

Summer 2004

DELAWARE



A collaborative effort of the Center for Disabilities Studies & the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The dissemination team at the Center for Disabilities Studies does a significant amount of preparation and planning before each issue of *delAware*. We begin by defining a topic and then brainstorming issues in the field of the specific topic. In our first planning session, we developed a list of things we could possibly focus on for an issue on Assistive Technology, including: computer equipment and adaptations, home modifications, legislative priorities around AT, and new research in the field of AT.

Kim Trohaugh and Amy Sawyer, graduate students from the University of Delaware, took the article list and painted a much more significant picture of AT and its impact on people with disabilities. Instead of focusing on the technology and the many developments in the field of AT, they focused on how these technologies affect the lives of people throughout Delaware. At the center of all of our articles are the people whose lives have been impacted by many different low and high tech devices that enable them to be more independent.

Throughout this issue are stories of how assistive technology provides opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in their communities. Adaptive computer devices provide individuals the ability to continue working. Linda Bruner's personal experiences are highlighted in

this issue to give you a sense of how basic adaptations to meal preparation have provided her with independence. An accessible horseback riding center in Odessa, Delaware, provides modified equipment and education to provide an adaptive and therapeutic recreation program. At the John G. Leach School in the Colonial School District, AT is written into a student's IEP and enables him or her to better meet learning objectives. Emanuel "Mann" Jenkins, an AmeriCorps volunteer at the Seaford Boys and Girls Club, shares how AT has impacted his own volunteer service in Delaware.

AT is fundamental in the lives of many people, and we encourage you to stay aware of the reauthorization of the funding for the AT Act. DATI, the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative, provides training, equipment demonstration and loans, and outreach regarding AT and legislative updates. Information to connect with their organization is provided at the bottom of this page.

We hope that you take from this issue the importance of AT in all of our lives. AT allows people with disabilities the opportunity to live, work, and play in our community, which in turn, creates a much more diverse society for all of us.

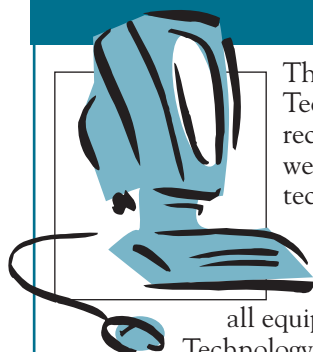
Sincerely,

Tracy L. Mann, Editor

delAware is sponsored by the Center for Disabilities Studies, University of Delaware and the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council. If you would like to contact us, please call (302) 831-6974 or TDD at (302) 831-4689, fax (302) 831-4690, email to Tracy Mann, tlm@udel.edu, or write to *delAware*, University of Delaware, Center for Disabilities Studies, 166 Graham Hall, Newark DE 19716.

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DATI WEBSITE



The Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI) recently launched its new website to improve access to technology and information for Delawareans with disabilities. The new site features an inventory of all equipment at the Assistive Technology Resource Centers and an online classified section for equipment exchange. AT providers and numerous other resources are also listed. DATI provides the latest legislative information and maintains a "Breaking News" database for people to register for email updates. Check out the new and accessible site at www.dati.org.

Assistive Technology: State of Our State



According to the National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research, nearly 16.6 million Americans with disabilities use special equipment, aids, or assistive technology (www.ncddr.org). Assistive technology (AT) is broadly defined as any device that assists persons with disabilities. This technology spans the gamut from low-tech devices, such as canes for those with visual impairment, to high-tech communication devices and computer access tools. Whether used in the workplace, for therapy, recreation, or in daily living, assistive technology enables many people with disabilities to participate fully in life.

With the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988, Congress made funds available to states for AT programs. In 1994, Congress reauthorized the Act and emphasized that programs should work toward eliminating barriers to AT access for their constituents. The most recent authorizing legislation, the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (AT Act), continued the support for state AT programs but reduced the amount of funding available after the program's eighth year of operation. The AT Act is scheduled to expire at the end of the 2004 fiscal year. AT consumers, program administrators, and advocates are working at the state and federal level to support the reauthorization of the Act so that funding for AT programs will continue.

