Tech It Easy (Text only version. All pictures and special formatting has been removed)

Access Technologies, Inc

December 2016 Edition

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Oregon Statewide AT Program Review: 2016

Access Technologies, Inc. proudly implements activities for the Oregon Statewide Assistive Technology Program; carrying out a continuum of four federally mandated state level and state leadership activities. These activities are designed to change the lives of individuals with disabilities through the improved access and acquisition of assistive technologies (devices and services); ultimately increasing their independence at home, school, work and in their community.

Our staff meet consumers in their community. That means our staff have the wonderful opportunity to travel throughout our great State, meeting so many wonderful people and learning about their life stories. During our last fiscal year, ATI staff drove more than 24,000 miles, providing one-on-one services to over 4,500 Oregonians, in addition to reaching over 274,000 people through Public Awareness and Information and Assistance services.

Let’s look at some of these services and see how many of our family members, friends and neighbors are now able to understand telephone conversations, read the menu at their favorite restaurant, maintain employment, and complete their school work with less frustration as a result of assistive technology devices and services they received through the Oregon AT Program in fiscal year 2016.

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Ask REMI!

Hi I’m Remi. I’m a two-year-old Yellow Labrador and I’m the office dog at ATI. Perhaps we’ve had the pleasure of meeting during your visit to our office. My job duties include greeting customers, comforting clients, and now I have an AT column to write for Tech It Easy; called Ask REMI!

Email your technology related questions to me at info@accesstechnologiesinc.org

Dear REMI: I’m low vision, and looking for a way to easily tell my spice bottles apart, identify food in my freezer, and not mix up my laundry detergent with the bleach bottle. Thanks Kari!

Dear Kari: Have you tried the PenFriend? This is way cool and super easy to use. The PenFriend allows you to record a voice message on self-adhesive labels, then use the PenFriend to read messages back.

Here’s an example of how the PenFriend works. First, place a label on one of your spice bottles, touch the tip of PenFriend to the label, then hold down the record button while recording your message.

When you want to know what spice is in the bottle, simply touch the pen tip to the label and have the message read aloud.

There’s a PenFriend in our Library. If you would like to explore this product firsthand, please call our office at 503-361-1201.

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Device Demonstrations—what they are and who was served

During the demonstration, a knowledgeable Specialist provides a hands-on, guided exploration of specific types of technologies designed to ensure appropriate decision making.— because staff with Oregon’s AT Program believes whether you are purchasing a bath bench for use following surgery, or you are in need of an alternative communication device, exploring various features and functions of different products help to ensure you are selecting the device that best meets your needs.

If you ask the 3,191 Oregonians, who received personalized demonstrations during the year about their SEE - TOUCH - LEARN experiences they gladly express appreciation for the ability to gain first hand skills and education necessary to make more informed purchasing decisions.

Like Pam, who after hearing about the Oregon AT Program scheduled a guided demonstration to learn about assistive technology devices that could help her son overcome literacy barriers.

During the demonstration, Pam explained that her son has struggled with reading since he was in the 2nd grade, and now that he is in middle school, he worries about standing out. Together, Pam and her son explored a variety of assistive technology devices, apps and computer software programs, specifically designed to accommodate individuals with different learning styles.

Empowered with a greater understanding of easy to use AT solutions that could allow her son to be more successful in school, Pam said she was looking forward to sharing this information at their next IEP meeting.

Pages 3 – 6 of this edition of Tech It Easy contain listings of new durable medical and/or assistive technology devices that are available for sale through our Assistive Technology MarketPlace.

Page 7 - 8 of this edition of Tech It Easy contain our Bargain Basement. The Bargain Basement section is a listing of slightly used items which are also available for sale online in our Assistive Technology MarketPlace.

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Device Loans

With over 2,000 products in our Library, our State of the Art AT Library is designed to allow individuals to try out devices in their personal environment; whether that’s in their home, at work, in the classroom, or in their community. Device loans result in more informed and accurate AT purchasing decisions; saving individuals time and money by avoiding “incorrect” purchases.

