

NEWS AND NOTES FROM

THE FAMILY CENTER ON TECHNOLOGY AND DISABILITY

September 2003

Issue 19



IN THIS ISSUE...

He Made All the Difference

In his 1920 poem, *The Road Not Taken*, poet Robert Frost wrote:

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

In late August, Tom Morales died at age 44. A project manager at the Alliance for Technology Access (ATA), Tom was a study in contrasts: He was a successful entrepreneur who sold his company and devoted the remainder of his life to increasing the access of children and adults with disabilities to conventional, assistive and informational technologies; he was a Latino in a professional field often perceived to be the province of middle class anglos; he possessed a community college education in a profession dominated by masters degree recipients; he was a highly effective advocate who spoke in a soft voice, with real empathy for those whose interests he served instead of in a loud voice aimed at an audience beyond the constituency about whom he cared deeply. It is to Tom's memory, along with those in the assistive technology field whose decision to take the road less traveled by has made all the difference to families and children with

disabilities, that this issue of the FCTD Newsletter is dedicated.

Tom Morales, 1959-2003: Sometimes the Strongest People Are Invisible

Alliance for Technology Access Project Manager Tom Morales was a Buddhist. His manner was subdued, quiet, almost serene, like a duck cruising on the surface of a calm lake. Also like the duck, Tom churned furiously beneath the surface in the pursuit of his grail: equity and access for all. His friend and ATA supervisor Russ Holland remembers that Tom often cited what Tom claimed was a Buddhist aphorism: *Sometimes the strongest man is invisible.*

Says Holland, "Tom had an obvious passion for what he was doing. He believed in equity and in the right of *everyone* to pursue a rich and rewarding life."

Tom Morales would have celebrated his 45th birthday in October. According to ATA Executive Director Mary Lester, Tom and his wife, Maggie, also a longtime assistive technology professional in the Bay Area and in

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California's Mendocino County, would have celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary in early October.

"Tom was diagnosed with diabetes just four months before his death," Lester explains. "His numbers were very high. Tom did everything the doctors told him to do, and then some; he exercised, he lost weight, he appeared to be in good shape, he changed his diet and tested his blood about four times a day." The cause of death was a heart attack.

Russ Holland and Maggie Morales find solace in another Buddhist aphorism: *You go from here when your work is successfully completed.* Says Holland, "You go because there are other things for you to be doing. Regardless of one's religious belief, that's a nice thing to think about."

Tom grew up in South San Francisco, the second oldest in a close family of five children. When he was a boy, he had a paper route and played soccer. According to Maggie Morales, though, his favorite activity was accompanying his father, Luis, on weekly visits to the South San Francisco library.

"Tom's dad would read the business magazines while Tom cruised the stacks." Even as a boy, she notes, Tom was not interested in children's books. "He was into reading chapter books at a very early age." Tom's love for the library "is why we set up the Luis and Tom Morales Fund" at South San Francisco's West Orange Avenue Library.

The Quest Begins

Tom sold his business, California Boot Stations Inc., in 1989 with no plans and, apparently, no plans to make plans. "It's a family sore spot!" says Maggie. "Tom took the money from his boot business and traveled around the U.S. for a year." His parents, she remembers, called

that year on the road Tom's "lost period." His parents, she says, "didn't realize he was actually doing a lot of soul-searching to figure out what he wanted to do next in his life."

Tom's travels took him to Camp Costanoan, a facility for children with disabilities located near Santa Clara, CA. Remembers Maggie, "Tom had returned to the Bay Area and had a friend who was working at the camp for a summer. The friend said, 'Tom I think you'd really love this camp. Why don't you come up for the weekend and find out?'"

Tom took his friend's advice and signed on at Camp Costanoan as a janitor and as an aide to some of the kids who were attending the camp. Eventually he became an assistant to the camp manager and was living at Camp Costanoan year round.

"Tom also ran the kitchen," Maggie says, "and thus cooking became a lifelong hobby." Tom Morales, exclaims ATA's Mary Lester, "was a fabulous cook."

Tom spent four years at Camp Costanoan before moving on to the Spectrum Center, a facility for children with disabilities located in Berkeley. Tom remained at the Center for 10 years.