Reduced funding for AT services and supports would have a severe impact on both consumers and agencies nationwide. The Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI), initially funded by the AT legislation in 1991, coordinates various programs that help individuals find and acquire the technology that they need. The program supports Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRC) at locations throughout Delaware that are open to the public and contain examples of all types of AT. Individuals and organizations can borrow equipment before purchasing it. Marvin Williams, AT Specialist at the Kent County ATRC, asserts that the Centers save consumers and other groups considerable money because the program helps to avoid purchasing the wrong equipment. Debbie Whitby-Norman, AT District Coordinator for Colonial School District, says the program is very useful to schools. "DATI has kept us informed with new AT information and we are able to borrow equipment to try out before we go ahead and purchase it." Cuts in AT funding could affect the lending service to both individuals and schools.

Brian J. Hartman, Esq., Project Director for the Disabilities Law Program (DLP), emphasizes that state AT projects "are instrumental in 'leveraging' resources, matching consumers with 'right-fit' devices, and facilitating consumer access to appropriate equipment." The DLP supports the continued funding of DATI and advocates on many levels for people with disabilities. Supports include testifying at the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee hearings on the importance of continued funding for AT and related services. Mr. Hartman's

recent testimony included support for the State of Delaware to match funds for two federal grant programs, the AT Low Interest Loan and the Telework programs, which enable individuals to borrow funds for AT purchases at below-market interest rates with reasonable repayment schedules.

"The withdrawal of funding for the Assistive Technology Act programs would dissolve the infrastructure that the past fifteen years of state and federal partnership has developed," states a letter to Congress from the ITEM Coalition (Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid). This national consumer-led coalition is comprised of over 70 non-profit organizations interested in maintaining and improving access to and coverage of assistive devices, technologies, and related services. DATI Director Beth Mineo Mollica noted, "DATI is the only comprehensive source for AT information, training, equipment demonstration, equipment loan, and advocacy in the state. Termination of federal funding would force us to close the Assistive Technology Resource Centers, cease production of our various information products, and bring a halt to the numerous awareness and training activities we undertake each year."

New Legislation

The Improving Access to Assistive Technology for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (H.R. 4278) passed the United State House of Representatives on June 15, 2004 without objection. This House bill requires state programs funded through the Assistive Technology Act to focus on device loan programs and alternative financing systems to assist individuals with disabilities with purchasing assistive technology. This shift in focus will affect Delaware's DATI program slightly, as they continue their equipment loan and demonstration program and establish their AT Low-Interest Loan program. The House bill would extend the authorization of funding for the Assistive Technology programs through fiscal year 2010.

A Senate version of the bill is expected soon and updates on the proposed legislation will be available through DATI's website.

Delaware Activity

Delawareans with a stake in the continuation of DATI should be ready to respond quickly once draft legislation is introduced in the Senate. DATI has recently launched a new website to connect people around the state with updates about DATI and legislative issues. State projects and their clients and partners from across the country will need to communicate with their respective Senators and Representatives and with the congressional members of drafting committees. Check the DATI website for up-to-date information and legislative action, www.dati.org.

1. For more information on both programs, visit <http://www.dati.org/funding/index.html>.

AT as a Key to Independence

By Linda Bruner

Linda Bruner, a Delaware writer, shares her personal experience in hopes that readers can better understand disabilities issues.



sports. My father assured me that I had different gifts and helped me to explore them. Exploring my gifts has given me a positive outlook on life. One way I explore is through books: they

prepare food in the kitchen. Preparing my own meals is one key to my independence.

In my kitchen, you will find:

- A dycem that holds a bowl in place while I mix food ingredients together. It can also hold my plate as I eat or hold paper in place while I write a note.
- A can opener in a wooden holder designed by my father.
- A trivet on wheels that transfers food from the stove to the refrigerator.
- Specially designed eating utensils help me grip and fit my specific range of motion. A curved-handled knife, for example, helps me to use just one hand to cut my food.
- A book holder that can hold my cookbook while I cook.
- A headset telephone that frees my hands for other activities.

