

SHARE Notes

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Custom Cell Phone Adapter Brings Peace of Mind to Massachusetts Teen and His Family

Like most moms, Linda Freeman wanted a way to keep in touch with her 16-year-old son when life's whirlwind of work, school and everyday activities kept them both going in opposite directions. After all, what parent wouldn't want the reassurance and security that a cell phone can provide?

But the compact size and small buttons of a standard cell phone were major obstacles to an otherwise perfect solution. Because Linda's son Alexander has cerebral palsy, he lacks the muscle control in his arms and hands to manipulate the tiny buttons, making it nearly impossible to use a cell phone independently.

"If you have mobility issues, cell phones are just out of your league," says Linda.

A close call convinced Linda that they both needed the peace of mind a cell phone could offer. She was out of town attending a funeral, and



Alexander places a phone call using the custom cell phone adapter he received in February.

Alexander had planned to let himself in after school. But when Linda called home to check on him, no one answered. She called and asked a neighbor to look in on him to be sure he was okay, but Alexander wasn't home. Still more than an hour away,

Linda grew increasingly worried until she learned that Alexander's bus had broken down, delaying his safe arrival. After that, Linda began searching for adapters that would allow Alexander to use a cell phone on his own.

That search led her to SHARE and the UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering, where rehabilitation engineer Mark Whittaker designed a custom adapter for Alexander's cell phone. The cell phone slides into the adaptive unit and interfaces with scanning software that Alexander can control by pressing a head switch.

Continued on page 2

UMD Center for Rehab Engineering Still Going Strong Despite Funding Cuts

Even in the face of significant funding cuts, the UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering kept pace with the many demands for service it received during Fiscal Year 2003.

According to the SHARE Foundation 2003 Annual Report, the Center assisted 255 people with disabilities last year; 136 were new clients. Throughout 2003, Center staff completed 594 service transactions, installing 127 new systems.

In comparison, the Center assisted 283 individuals with disabilities during FY 2002; 161 were new clients. Staff completed 709 service transactions in 2002, installing 130 new systems.

"Although our service output is somewhat less than last year, we're still doing a lot with the resources we have," says Center director Les Cory. "We've still been able to touch a lot of lives, and that's something we can all be very proud of." ■

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Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation Awards Quality of Life Grant to SHARE

The Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation (CRPF) recently awarded a \$7,500 Quality of Life Grant to the SHARE Foundation to support the ongoing work of the UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering. Since 1999, the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation has funded more than \$4.2 million in Quality of Life grants to organizations that work to increase opportunities, improve accessibility and enhance the everyday quality of life for those living with disabilities, especially paralysis.

"We are thrilled to receive the Quality of Life grant from the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation," says Les Cory, SHARE founder and president. "The funds will allow us to design and adapt high-technology equipment tailored specifically to meet the unique needs of the people who seek our help."

SHARE was among 103 organizations nationwide to receive a total of

\$713,897 as part of the CRPF Quality of Life Program's second funding cycle for 2003. Originally conceived by Dana Reeve, CRPF director and chairperson of the Quality of Life Committee, CRPF's Quality of Life grants are awarded twice yearly and are intended to help in such categories as sports, arts, education, outdoor recreation, advocacy, employment and assistive technology.

"The Quality of Life grants are designed to substantially improve the lives of people who otherwise could not enjoy the full range of activities that most people take for granted," says Dana Reeve.

For more information about the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation Quality of Life Program, contact the Quality of Life Department at (973) 467-8270 ext. 201 or visit www.ChristopherReeve.org for a complete list of grant recipients. ■

Save the Date

The 21st Annual Ben Boyle Golf Classic

Sunday, July 25

Richmond Country Club
Hope Valley, RI

Sponsored by the
Pawtuxet Valley Rotary Club
and the Sunday Morning Golfers

For more information,
please call Ron Kostyla at
401-821-6203 or 401-821-7527



The Tenth Annual Auto Show & Fun Day

Sunday, August 15

UMass Dartmouth Campus



SHARE Fun Walk

Sunday, October 17

UMass Dartmouth Campus

For more information about
these events, please call
SHARE at 508-999-8482

SHARE, Yankee Magazine Team Up to Help Individuals With Disabilities

For just \$20, you can order a year's subscription to *Yankee Magazine* and help SHARE provide adaptive computer equipment to children and adults with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, Lou Gehrig's disease, spinal cord injuries and more.