An Aunt and Uncle with Parkinson's

"Unless disability touches your life in some way," Maggie observes, "most people don't even know the world of disabilities exists." Tom and Maggie were no exceptions. Maggie's nephew suffered from cerebral palsy; Tom had an aunt and uncle who were afflicted with Parkinson's. That connection, she adds, was probably on Tom's mind when he joined Camp Costanoan and, later, the Spectrum Center. "He was paid almost nothing as a janitor," Maggie chortles. "I could have waitressed in the summer and made more

money than Tom earned at the camp, but he loved what he was doing and he was on call 24/7.”

In an effort to explain his new calling to his parents, Tom invited them to the camp where they met the children and the counselors. They quickly understood. Says Maggie, “Tom discovered what I also learned, that a lot of people unaccustomed to being in close proximity to people with disabilities can get so hung up on how disabled their bodies appear and then believe that their minds are disabled as well, which is just not so.”

A Tough Job, but Worth the Risk

After spending 10 years with the Spectrum Center Tom moved to Opportunity for Independence (OFI) in San Rafael, CA as a job developer, attempting to find jobs in the community for adults with developmental disabilities. OFI is community-based and features residential and job placement. “It was really hard for him,” Maggie remembers, “because he’s not a salesperson.” The experience, she explains, “brought him back to his days as a small business owner; he knew that salesmanship was not one of his skills.”

The source of Tom’s discomfort, she recalls, “was his having to sell prospective employers on a disabled individual’s skill and value, knowing that many of these employers looked at Tom’s clients and saw only the deficits, not the skills and benefits. Still, I think the OFI experience was good for him and he was glad he took the risk of leaving a secure job at Spectrum for it.”

Tom “plugged away” at the OFI job for two years and, according to Maggie, “he made some great connections. Says Maggie, “A young man with autism, named Larry Mason, got his first job through Tom. He’s performing well and has moved up the ladder. In fact, I

just got a call from Larry’s dad who was concerned that someone ought to be with Larry when Larry found out that Tom had died. Tom and Larry had been good friends ever since Tom left OFI. When Tom was down at the San Rafael ATA office he’d call Larry for lunch or dinner. Tom maintained his OFI connections to the very end.”

Tom’s next stop was a stint with longtime friend Dr. Carl Shrader at Dr. Shrader’s Behavioral Counseling and Resource Center (BCRC), also in San Rafael. “Dr. Carl” was experimenting with a new program that placed a single very well-trained behavior specialist in a classroom to work closely with a teacher so that, despite lack of funding, parents of children with behavioral problems or physical impairments could know that their children would benefit from one-to-one situations with a trained specialist.

While Tom spent more than a year with Dr. Shrader, Maggie, thanks to a summer grant, had connected with ATA, which offered her a job as project coordinator. “I’d just accepted a job with BCRC as a clinical supervisor so I turned down the ATA position. In talking to Tom about the ATA opportunity over dinner, he said ‘I’d be perfect for that job! It’s behind the scenes; I could be helping people over the phone and working on the computer.’” Tom admired the ATA organization. He called ATA and talked to Russ Holland, ATA’s interim Executive Director who hired Tom.

“His Passion was Obvious”

Remembers Holland, “Tom’s passion for his calling was obvious immediately. He had a quiet, strong manner about him that I liked and admired.” Russ and Tom worked easily together. “Tom worked on projects and I worked on programs,” Holland recalls. “Many time those projects and programs were one and the same. We divided the work smoothly. We

often split up the work geographically, because Tom was in California and I was in upstate New York. Our relationship moved quickly from employee/employer, to colleague, to peer, to good friend.”



Tom with ATA colleagues Mary Lester and Russ Holland.

Tom’s overarching attribute, according to Holland, “was his genuineness.” Tom “was very supportive of everyone he dealt with – *everyone*. He had a way of drawing out the best in people just through simple interaction. What a gift that was!” Adds Russ, ‘So many people gave Tom credit for projects or ideas that he conceived or followed through with. Since he died I hear that more and more from colleagues and others whom he touched.’”

Not Only Behind the Scenes: From a Job to a Quest

After arriving at ATA, Tom soon discovered that not all of his work would be behind the scenes. Says Maggie, “Tom learned to present at conferences, for example. He handled some delicate and important projects, like the Mattel Foundation, which funded Tom’s position for a time. Throughout he was always just himself. He won the Mattel people over by his personality, dedication and ability. Here was this long-haired guy with a big beard and wire-rimmed glasses and they fell in love with him.”