I use other AT throughout my home. The arthritis in my neck is helped by a supporting backrest for sitting in a chair or car. In fact, to write this article, I used a slanted writing board, pens with writing grips, a touch pad mouse, and a clipboard. While these devices are common office supplies, they help me to communicate.

I envision my future as becoming more independent by using many of the devices described in this article. Newly-devel-

“Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, or product system—whether acquired commercially off-the-shelf, modified, or customized—that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.” (20 U.S.Code. §1401 [25], used in the 1988 AT Act)

Every aspect of our daily lives can be influenced by assistive technology: from a pencil grip that assists with writing, to a wheelchair that allows the user to move to a standing position while still being supported. AT, designed to aid people with disabilities, can enhance environments through universal design to create equal accessibility to all members of the community. Examples of such forms of AT are larger computer screens, curb cuts, and thicker pens with soft casings. These “technologies” are not considered assistive by the community because they are integrated into our lives. Larger computer screens ease eye strain, curb cuts help delivery drivers and people pushing baby carriages, and thicker pens with soft casings make writing more comfortable for all.

AT is a supportive element in many people’s lives, and if successful, AT fades into the background as a fully integrated part of the environment. For many individuals, access to AT has allowed success at home, work, school, and play. These two pages include a collection of snapshots of people’s lives—their daily activities, their successes, and even their challenges. When available and functioning well, AT can be an incredible springboard for individuals to achieve their goals. The articles that follow illustrate the potential benefit of AT in many of the settings in which we spend our day.



Before and after being diagnosed at 16 with a movement disorder called Dystonia,¹ I had many challenges. In fourth grade, I had to adjust from being right-handed to being left-handed. I experienced people looking at me because I was different; sometimes, people would make fun of me. As I learned about my disability, I learned to live a life with my limitations to the best of my ability. My parents and I went to several doctors before I was diagnosed with Dystonia. My parents sought as much information about Dystonia as possible and found a support group that helped them better understand what was happening. This is a challenging process, and I encourage families to actively seek information and find others who can share their stories and techniques for adapting to a disability.

As an adolescent, I had lots of mixed emotions about my disability. I felt left out because I couldn’t always catch the ball well or participate in different

can take a person many places. Assistive technology enables me to read books through listening to recorded books. This technology, along with Braille or large print books, is a service of the Library of Congress.

It can be a challenge for people without my disability to fully understand me. Sometimes, people don’t know how to talk to me: they are afraid, talk down to me, or talk to the person I am with who does not have a disability. People with mobility disabilities can tire easily and may ask for help. Another person can provide the assistance I need and can literally be my eyes, ears, or hands.

Assistive technology helps a person with a disability participate in day-to-day activities. Sometimes, there is a way to adapt the activity so that it is accessible. Other times, however, there are tools that make activities possible. Assistive technology comes in many forms and is hard to define in just one sentence. Instead, I’d like to share with you a few of the assistive technology devices I use to

oped technology will make my life easier. My goals are to share AT information with as many people as possible through writing. Finding the right AT device can be of great benefit. An AT specialist or an occupational or physical therapist can assist in the search. Participating in a technology users peer group, advocacy, and network activities are also good ways to learn more about AT.

Assistive technology described in Linda Bruner’s article can be bor-

rowed and tested through the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI). For more information, check the website: <http://dati.org/> or call: 1-800-870-3284. A full list of AT providers in Delaware is also available on the DATI website.

