that it would be to the degree that it has been. Huggy Bear and I graduated a little over one year ago. It's so hard for me to sum up what a positive difference he has made in my life. Huggy is my primary support and stabilizer for balance when ambulating. Once I got Huggy I no longer needed my cane for short distance or my wheelchair for those longer distances. With Huggy helping to compensate and provide support, the amount of physical and mental effort I need to achieve the task of walking has decreased. For this reason I am now able to walk one and three-quarters

miles rather than the one-quarter mile with my cane and another person for assistance. That is a significant and astounding difference! On a side note too, but an important side note, Huggy is much more fun than a cane (at least in my opinion). His antics make me smile, even when I'm having one of those "bad days."

Huggy knows how to compensate for my balance difficulties whether it's walking on uneven terrain, going up/down steps, walking on grass, etc. This is something that just doesn't happen when you use a cane. Functionally, Huggy's assistance with my walking has allowed me to go places with increased ease and accessibility. I don't have to walk the extra distance to get to curb cuts (assuming they are there) or worry about obstacles in my path. With Huggy by my side I now use the fixed-route bus instead of the paratransit that is available for use to individuals with disabilities. I consider this a huge advantage because it allows me to be in control of the time I go and where rather than relying solely on the paratransit bus.

Huggy Bear helps me in more ways than most people realize. Not only does he provide the stability and support that I need for walking but he also opens/closes doors, carries objects/bags for me, tugs my laundry bag from the second floor of my house to the washer located in the basement, retrieves items that I request and pays cashiers when I am unable to reach the counter. If we are upstairs, Huggy is able to go downstairs and get an item I need from my husband and return upstairs to give it to me. As my endurance is not what it used to be, this is a tremendous energy conservation technique for me. In addition, Huggy has increased my self-confidence and active participation in life again. He is my 24-hour a day companion and I wouldn't have it any other way. Although Huggy and I have been together only a little over a year, it feels like we have been together forever. I would be lost without him.

Now that some of the pros have been covered, let's go on to the cons. He is not perfect… nor am I! He can be extremely stubborn at times! You tell him to do something for you and he gives you a look like "I have no idea what you are talking about," like he never did that task before a day in his life! There are days when I'm extremely frustrated with him; he acts like a two-year old trying to get away with whatever he can. But just like a two-year-old, he always gives you that unconditional love. He seems to understand when I am not feeling well and need to lie down. At these times, he will remain by my side until I'm up and ready to go again. He also knows when a

"dog kiss," a lick of the tongue on your hand is needed and will freely give it.

Having a service dog necessitates certain responsibilities for the recipient. Proper and consistent medical and grooming care need to occur. Respect needs to be given to the people you encounter who are afraid of dogs. Respect also needs to be given to the public as a whole in regard to proper "clean-up" once the dog has eliminated. Just as there are rules for the recipient, the public sector is legally bound to follow certain regulations—with guidance from the ADA—for accommodation for recipients who use service dogs. Service dogs help to make it possible for individuals with disabilities to go places. The service dog is considered to be in the same category as a person's wheelchair. Remember that the ADA covers the individual person and not the dog. On his own, a service dog does not have public access. In comparison, those with therapy animals have no ADA protection like individuals with service dogs. Therapy dogs are trained to offer a service to others besides the handler. They are not allowed to go into areas of public accommodation without express permission from the facility where they are visiting. This may mean that visitation is only permitted on special days and in certain areas. For example, therapy dogs may be allowed in a playroom but not individual patient rooms. Most facilities require that individuals who have therapy dogs have some sort of liability insurance in case the dogs cause injury. If an individual is interested in visiting a facility with his therapy dog(s) it may be advantageous to develop a written packet that contains information about the trainer, the dogs, their training and experience. In any case, it is vital for individuals with a service dog and those with therapy dog(s) to know and abide by the laws and access rights. Both types of dogs provide a valuable service. Once you have experienced and/or witnessed their benefits, you will be hooked!

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Jo Ann "Jody" Tate, MS, OTR/L, suffered two strokes within 3 days in May, 1998. Prior to the strokes she was an early intervention specialist for Easter Seal Society of Del-Mar. The results of the strokes significantly affected autonomic areas such as breathing, feeding, swallowing, and control of body temperature as well as strength, coordination and balance. Mobility and aids to achieve this skill have been an ever-changing facet of Jody's life since the strokes. Jody's use of mobility aids has run the gamut from

wheelchair, rolling walker, walker, and quad cane to single prong cane. Her most recent change has been the addition of her service dog. This service dog is a remarkable piece of AT and accompanies her everywhere from trips to the Bahamas, to the RA meetings at national conference, to classes at the local community college and to social/recreational events.

Parents with Disabilities and T**h**eir Teens Needed for Nationwide Survey

Through the Looking Glass, a federally-funded program supporting parents with disabilities, is conducting a project to learn more about families in which a parent with a disability is raising a teen (11-17 years old). Surveys are available by mail, online and printable at their website, in Spanish, over the phone, and in a version specific to Deaf parents. For more information, or to participate, contact Nancy Freed, Project Coordinator: Voice (800) 644-2666; TTY (800) 804-1616; email tlg@lookingglass.org; website www.lookingglass.org.

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If the address we have for you is incorrect, please type or print your correct address and forward it to DATI along with the current mailing label. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please contact our office or send us your mailing label with "discontinue" written next to the label. Thanks for your cooperation.

Do you know someone who would like to be added to the DATI mailing list? Have them call any of the DATI locations.

DATI Throughout the State...

1-800-870-DATI

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