



# CTTAP News

Fall, 2007

Volume 1, Issue 2

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*Assistive Technology (AT) is any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life, including at school, at work, at home and in the community.*

## The CT Tech Act Project: Introduction

*By Arlene Lugo, Assistive Technology Coordinator*

Welcome back to CTTAP News!

Over the past few months we have been very busy developing new programs and expanding current programs. In this edition of CTTAP News you can read about the new long-term loans of Electronic Aids to Daily Living (formerly known as ECUs or Environmental Control Units) for Medicaid Waiver consumers and short term loans of computer equipment and AT software for school systems. You'll also find updates on current CTTAP programs such as the AT Loan Program, the AT Exchange and the Tech Mentor Program.

Through these programs, our goal is to help increase access to and acquisition of Assistive Technology devices and services.

And I'm very happy to introduce our new AT Loan Program Manager, Therese Nadeau! ☺

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## The AT Exchange in New England

[www.getATstuff.com](http://www.getATstuff.com)

The AT Exchange has been open since February 2007 and since then we have



been able to get 74 AT devices posted on this online classifieds system that spans the New England region. The purpose of [www.getATstuff.com](http://www.getATstuff.com) [pronounced: get A.T. stuff] is to help get unused AT devices into the hands of people who need it. Please visit the AT Exchange if you have AT devices you no longer need or if you are looking for one.

*You don't have to have a computer to use the site – just give us a call and we can help you find AT devices that*

*The Tech Mentor Program is a peer to peer mentor program where individuals with disabilities who have personal experience using AT in their own lives can help guide and support other individuals with disabilities who need Assistive Technology.*

*If you think you would benefit from the support and guidance of a Tech Mentor or think you would make a good Tech Mentor, call CTTAP.*

are listed or post an AT devices for you.

If you would like a paper copy of the AT Exchange listings mailed to you, please contact us.

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### Comments from a Tech Mentor

*By Leonore Zacchio, Tech Mentor*



My name is Leonore and I have been a Tech Mentor with the Connecticut Tech Act Project for almost a year. Working through the project has given me great work experience, as well as life experience. I have a disability, and given the training and opportunities to facilitate others with disabilities to find Assistive Technology (AT) that makes everyday tasks and goals a little easier, has proved to be satisfying to Mentees, as well as useful within my own life.

One of my Mentees is an elderly woman with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). She uses a wheelchair and resides in a nursing home. She became a Mentee in the Tech Mentor Program because she wanted to write her life story for her children. The MS has impaired her ability to write using her hand, so she needed a computer. She had no funds or transportation to go out to buy herself a computer, so as her Mentor, it was my responsibility to explore the resources available to help find a free computer or to find an agency who would provide funding for the computer. After searching both options, I was able to find a laptop computer for her, through an agency that loans out equipment to people with disabilities for as long as needed and for free.

Once my Mentee received her computer, I became responsible to follow up with her on her new Assistive Technology device. Mentees may not be very familiar with the devices they receive and may need light training to become comfortable and acclimated to it. I meet with the Mentee on a regular basis to teach her the basics – how to open a word document to type her story, how to save what she has just typed, how to do spell check and so on. I have her practice typing in-between my visits with her and I leave her with directions on what I've taught her so that if she forgets she can refer to the directions and not become discouraged.

*Please send comments, suggestions or articles to:*

*CT Tech Act Project  
25 Sigourney St,  
11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hartford, CT 06016*

*OR*

*Click on the  
"Contact Us"  
link on our website:  
[www.CTtechact.com](http://www.CTtechact.com)*

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860-424-4881

860-424-4839 TTY

While I visit with her, I also note other AT devices she may need. For example, when she first received the computer I noticed she had a difficult time using the mouse touch pad that is standard on laptop computers. I was able to get her a standard mouse that she can use with much greater ease.

The process of being a Tech Mentor has helped me to grow and has taught me how to think about AT that I can use in my own life, as well as with other Mentees.

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## AT Loan Program Update

### *Making Progress!*

*By Therese Nadeau, AT Loan Program Manager*



I wanted to introduce myself. I am Therese Nadeau, and I am the new AT Loan Program Manager. I have been involved in working with people with disabilities and families for a number of years in a variety of positions, including assisting people to look financially at their housing and Assistive Technology needs. I also know first hand the importance of Assistive Technology in my own life.

I am very excited to be a part of the Connecticut Tech Act Project Team! We are making progress in redesigning an AT Loan Program that will provide people with disabilities and their families the opportunity to obtain a loan to purchase various forms of Assistive Technology. This in turn will increase independence and improve the lives of people with disabilities through the use of Assistive Technology. Keep checking our website for updates to the loan program!

In the meantime, please feel free to contact me to discuss alternative loan programs to meet your current Assistive Technology needs and to help plan for future needs. If you have a current loan with the AT Loan Program, please feel free to contact me too. I look forward to talking with you!

I can be reached by email at [therese.nadeau@ct.gov](mailto:therese.nadeau@ct.gov) or by phone at (860) 424-5619.

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## New Partners & Programs

The **Corporation for Independent Living** and the CTTAP are partnering to provide long term loans of Electronic Aids to Daily Living (EADL), AT devices that can control appliances, TVs, the climate of your home, telephone, open the front door and more. Individuals who receive services through any one of the Connecticut Medicaid Waivers may request to participate in this program. UCONN's Center on Aging will be doing research on the impact of the EADL on an individual's quality of life and independence in hopes to make positive systems change. This program is now taking applications – please contact CTTAP or CIL at 860-563-6011.

The **Center of Adaptive Technology at SCSU** and CTTAP are partnering to create a short-term loan program of computer equipment, AT software and computer access devices to school systems through out the state. Schools will be able to borrow the equipment for their students for up to 6 weeks to use while a student's equipment has been ordered and is waiting to come in or while a student's equipment is out for repair or for the purpose of evaluating a student. School personnel can contact CTTAP or call the Center of Adaptive Technology directly at 203-392-5799.

The **NEAT Marketplace** in partnership with CTTAP has opened a satellite Equipment Recycling & Device Demonstration Center at the **Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County** (DRCFC) in Stratford. This Center is open for business and will be hosting a series of FREE Demo Days. Contact NEAT Toll Free at 866-526-4492 or DRCFC at 203-378-6977 for details or visit [www.CTtechact.com/calendar](http://www.CTtechact.com/calendar) for dates and details of each Demo Day.

**Vision Dynamics** has also become an official Demonstration Center for CTTAP. Vision Dynamics offers AT devices and software primarily for individuals who are Blind or Visually Impaired. You can visit their storefront in Cheshire or call for an appointment at 203-271-1944.

*Achievement through Technology*

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- Call 860-424-4881