¹ “Dystonia is the term used to describe a condition dominated by involuntary sustained muscle spasms which can be extremely painful. These can affect various parts of the body and cause abnormal movements and postures.” (<http://www.dystonia.org.uk/>)

Making Employment Accessible

Imagine this scenario: you are sitting at your desk in your office. In front of you is a computer that you use from the time you sit down in the morning until the time you leave. The phone sits off to your right, next to message pads and a calendar. Files and books line the shelf that you often check for reference. In your weekly meetings, you scribble notes and monitor time, quietly looking at your watch. Now, imagine this same scenario after you’ve found out that you have a degenerative vision disorder and will be almost completely blind within a few years. What will happen to you, your family, your work, and your relationships?

Losing your vision is a stressful and emotionally draining experience. Whether young or old, much of life is spent depending on the visual information we receive. Finding ways to adapt a home to accommodate for a disability is often perceived as challenging and continuing to work may seem impossible.

Both Sharon Sutlic and Debbie Kenpf thought that they would be unable to work again after they became blind. Originally preparing to work in the field of Animal Science, Ms. Sutlic began to lose her sight and changed her plans. She eventually went to work for the Delaware Association for the Blind peer support program. “Just because you can’t see well doesn’t mean your life has to stop,” she asserts. Ms. Sutlic’s job was to train volunteers who were themselves visually impaired. On a one-to-one basis, volunteers help others to adjust to their own vision loss by connecting them to programs and services throughout Delaware. Ms. Kenpf, originally a client of the peer



support program, became a volunteer a few years ago. Legally blind after experiencing a gradual loss of sight, Ms. Kenpf now works as a staff member with Ms. Sutlic at the Association’s West Street store, managing retail responsibilities that range from buying, selling, and organizing materials to working with customers’ individual needs and concerns.

Debbie Kenpf uses a CCTV to read a document.

These two women easily navigate the West Street store and perform their daily tasks in front of a computer using assistive technology. Ms. Kenpf uses a zoom function on the computer and sharpens the contrast to have white letters on a black screen. The keys on her keyboard have adaptive stickers so that she can see her keys better. She uses a CCTV (closed-circuit television) to read printed materials and sometimes opts for the audio program that reads material on the computer screen. When talking about the AT she uses, Ms. Kenpf shared, “There’s not one right way of doing anything. You just have to find out what works best for you.”

Ms. Sutlic carries a Braille note-taker for meetings, wears a Braille watch and often uses the audio program on her computer to read the screen to her. For print materials, she also uses a scanner with a software program that enables the words to be read to her. Ms. Sutlic uses a standard telephone for herself at work, but telephones sold at the store have large numbers and textures on the buttons for easier recognition.

Using many types of assistive technology themselves, Ms. Sutlic and Ms. Kempf help customers with visual impairments select equipment and other adaptive products. The store sells a wide range of products at cost and works closely with the peer support program to support and assist visually impaired people of all ages. Ms. Sutlic demonstrates many of the items sold at the store including extra-long oven mitts for cooking, Braille playing cards, writing guides and popular movies with full narration. All assistive technology items found in the store share the purpose of creating an adaptive environment.

While having a disability may mean things will be different at work, it does not mean that a person has to give up his or her job or livelihood. In most cases, reasonable adaptations can be made, especially with the help of assistive technology. Ms. Sutlic emphasizes that persons with a disability must be assertive and be their own advocate. She confidently stresses that while visual impairment can be inconvenient, it is not life threatening. “I have a life to live, and I’m going to live it!”



Sharon Sutlic shows the adaptive equipment available at the West Street store.

Accessible Therapy and Recreation



On a ranch just outside of Odessa, Delaware, people of all ages with a wide range of disabilities are experiencing one of the oldest forms of “assistive technology.” For over a year, *The Center at C-Line Stables* has operated as a nonprofit, therapeutic horsebackriding program with lessons that are both a recreational activity and a therapeutic plan.