A local mom was one of the 346 individuals who accessed the Library in 2016; inquiring about speech communication applications (apps) that might serve as a voice for her young son who is nonverbal. After exploring a number of apps with the AT Specialist, Katie borrowed a tablet with specific age appropriate communication apps and began working with her son’s Speech Language Pathologist, to determine the best solution for him. Together they identified *the app* and applied for financial assistance with the family’s insurance company to purchase the $250 app as well as the tablet. Now that her son had *found his* voice, the family was delighted they were allowed to extend the loan of the tablet device during this lengthy process.

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Finance Activities

Obtaining Assistive Technology devices and services through the state financing activities saves individuals a significant amount of money and may be the only option available to them. Without these options Oregonians would go without the AT they need for work, school or daily activities in their community, like going to church or scheduling an appointment with their doctor.

The Oregon AT Program increases the ability of Oregonians to acquire Assistive Technology by developing and expanding FINANCE services proven to WORK in our State. By providing a variety of finance activities, Oregon consumers are able to purchase and obtain assistive technology devices and services they wouldn’t otherwise be able to afford.

This pie chart shows the combination the Finance and Reutilization activities offered through the Oregon Statewide AT Program saved Oregonians over $95,000 in 2016. Here’s a short story from one individual who was able to acquire important assistive technology because of these services. (To protect her privacy, the consumer’s name has been changed.)

Cathy was stricken with Rubella/German Measles in the early 1960s; damaging both her optic and inner ear nerves. Overtime, her vision and hearing decreased and today, Cathy is clinically deaf/blind.

Recently, Cathy met with Oregon’s AT Program to learn about portable technology that would allow her to text and email friends and family. During the meeting Cathy saw first-hand that the accessibility features of a portable tablet allows her to send/receive emails and text messages independently, and was delighted to learn that she qualified for services that permitted her to receive the tablet at no cost. Now, Cathy is able to stay connected with friends and family members even during regular medical treatments that require extended hospital stays.

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MarketPlace Coupon: Present Coupon During your MarketPlace Purchase and receive:
$5 off Purchase of $50

$10 off Purchase of $100

$20 off Purchase of $200

Valid thru December 23, 2016

Once Coupon per Customer

Sorry, coupon only valid on in stock MarketPlace purchased. May not be combined with other offers.

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Oregon ABLE Savings Plan

Oregonians with disabilities will be able to save money without fear of losing their vital state and federal benefits starting Dec. 6 with the Oregon ABLE Savings Plan.

**What is an ABLE account?**

ABLE Accounts, are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families, created as a result of the passage of the Stephen Beck Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 or better known as the ABLE Act. The account owner is the beneficiary of the account, and income earned by the accounts will not be taxed. Anyone may contribute to the account (the account beneficiary, family and friends) using post-taxed dollars and will not be tax deductible, although some states may allow for state income tax deductions for contribution made to an ABLE account.

**Why the need for ABLE accounts?**

Millions of individuals with disabilities and their families depend on a wide range of public benefits for income, health care and food and housing assistance. Eligibility for these public benefits (SSI, SNAP, Medicaid) require meeting a resource test that limits the eligibility to individuals who report more than $2,000 in cash savings, retirement funds and other items of significant value.

To remain eligible for these public benefits, an individual must remain poor. For the first time in public policy, the ABLE Act recognizes the extra and significant costs of living with a disability. These include costs, related to raising a child with significant disabilities or a working age adult with disabilities, such as accessible housing and transportation, personal assistance services, assistive technology and health care not covered by insurance, Medicaid or Medicare.

For more information about ABLE, go to www.Oregon529SavingsNetwork.com

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Learn about a FREE Equipment Program

iCanConnect—Oregon

If you have significant combined hearing and vision loss, you know first-hand that sending emails or chatting on the phone can be difficult.

iCanConnect offers free communication equipment and training so you can keep in touch . . . and be more independent.

Contact ATI to learn about the program’s income and disability guidelines. Refer someone you know or apply for the program yourself.

Phone: (503) 361-1201

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