Tom quest, she explains, “was to channel the available funds to where it can do the most good instead of becoming bogged down in administrative BS.” One of his favorite tasks, she remembers, was responding to queries emailed by families to the ATA website. Says Maggie, “At night, when I was preparing lesson plans – she is an itinerant teacher for the Mendocino County Office of Education, serving students with orthopedic impairments - - Tom would go into the list of questions from consumers and families and answer them. Every so often I had the privilege of helping him because I have a background in assistive technology. Tom loved interacting directly with consumers and helping them get the answers they needed. He liked it because it helped him think outside the box, and because he was helping people who really needed help.”

Tom always needed more than just a job, Maggie explains, and each task added to a repository of knowledge that transcended the boundaries of formal education. “He graduated from South San Francisco High School and did a couple of years at Skyline College, a community college, majoring in journalism. All the rest of his education was life skills.” He was an avid reader who favored Japanese haiku poetry.



Connecting with people was perhaps Tom's greatest strength.

Lovely Emails

“There were lovely emails written about him after he died,” says ATA’s Mary Lester. “Everybody writes what we already knew, that he was so kind, so easy to work with, so easy to be around. He made things happen.”

One correspondent, she says, “wrote that Tom was an odd mix; he was a Latino in the disability world, which is pretty uncommon – a lot of people of color and in communities where English is not the primary language are not connected to traditional disability organizations. Tom was an effective bridge to that world.”

Lester explains that Tom’s role at ATA was to coordinate projects between the members of the ATA network, ATA centers and ATA vendors, as well as with public schools and community groups and to bring the various constituencies together to solve problems and create initiatives. His work with the Mattel Foundation brought him in contact with 80 schools nationwide to which Mattel had provided equipment. “Our role – and Tom’s – was to make sure that the equipment and strategies were available to students with disabilities. People loved Tom,” she declares, “so he had this network of teachers to whom he was providing support and ongoing strategies.”

Since 1998, Tom represented ATA in the partnership of organizations that operate the Family Center on Technology and Disability. Tom maintained primary responsibility for the Center’s review of assistive technology resources, made available to the public as a searchable database. Tom worked closely with the Center’s staff, particularly Director Jackie Hess and Deputy Director Julie Inlow. “Tom seemed to know everyone in the AT field,” says Hess. “He was the consummate networker, putting people and resources together in ways that would benefit children

and their families. He was extremely generous in sharing his knowledge and his connections. It was always a pleasure working with him. In a world in which egos can often run rampant, here was a man who seemed completely unconcerned with ego. He was always focused on the big picture.” Adds Inlow, “I didn’t know Tom that well, but I bet there are people all over the country (and probably the world) who didn’t know him well who are, like me, feeling really sad and trying to figure out why they are feeling so deeply. I think that more than anything, it is the fact that Tom was such a genuine and good person. Deeply genuine people like Tom are rarities, and their spirits stay indelibly in the people with whom they’ve interacted.”

Tom Morales left a number of legacies, Mary Lester remarks. “He was the one among us who was the most balanced. When people think about Tom they will think about the joy with which he lived his life and approached his work. For us, on staff at ATA, Tom was very committed, dedicated and balanced. He had a wonderful life and a wonderful perspective and a good understanding of the role of work and the role of friends and family. His legacy in the outside world is about bringing to people’s attention the values of access and inclusion for those who’d never thought about it in terms of disabilities. Tom lived a very, very inclusive life. He shared that with all of us.”

A Voice You Hear in Your Head

For Russ Holland, a relationship with Tom Morales is something that is so comfortable that it was almost taken for granted, that it will always be there because he will always be there. You never stop to analyze it. That is its blessing. You don’t truly appreciate the relationship until you see how big a hole is left.”

Says Jackie Hess, “Tom’s was the kind of voice you hear in your head long after it’s gone. His laughter was deep and contagious. He emanated a sense of personal peace. Like many others, I will miss him very, very much.”



Smart Thinking: Technology that Empowers People with Memory Loss

By Annette Cerreta,
PACER Simon Technology Center

While we may joke about not remembering our own phone number or where we last placed the car keys, memory loss is no laughing matter for a child with a cognitive disability. Memory loss can have a devastating effect on a child and his or her family, dramatically altering the landscape of everyday life.