Therapeutic Riding, technically known as Hippotherapy (literally, “treatment with the help of the horse”), dates back to the ancient Greeks. C-Line stables stated that their research has revealed that individuals who participate in therapeutic riding can experience physical, emotional, and mental rewards. “Because horseback riding gently and rhythmically moves the rider’s body in a manner similar to a human gait, riders with physical disabilities often show improvement in flexibility, balance, and muscle strength. For individuals with mental or emotional disabilities, their unique relationship with the horse can lead to increased confidence, patience, and self-esteem” (*The Center at C-Line Stables*). One parent spoke of her daughter’s experience, “Her friends have activities, but no one else rides horses. It’s her own thing, something she’s really getting good at and the change I’ve seen in her self-esteem is amazing!”

The staff at *The Center* focuses on the individual’s needs by specifically tailoring riding lessons for each rider. Modified equipment, instruction, staffing, and horses not typically found at standard riding facilities assist in creating an adaptive program for persons with disabilities. Now serving 52 riders, the therapeutic program



works with riders who range in age from 18 months to 80 years old who have various learning disabilities, speech delays, developmental, and/or physical disabilities. *The Center* is currently being reviewed for certification by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, Inc. (NARHA). Local support for the program has been strong and funding has come from New Castle County, The DFRC

Foundation, and other community sources.

The entire experience for riders offers educational and therapeutic aspects at the same time. Instruction is individualized, and modifications for each rider are made with assistive devices such as bareback padding, sheepskin covers, educational/mobility props, bells and buzzers, safety belts or harnesses, color coded reins, mounting equipment, ramps, lifts, and enlarged mounting blocks. For individuals with learning delays, educational elements are also incorporated into the session using colors, shapes, letters, and numbers.

One of the most distinctive modifications *The Center* has made for riders of varying abilities is the recent construction of the largest indoor, fully accessible riding arena in Delaware. Along with accessible horse mounts, the arena is specially insulated for climate control and added comfort for riders. Inside the arena, *The Center’s* office will include a glass-enclosed therapy room that allows parents to watch their children and will also provide space for lessons and tutoring. On-site lessons and tutoring will integrate the activities of the riding arena with a classroom setting. Lessons for riders with disabilities will take place at the same time as other riders, creating a fully integrated experience.

Many of the young riders at C-Line Stables volunteer for *The Center’s* therapeutic program, and this volunteer opportunity allows for an inclusive experience for those with and without disabilities. “As an ex-school teacher, you want your children to grow up and see and experience and be accepted. Here, we accept and integrate everyone,” said Carlotta Cline, owner of C-Line Stables. Parents of children in both programs interact during lessons and report that the riding experience is very special for their children. Parents of children at *The Center* form an informal network for each other by sharing contacts and resources related to AT or other disabilities issues. Executive Director Pam Liverman sums up what is so significant about riding, “Horses are the great equalizer—everyone is a beginner and everyone starts off the same.”

For more information, visit *The Center’s* website at www.clinestables.com. For more info on Therapeutic Riding, visit the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, Inc. (NARHA) at www.narha.org or the American Hippotherapy Association at www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org.



Educational Goals and AT



Children laugh and chatter as they leave school at the end of the day. Some stop by the office and say goodbye to the Ms. Janice, the secretary.

A parent talks with a teacher about her child’s progress. The principal smiles and moves about the school, greeting students and teachers. John G. Leach School is a place where students are encouraged to meet their goals and teachers are inspired to create opportunities that allow all children to imagine the possibilities of learning.

Students at Leach School use a variety of assistive technology devices to support their communication, computer access, mobility, and daily living needs. Communication devices can range from a single message switch with a texture or symbol to a complex system of vocabulary pages that are linked together; operating much like a website browser. Students can use spoon handles for easier eating or a switch-activated pourer for a cooking activity.

