

A Closer Look

Increasing Access to and Acquisition of Assistive Technology for Georgians with Disabilities

An Assistive Technology Publication of Tools for Life, the Georgia Assistive Technology Act Program
Spring 2010

Bringing Assistive Technology to You Tools for Life Launches Webinar Series for 2010 By: Liz Persaud

The Tools for Life team is always searching for fun, friendly and useful ways to bring the knowledge of Assistive Technology (AT) to you. With ongoing budget cuts, travel restrictions and busy schedules, being away from your home or office can be difficult. We are proud to announce an exciting way to bring educational sessions about AT to you with our 2010 webinar series. Webinars are an easy and accessible way to get information right where you are, right when you need it. All the Tools for Life webinars are archived at www.gatfl.org, so if you missed one or had a schedule conflict you can download the information and listen at your convenience.

Check out the Tools for Life 2010 webinar schedule below and mark your calendar. If you have any ideas for a webinar session, please let us know – we want your ideas!

WEBINAR SCHEDULE

All Webinars are scheduled for 1:30pm-3:00pm EST

Date & Topic

- May 11 Dollars and Sense: Navigating AT Funding Streams
- July 13 Assistive Technology Strategies and Solutions for Individuals with Neurodegenerative Disorders
- Sept. 14 Assistive Technology Strategies and Solutions for Individuals with Hearing-Related Issues and Deaf-Blindness

FREE CEUs for Live or Archived Webinars

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AT Spotlight: ZAM Communicator

By: Martha Rust

Last year Tools for Life received a generous donation of over 500 communication devices called the ZAM Communicator. The ZAM Communicator is a lightweight device that enables a person who has difficulty speaking to communicate by spelling out words with a keypad or pressing an icon to display a message on a LCD screen. These devices do not have audio output; they are double-sided with the alphabet on one side and a picture display on the other side. They also include Spanish underneath the pictures.

Tools for Life distributed the ZAMs across the state of Georgia to many different partners. The Assistive Technology Resource Centers and their mentor sites received the devices in their lending libraries. So now, anyone interested in the ZAMs can visit these sites to try out the device. Tools for Life also collaborated with the Area Agencies on Aging, the Georgia Department of Education, universities, speech language pathologist, hospitals, and rehabilitation centers to get the Zams in the hands of those that could use them.

ZAM Announcement

If you have received a ZAM Communicator and notice that it does not keep its charge, there is a solution! A TFL Advisory Council member discovered that a universal charger can be used in place of the original. An example of a universal charger that would work is the Enercell 6VDC 800 mA (AC to DC power adapter). You must also have an Enercell Adaptaplug “K” tip. These items can be found at Radio Shack for about \$23.50.

Individuals who are interested in learning more about the ZAM Communicator and where to borrow one can contact their local ATRC or listen to a webinar titled “AT Spotlight: The ZAM Communicator, Bathing Cushions and Surfer Bathers...Oh My!” which is archived on the TFL website.

ZAM IN ACTION

My name is Anne Marie Warley. I went to Walt Disney World with my mom, Terry and my sister, Beverly. I brought my ZAM to help out in the Parks. My mom had to take off my laptray for the rides my wheelchair can go on so I could not use my talker, the PathFinder. Because of not having my laptray I can not have to take my PathFinder into the parks, but I did take my ZAM into the parks. Also, the ZAM

works in the dark for the Parades. I am so happy about the ZAM a lot and it is easy to use.

Terry Warley (Anne's mother)

It was great to have the much smaller ZAM handy in the backpack to find out what Anne had in mind all during the days at parks.

What's New in AT Funding and Resources?

By: Rhonda Perling

Your Funding Guide Has A New Look!

The Dollars & Sense (D&S) Funding Guide has been an important resource of the Tools for Life program since 1991. We are proud to announce a new look to help you explore your personal strategy for funding. D&S is your guide to help navigate the “funding streams” of Assistive Technology. The updated guide provides more information and education on AT funding resources, service providers, examples of letters of medical necessity, and a glossary of AT terms.

TFL believes you need to
KNOW YOUR RESOURCES!
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

For more information on the Dollars & Sense Funding Guide, contact Rhonda Perling at 404-235-0142 or Rhonda@gatfl.org.

Director's Notes
By: Carolyn Phillips

On July 26, 2010, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will turn 20. I remember where I was and the hope I felt when the legislation was signed on a hot summer day in 1990. I went to dinner with my parents and a group of friends to celebrate. The restaurant we choose was one where we protested as well as actively educated for years. A few months before, we were finally able to break down both attitudinal and physical barriers at the restaurant and it became accessible. The dinner we had that night was one to be savored – on many levels.

I had just turned 21 and I remember thinking that night, by the time I am 40, people with disabilities will be able to go anywhere we want, meet our educational goals, get the jobs and the promotions, live in communities of our choice with the people we chose. Well, I just turned 40, but the fight for these basic rights continues.