Memory strategies that most of us rely on to carry out our daily routine, such as checklists, calendars, and post-it notes, may not provide

adequate support for the child with a cognitive disability and memory loss.

When typical memory compensation tools and strategies aren’t enough, families might consider more sophisticated cognitive aids. Recent advances in computer and telecommunications technologies have given rise to a number of powerful, portable devices that offer an alternative to the pen and paper strategies and other low-tech approaches.

These devices are often off-the-shelf technologies that many people use everyday, such as personal digital assistants, pagers, wristwatches, and cell phones. Children with cognitive deficits can learn to utilize these everyday technologies to compensate for memory and other cognitive deficiencies.

Karen’s Story

Karen, a 15-year-old girl, sustained a head injury in a motor vehicle accident when she was ten years old that resulted in severe cognitive deficits, including significant memory loss. Although her cognitive skills improved dramatically over the five years after her accident, she continued to struggle with keeping track of time and activities. Karen kept a written daily planner, but often forgot to use it or misplaced it.

Karen’s mother consulted an occupational therapist who suggested that Karen try using a wristwatch called the Timex DataLink®. This watch merges electronic daily planner technologies with a wristwatch alarm system. Multiple alarms were set to alert Karen when she was suppose to attend to a task, such as taking her medication, making a phone call, or turning in a homework assignment to her teacher. When the alarm sounded, Karen could read a message on the watch, such as “Call home now” or “Take your medication” that would prompt Karen to carry out these

activities. Karen was also less likely to misplace the watch since she wore it on her wrist.

Karen was anxious about using the watch at first, so her therapist taught her how to use the most essential features only. She also taught Karen's mother how to program the watch for Karen, so that Karen only needed to respond to the alarms and messages throughout her day in the beginning. This approach minimized Karen's stress, and she began to appreciate how the watch helped her to stay on track by reminding her to do important daily tasks. After a few months of training, Karen was ready to start using other helpful features of the watch, such as the to-do list, schedule planner, and phone book.

Karen's story is a good example of how off-the-shelf technologies, such as an electronic watch or personal electronic organizer, offer the added layer of support a child with memory loss needs to function more independently.

Families should also be aware of technology aids designed specifically for persons with cognitive deficits. The TimePAD by Attainment Company, for example, is a small, pager-sized device created for people who need reminders throughout their day. The device is programmed by a caregiver to play pre-recorded voice messages at pre-set times, such as "It's 7:30am – go outside to wait for the school bus." The main difference between this device and a regular pager is that it speaks the messages outloud instead of displaying them in a text format. This could be beneficial for children with reading difficulties, visual impairment, or those who respond best to auditory cuing. The device holds up to 72 seconds of speech divided among five messages. It cost about \$30 and comes with a belt clip. For more information contact Attainment Company, www.attainmentcompany.com

Strategies for Selecting the Right Cognitive Aids

Before acquiring a cognitive aid for your child, families should give consideration to several factors during the selection process to assure a good match between their child's needs and a cognitive aid device.

- Always take into account the personal characteristics of your child, including their physical, social, cognitive, and sensory level. For instance, a person who is not able to understand the usefulness of a beeper alarm system would not be a good candidate for it's use.
- If your child has a functional limitation, such as limited fine motor skills or low vision, look for devices that have larger buttons, larger print displays, or other accessible features.
- Choose devices that are user-friendly and simple. Complicated devices lead to user frustration and device abandonment.
- Set realistic expectations about what the device can do for your child.

The technologies of today provide families with additional tools to help their children succeed at home, school, and in the community. To learn more about technology-based cognitive aids refer to the following resources.

Cognitive Disabilities & Assistive Technology: Web Resources

<http://www.pitt.edu/~eflst4/sig20/weblinks.htm>

Devices for Memory Loss

A fact sheet from the RERC on Aging and the University of Buffalo Center for Assistive Technology

http://cat.buffalo.edu/newsletters/mem_loss.php

Institute for Cognitive Prosthetics

<http://www.brain-rehab.com/>

Texas Technology Access Project

<http://techaccess.edb.utexas.edu/cognitivesupports.html>

PACER Simon Technology Center

www.pacer.org/stc

**FCTD KNOWLEDGE NETWORK -
Featured Members**

**American Council on Rural
Special Education (ACRES)**

The American Council on Rural Special Education is the only national organization devoted entirely to special education issues that affect rural America. The membership of ACRES is geographically diverse, and is representative of all regions of the country. Diverse representation is vital because issues vary among specific rural areas.