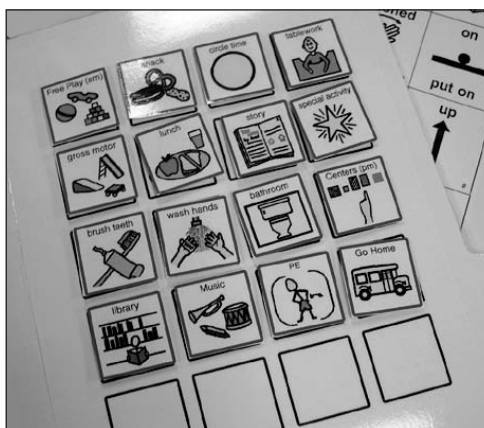
Students also use a variety of specialized equipment to help participate in school life. Computers at Leach School look very different from those at other schools. A screen can be placed over the monitor display so that a student can touch the screen instead of using a mouse. Keyboards can be customized for a one-handed user or with large buttons that are programmed with commands to read a book or draw a picture. Students may walk in the hallway using adapted standers with wheels that can be propelled with their arms. Principal Jack Jadach explains, “AT is critical for students to move through all aspects of the program at Leach School.”

In recognition of the importance of AT in a student’s

program and in response to a federal mandate for consideration of AT for each student, the Colonial School District has established a district-wide program to support AT services and devices. Barbara Brooks and Debbie Whitby-Norman serve as AT Coordinators for the District. Once the need for AT has been determined by a child’s team, the coordinator’s support is available for any student in the district. Ms. Brooks and Ms. Whitby-Norman work with teams and students to determine the optimal set of AT tools to meet a student’s unique needs. This assessment often includes identifying the student’s needs, the environment in need of support, the tasks that need to be performed, and the right tools to access the curriculum. A trial period with a variety of tools may be necessary in order to pinpoint the best match for the student.

The need for AT is documented on an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP process brings parents, teachers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and psychologists together to define the student’s program. They collaborate to identify necessary supports, services, and accommodations, including AT, needed to meet the student’s learning objectives. Because an IEP is a legal document, its plan must be followed.

“Strong supports are needed for students using assis-



sive technology—it requires a combination of therapy, teacher attention, training, maintenance, and repair,” Ms. Whitby-Norman explains. Along with assuring that students have necessary AT, Ms. Brooks and Ms. Whitby-Norman provide training for teachers and other professionals at the schools. They also research the latest technologies and programs, find grants, and strive to apply best practices to the schools in the Colonial School District. Because it is purchased through the district and not by an individual school, equipment can follow the students regardless of their school placement. A central equipment resource center also provides a variety of tools for trials and replacements in case of equipment breakage.

In addition to these district resources, the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI) offers a lending program for the benefit of students throughout Delaware. Teachers help students borrow equipment, try it out, and see if it is what they will need as they attend school. With the support of the Colonial School District’s AT program, students at Leach School and throughout the district are able to access the curriculum and achieve scholastic success with the support of tools that meet their specific needs. As students with and without disabilities work through lesson plans that incorporate AT, they benefit from an inclusive classroom where activities and experiences are shared by all students.

Through the use of AT, students achieve success. Families report positive results are a real part of the process at Leach School. Leach School unites families, teachers, and professionals to find the appropriate AT to help students attain their educational goals. Principal Jadach reports, “The AT program is a tremendous asset to Leach School and the district!”

Community Inclusion Through Service

Emanuel Jenkins, known as Mann, was diagnosed at an early age with Cerebral Palsy. He has limited mobility and uses a high-tech wheelchair for most activities. In early adolescence, Mann wanted something to do to get out of his house and interact with his peers. He and his mother discovered the Boys and Girls Club in Seaford, and from the start, he was hooked. Mann has now been volunteering at the club in Seaford since he was 11 years old. About volunteering, Mann says, "We all know something someone else doesn't know—and we can take the time to show what we know to others who will then be able to teach someone else. Through volunteering, everyone can come together as one."

Mann's focus on community and personal action, combined with humor and patience, has led him to the AmeriCorps program in the Boys and Girls Clubs in southern Delaware. During this interview for *delAware*, several students shyly approached Mann, not wanting to interrupt the interview but wanting his supportive comments on homework or a smile and a goodbye. At the Boys and Girls Club, he can be found doing anything from homework help, to creating brochures, to running a leadership group with the children called "Ticket to the Future."