The ADA is alive and well within my family and circle of support. My daughter, Meera, uses her Alternative Augmentative Communication device everyday, all day to answer questions, take tests, joke with her brother, tell us she loves us and negotiate – no, argue about - chore duties. My parents are happily living in a fully accessible home of their choice that we designed with them. My disabilities did not hold me back from my high school diploma, undergraduate degree, master's degree and a truly meaningful career – despite the predictions of many teachers and “professionals.” For all these personal examples and many more reasons, I am thankful for the ADA and for the assistive technology that makes much of it possible.

However, the Tools for Life team and TFL network are contacted every day by Georgians with disabilities about societal, educational, workplace and attitudinal barriers that hold them back. And when that happens, Georgia as a whole is held back. TFL assisted more than 34,500 individuals in 2009 with the information, assistance and AT tools needed to help break these barriers. We also continue to collaborate actively with our partners to prevent others from creating more barriers. Yet while we have worked for nearly two decades to eliminate

obstacles, others have methodically chipped away at the ADA. Clearly our work is not yet done.

On January 1, 2009, the amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act took effect. These amendments are designed to restore the original intent and protections of the ADA. I challenge you to reread the ADA as amended (<http://www.ada.gov>) and commit yourself to creating an accessible, inclusive community that respects, honors and celebrates all individuals.

In 20 more years, ADA will be 40 - and I will be 60. My vision sees us celebrating our great successes, explaining to our youth why we even had to create the ADA. My vision does not include us continuing to face barriers, but rather building bridges.

Yours in the Struggle and the Hope,
Carolyn Phillips

Resources
Spring Cleaning Anyone?
By: Rhonda Perling

With spring just around the corner, you may feel the need to clean out a closet, basement or garage, and

then wonder what to do with the items you no longer need.

The STAR Network has a new donation project to help you solve that dilemma. Donated items we accept include: computers, vision devices and magnifiers, manual and power wheelchairs and scooters, walkers, canes, crutches, hospital beds and patient lifts, shower chairs and bathroom equipment, communication and environmental controls, and personal care items. All donated items can be refurbished to high quality standards and then given to Georgians with disabilities who can use them to great benefit.

You will receive a TAX-DONATION receipt for the items you contribute. We also hope you will consider a \$10 donation to help with our no landfill policy. To schedule a drop off or pick up appointment, call Lloyd Aames at 770-871-0433.

Tools for Life Data Corner

Data tells the story and the story of the Tools for Life Network is one of another successful year! We continued to lead the U.S. in the areas of AT Reuse and Information and Assistance. Some of our services experienced a jump in usage of 40%. We are excited about serving Georgians with disabilities

through Assistive Technology and encourage you to get in touch with us if you have questions about how AT can assist you!

AT/DME Reuse Saved Georgia Consumers
\$1,780,864!

Please visit us on the web at www.gatfl.org, send us an email at info@gatfl.org or give us a call at 1-800-497-8665.

Tools for Life 2009 Fiscal Year Report 10/01/08 – 09/30/09

467,252 Georgians reached through TFL Network
Public Awareness Activities

34,695 Georgians benefitted from Individualized
Information & Assistance

- 17,744 Georgians were assisted with specific AT Devices/Services
- 9,313 Georgians were assisted with AT Funding
- 3,126 Individuals received hands-on AT Training

TFL Network AT Device Loan Library

- 668 AT Devices Demonstrated
- 673 AT Devices Borrowed from our Library

AT Reuse - GA Leads the U.S!

- 32,585 Donated AT Pieces
- 3,036 Individuals received Reused AT Devices

\$1,780,864 Consumer Dollars Saved

3,036 Individuals received Direct AT Services (Not including Training)

Tools for Life Network

Services include an initial interview, information and assistance, device demonstration, equipment lending library, assessments and training.

Disability Connections

The Middle Georgia Center for Independent Living, Inc.

170 College Street, Macon, GA 31201

478-741-1425 Phone/TTY

1-800-743-2117 Phone/TTY

www.disabilityconnections.com

Tech-Able

1114 Brett Drive, Suite 100

Conyers, GA 30094

770-922-6768 Phone/TTY

www.techable.org

Walton Options for Independent Living, Inc.
948 Walton Way
Augusta, GA 30901
706-724-6262 Phone/TTY
www.waltonoptions.org

Touch the Future, Inc. Home of Reboot™ and the
Assistive Technology Center
4508 Bibb Blvd., Suite B10
Tucker, GA 30084
770-934-8432 Phone/TTY
www.touchthefuture.us

The Center for Financial Independence & Innovation
(CFII)
Alternative Financing Program/Credit Able
1419 Mayson St NE
Atlanta, GA 30325
404-541-9005 Phone
www.thecfii.org

FODAC
4900 Lewis Road
Stone Mountain, GA 30083
770-491-9014 Phone
www.fodac.org

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Tools for Life data and resources are made available to everyone on the web at www.gatfl.org or call 404-638-0390 for more information.

Individuals and groups advocate for funding that is needed to increase availability of additional state-of-the-art assistive technology equipment that would greatly increase daily living for persons with disabilities.

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