How? For each subscription sent to *Yankee* through the Yankee Community Partners Program, *Yankee* will send \$8 to SHARE. Each month, subscribers will love reading feature articles about remarkable people and places in New England. They will view breathtaking photos of impressive sights and historical places, discover tasty recipes and browse sections on real estate, travel, food and a multitude of other fun and interesting topics.

And while they explore the magazine's inviting pages each month, SHARE, the fundraising arm of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering, reaps the benefits. You can even renew a subscription through this offer!

To help SHARE in this project, call (508) 999-8482 to obtain your special Community Partners subscription card. Or, visit the Yankee Community Partners web page and order your magazine designating SHARE as the charity recipient. The online address is www.yankeemagazine.com/ymcp/subscribe.php.

Custom Cell Phone Adapter *Continued from page 1*

The scanner continuously scrolls down a list of menu options from which Alexander can choose, allowing him to turn the phone on and off, select from a directory of phone numbers, and dial and end a call by hitting the switch when the desired option is highlighted. Powered by Alexander's wheelchair battery, the adapter mounts onto the wheelchair arm, but both the device and mounting bracket can be easily removed when the cell phone isn't needed.

"Alexander's so thrilled to have something that gives him that access," says Linda of the adapter. "It's going to be incredibly valuable when he needs to use it." ■

Computer Technologist Joins Center for Rehab Engineering Staff

The UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering recently welcomed Christine Pavao to its staff as a computer technologist.



Christine's duties for the Center include delivering and setting up computer equipment in clients'

homes. She is also responsible for training clients in Internet use and office software and developing training plans to enhance clients' computer skills.

"Chris spends much of her time out in the community, visiting clients to assure that they have the correct equipment for their needs and abilities and that it is working properly," says Les Cory, Center director. "Having Chris on staff has allowed the Center to provide much-needed outreach services to our clients."

Christine received her associate's degree in computer systems management from Johnson and Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island. She has more than 15 years of related job experience.

In addition to her work at the Center for Rehab Engineering, Christine currently provides hardware and software technical support and web maintenance for Tin Can Sailors in Somerset, Mass., and Fillion Associates in East Providence, Rhode Island.

We're proud to have you on our team, Chris! ■

You can make miracles happen.

Like most of us, you may write out a check to a favorite cause and still wonder...Where does the money go? Will my gift really make a difference?

Rest assured, your gifts to SHARE make miracles happen in the lives of children and adults living with disabilities. Here are just some of the ways your donation today can truly change a life:

\$25 will provide a wireless call system for a nonverbal individual who is unable to call out for assistance.

\$50 will provide a wireless keyboard and mouse for a student using a wheelchair to access her computer.

\$70 will provide a switch for a child using a scanning on-screen software package to enable him to "write" his school assignments.

\$150 will provide a sound-activated switch for a person with Parkinson's disease to control a scanning telephone with a prerecorded emergency message.

\$200 will provide a scanning television controller to enable a person who cannot use her hands to control her TV set by pressing her head against a pillow switch in her hospital bed.

\$250 will provide Internet access for a year for a person in a long-term care facility so that she may "visit" with her family via e-mail, view digital photographs of her newborn godson, and see pictures of her homeland.

\$300 will provide a flat screen monitor for a bedridden individual that, when placed on an over-the-bed table, will allow him to read current news and books online.

\$400 will provide a person with multiple sclerosis with a device that will allow him to start his computer independently from his wheelchair without touching it.

\$500 will provide a Piezoelectric switch that will enable an individual with ALS to continue communicating his medical and safety needs to his caregivers by using only his eyebrows.

As always, we at SHARE and the UMD Center for Rehabilitation Engineering salute your ongoing support and generosity, which make this vital work possible. Your commitment and concern continue to empower and enrich the lives of so many others. Thank you!

THANK YOU

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the many supporters who have donated to SHARE over the past few months. Your generous gifts are making it possible for us to provide the opportunity for independent communication to more children and adults with disabilities.

The following donations were received from September 23, 2003 through March 22, 2004.

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