Founded in 1981 by individuals interested in the unique challenges of rural students and individuals needing special services, ACRES is comprised of special educators, general educators, related service providers, administrators, teacher trainers, researchers, and parents.

ACRES was founded to:

- Promote the growth and development of each member of the organization;

- Foster quality education and services for individuals with exceptional needs living in rural America;
- Encourage cultural diversity and the empowerment of minorities and members of traditionally under-represented groups in providing services to individuals with exceptional needs, their families, and service providers;
- Gain national recognition for rural special education, health, and human services;
- Forge collaborative partnerships with organizations interested in special education, health, and human services; and
- Disseminate information concerning promising practices and research for improving education and services for individuals with disabilities living in rural America.

The ACRES Annual National Conference, held in March, is the only national conference devoted entirely to rural special education issues. Topic strands include: administration, at-risk issues, collaborative education models, early childhood, gifted and talented, multicultural issues, parents and families, professional development, technology, transition, and related services.

The nature of American rural areas -- sparse populations, tendencies toward professional isolation, remoteness from resources -- makes it essential for rural educators, service providers, and parents to have an effective communication network.

Rural areas thrive on warm personal relationships and close-knit communities. The American Council on Rural Special Education offers rural professionals and parents the opportunity to develop a "close-knit" rural organization at the national level.

To learn more about ACRES, contact:

American Council on Rural Special

Education
Utah State University
2865 Old Main Hill
Logan, Utah 84322-2865
Phone: (435) 797-3911

<http://www.extention.usu.edu/acres>

Equip for Equality

Equip for Equality was established in 1985 to advance the human and civil rights of people in Illinois with physical and mental disabilities. It is the only comprehensive statewide advocacy organization in Illinois providing self-advocacy assistance, legal services, education, public policy advocacy and systems monitoring. The organization has been designated by the Illinois governor to operate the federally mandated protection and advocacy system (P&A), safeguarding the rights of people with physical and mental disabilities, including developmental disabilities and mental illnesses.

Last year, more than 6,000 individuals benefited from Equip for Equality programs and services. In addition, thousands of individuals benefited from its public policy and other systems change initiatives. All individuals with an ADA-defined disability in Illinois are eligible for services, including children, senior citizens, and individuals in state-operated facilities, nursing homes, and community-based programs. Programs and services include the following:

- **Self-Advocacy Assistance** offers free, one-on-one technical assistance to inform individuals about their rights, alternative options and strategies, and steps they may take to advocate on their own behalf or on behalf of a family member.
- **Legal Services** provides free legal advice and representation in administrative proceedings and federal and state court and also engages in systems and impact litigation.

- **Training Institute on Disability Rights** provides education through substantive seminars for people with disabilities and their families. Seminar topics include rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act, protections against employment discrimination, guardianship and advance directives and special education rights.

- **Public Policy Advocacy** achieves changes in state legislation, public policies and programs to safeguard individual rights and personal safety, enhance choice and self-determination, and promote independence, productivity, and community integration. Drafts and secures passage of state legislation and participates in state regulatory and policymaking processes.

- **Special Projects** undertakes research and in-depth monitoring of projects that have a major impact on people with disabilities in Illinois. Findings and recommendations for reform are then released to the public. Current initiatives include examination of the state's guardianship system and original research on use of physical restraints in state-operated mental health facilities.

- **Abuse Investigation Unit** works to improve the safety of recipients receiving services and to demonstrate how an independent, non-governmental P&A system can enhance existing state and federal systems charged with investigating serious incidents.

- **Ticket to Work** assists individuals with disabilities in Illinois who receive Social Security benefits with information and advice regarding vocational rehabilitation and employment services. Provides advocacy or other services that beneficiaries with disabilities may need to secure, regain, or retain employment.

Equip for Equality publishes *The Equalizer*, a quarterly newsletter with a circulation of 15,000. Other publications include interim legislative summaries, special project reports,

seminar handbooks for each seminar topic offered by the Institute.