The Ticket to the Future program was developed by Mann to help students learn to set goals for the future. He motivates students and demonstrates that they can plan for challenges and obstacles by setting goals and working toward them. The *Dragon Naturally Speaking* computer program

supports his work with the children. Mann uses the program to help him access files and create documents. With a headset, he is able to speak commands that the computer recognizes and responds to. The children have become acquainted with the ins-and-outs of his work, and as Mann puts it, "They know that when Mr. Mann has the microphone on, cut the noise off; bring the volume down." If there is too much noise in the room, the *Dragon Naturally Speaking* program does not work. The tools that Mann uses to provide the important goal-setting program for the children at the Boys and Girls Club also help him keep the children focused. During the Ticket to the Future program, children crowd around Mann and talk about what is happening in their lives and the lives of those they care about.

"When I first got here, the kids would ask me, 'what button is this?' or 'why are you in a wheelchair?' They asked if I had been in an accident. I was able to tell them that sometimes people get a disability through problems at birth and was able to show them everything I could about my wheelchair. Now the kids know more, and they can share it with their friends. I deserve the same respect as someone standing, and the kids know that," Mann explained. Not only does his use of AT enable him to work with Boys and Girls Club staff members so that, as a team, they can create a supportive educational environment for the children, but also his sharing his personal experience of living with a disability through AT use educates the

children. AmeriCorps director for the Boys and Girls Club, Kathy MacKaye says, "Emanuel has a real dynamic personality—he's really fun. His happiness resonates and makes people want to be a part of what he's doing and learn with him."

Mann recommends volunteering to other individuals. He notes that, "If you volunteer, you've got to be ready to work, and you need to be creative. You need to have the right match." Assistive technology can help people in their volunteer positions, but an individual's personal drive and dedication creates a truly successful position. Ms. MacKaye also emphasizes, "The program has to be ready to accommodate; it takes work on the part of the program to make things accessible and work toward availability of [assistive technology]." She explains that the Boys and Girls Club is still learning about accessibility and assistive technology issues, and new situations bring new opportunities for learning.

Ms. MacKaye and Mann are hoping to work together to create a plan for inclusion that will open the Clubs up to more students with disabilities. Mann plans to extend his AmeriCorps time by serving as a disabilities coordinator to increase accessibility and broaden the participation of children with disabilities in the Clubs.

The Delaware Service Inclusion Project (DSIP), through the Center for Disabilities Studies, works with AmeriCorps programs like the one described above. The DSIP encourages individuals with disabilities to apply to



Mann works with students at the after-school program.

AmeriCorps. The DSIP also works with AmeriCorps programs across the state helping the programs understand and address accessibility issues. In November 2003, the DSIP hosted the Delaware Service Inclusion Project Conference. The largest conference of its kind in the country attracted over 100 individuals to its two-day event. People attended from Delaware, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland,

Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky to learn about including people with disabilities as volunteers and members in National Service programs. Mann, who presented at the Delaware Inclusion Conference and the Delaware People First Conference in April 2003, is a strong advocate for volunteering. "My job lets me help the kids—we find connections, and there is a real joy in knowing you're helping someone!"

DELAWARE SERVICE INCLUSION PROJECT: EVERYONE CAN SERVE!

The Delaware Service Inclusion Project (DSIP) provides training and technical assistance for Delaware's National Service programs. DSIP supports Delaware's AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Learn and Serve, AC*VISTA, and Public Allies programs to include more people with disabilities as members and volunteers. A joint effort of the Center for Disabilities Studies and the Delaware Community Service Commission, DSIP is partially funded by the National Service Inclusion Project.

If you have an interest in:

- participating in community service through AmeriCorps or similar programs,
- forming a partnership with your organization and a Delaware National Service Program, or
- scheduling speakers or training programs on volunteer service and working with people with disabilities,

Contact: DSIP, Judy A. Greene, Center for Disabilities Studies, 302.831.2028, jgreene@udel.edu.