For further information on Equip for Equality, contact:

Equip for Equality
20 N. Michigan, Suite 300
Chicago, IL 60602
Phone: (312) 341-0022 Se Habla Espanol
(800) 537-2632 (Voice)
(800) 610-2779 (TTY)
Fax: (312) 341-0295 (Fax)
contactus@equipforequality.org

Franziska Racker Centers

For more than 50 years, Franziska Racker Centers have provided services to individuals with disabilities and their families. Each year the Centers provide over 135,000 individual services to nearly 2,000 people.

The Racker Center concept was born at the end of World War II when a group of parents and professionals joined together to address the needs of children with disabilities in Central New York State. The group formed the Cerebral Palsy Association of the Ithaca Area, providing physical therapies for children with special needs. The Association's goal was to offer service options to individuals and families, enabling children with disabilities to remain at home, receiving needed therapies in a community setting that were once available only in institutional environments. By 1963, the agency's services had expanded, prompting the Association's name change to the Special Children's Center. On September 1, 1999, the Special Children's Center changed its name to Franziska Racker Centers in honor of the agency's medical director. Dr. Franziska W. Racker served as medical director from 1971 until her death in 1999. Her 28 years of service was a period of great change at the Special

Children's Center. She was regarded as a trusted friend, a compassionate leader, and a champion of human rights.

Today Franziska Racker Centers offer people with disabilities (newborns to senior citizens) and their families a wide range of individualized programs, services, supports, and opportunities to reach goals of their own choosing. The Centers' maintain 22 service locations in Cortland, Tioga, and Tompkins. Of the 22 sites, 8 are program sites and 14 are residences.

Racker Centers outreach programs include:

- 22 school districts in Seneca, Tompkins, Cortland, and Tioga counties
- The homes of individual families in these and neighboring counties
- Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga BOCES
- Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES
- Residences for people with disabilities in Cortland, Covert, Dryden, Groton, Homer, Ithaca, and Trumansburg
- Day care, Head Start, and preschool programs in Cortland, Ithaca, and Owego

The Centers provide evaluation and early intervention programs; speech, physical, occupational, and audiological therapies; mental health services; day habilitation, residential habilitation, and service coordination; audiological assessments; respite care, case management, referral services, and community involvement programs.

Early Childhood Services

The supports and opportunities the Racker Centers offer help both the children and their families during the crucial first five years of a child's life when growth, learning and development are most dramatic. Working with families, the Centers facilitate the development of skills in young children. Early childhood services include:

- Evaluation services
- Therapies, special education and social work
- Day care

- Family resource program
- Service coordination

School-Age Services

Franziska Racker Centers partner with area public schools to complement and reinforce educational programs. School-based teams including teachers, therapists, and counselors, work with students and their families to broaden learning opportunities. School-age services include:

- Evaluation services
- Therapies, special education and social work services
- Counseling and mental health services
- Family resource program
- Service coordination
- Residential services

For further information on the Racker Centers, contact

The Franziska Racker Centers
3226 Wilkins Road
Ithaca, NY 14850
607.272.5891
Fax 607.272.0188

<http://www.rackercenters.org>

AbilityHub

The AbilityHub website features information on adaptive equipment and alternative methods available for accessing computers. As their website maintains, "Searching the Internet for accurate information on assistive technology is much like *"looking for a needle in a haystack"*. AbilityHub attempts to reduce the size of the "haystack" and supply information in an organized fashion.

The organization was created and is maintained by Dan J. Gilman in association with TGGWEB. Since 1992 Gilman has aided disabled individuals who require AT to access the computer. Gilman is certified by the

Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) as an Assistive Technology Practitioner (ATP). Mr. Gilman has lived with a disability since 1972 when he fractured his neck in a swimming accident, resulting in paralysis from a C4-5 spinal cord injury. His utilization of the Internet as a resource for investigating current technological advancements in AT prompted him to learn more about html and web page development, which resulted in the creation of AbilityHub.

Consulting and Training Services

AbilityHub provides the following AT consulting, evaluation and training services:

- Evaluation of beta software and hardware products.
- Assistive technology feasibility studies.
- Technical support for AT technology devices.
- Training in the use of AT technology devices.
- Consultation with professionals regarding analysis of their client's assistive technology needs:
 - Hardware recommendations
 - Assistive technology software recommendations
 - Operating Systems recommendations
 - Recommendations of what type of training might be needed:
 - training of user
 - training of professional
 - training of caregiver
- Website accessibility technical support.
- Estimates of time and cost to obtain website "accessibility" approval.

For further information on Ability Hub, contact:

AbilityHub
c/o The Gilman Group, L.L.C.
P.O. Box 6356

Rutland, VT 05702-6356,
Telephone: (802) 775 1993
Fax: (802) 773 1604
Email: info@abilityhub.com

Covering Kids & Families (CKF)

To address the need to reduce the number of uninsured children and adults eligible for public health care coverage programs but not enrolled, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation launched Covering Kids & Families (CKF), a four-year, \$55 million dollar initiative to increase the number of children and families who benefit from existing health care coverage programs.

Covering Kids & Families operates through statewide projects in 45 states and the District of Columbia and more than 140 local community projects. In addition, four states have CKF liaison grants that provide opportunities to participate in the national CKF initiative.

The CKF coalitions focus on the following three strategies to reduce the number of uninsured children and adults who are eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP):

- Conduct and coordinate outreach programs
- Simplify enrollment and renewal processes
- Coordinate existing health care coverage programs

Among the tens of millions of uninsured Americans are significant numbers of children and adults who are currently eligible for publicly funded health care coverage programs but are not enrolled. More than 41 million Americans are uninsured, including 7.8 million children. Over half of uninsured children are Hispanic or African American. Most uninsured children are eligible for Medicaid and SCHIP. Many adults are eligible too.

Due to policy and procedural barriers and a lack of knowledge about public health coverage programs, thousands of uninsured but eligible children and adults are not enrolled in Medicaid or SCHIP. Beginning with Medicaid expansions during the late 1980s and in recent years with SCHIP (enacted by Congress in 1997), the opportunities for coverage have expanded. As of April 2003, all states and the District of Columbia administer an SCHIP program, and 38 states and the District of Columbia have expanded eligibility for children in households at or above 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), approximately \$36,800 annually for a family of four.

The Southern Institute on Children and Families, a private, non-profit public policy organization located in Columbia, South Carolina, serves as the National Program Office of the CKF initiative. The Southern Institute provides leadership and direction for CKF statewide grantees and local projects.

GMMB, a strategic communications firm located in Washington, DC, manages the communications campaign for CKF. The Communications Campaign works to inform low to moderate-income families about low-cost and free health care coverage available through Medicaid and SCHIP.

To learn more about Covering Kids & Families, contact:

Southern Institute on Children and Families
500 Taylor Street
Suite 202
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: (803) 779-2607
Fax: (803) 254-6301 or (803) 779-6785
info@coveringkids.org

Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI)

An estimated one-quarter of Delawareans have some degree of disability. Since 1991 DATI

has been building a statewide network of resources to help Delawareans with disabilities identify appropriate assistive technology. Today, DATI clients can "test drive" hundreds of devices at Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRCs) located in each Delaware county.

DATI does not directly provide technology devices to individuals, but provides information and advocacy so that people with disabilities can exert greater control over their lives. With DATI's help, individuals, their families and other members of the community can make better-informed choices about available technology and services available.

DATI has five major objectives. Some address immediate needs. Others focus on long-term change. All are focused on advocacy, education, information and referral, and coordination of resources so that people with disabilities can be empowered to pursue individual interests.

Raising Public Awareness: DATI publications address life span and disability topics and are available from any of the four DATI sites.

Making Information and Resources

Accessible: Assistive Technology Resource Centers are located in each county to provide hands-on access to AT and information resources.

Providing Training and Technical

Assistance: DATI sponsors statewide conferences and a variety of other training opportunities, combining theory with "how-tos" and informal networking opportunities. DATI also offers free information and referral via telephone or written request. DATI staff members answer a wide variety of technology-related questions and provide unbiased product information.

Demystifying Funding: The policies, practices and procedures intended to ensure access to AT devices and services sometimes have the opposite effect--because they are outdated, confusing, contradictory or needlessly restrictive. DATI is reviewing the policies of state agencies and public and private funders of assistive technology and working to reshape them so that they are more effective. A full-time funding specialist is on staff to help achieve system-wide improvements and assist individuals.

Ensuring Agency Collaboration: DATI is an outgrowth of state interagency coordination efforts begun in 1989. The organization fosters a cooperative working relationship among individuals with disabilities, the agencies that provide services, and the public and private organizations involved in promoting AT.

To learn more about DATI, contact:
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