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Web Site: http://www.uaaact.org

UAAACT NEWS

Utah Augmentative, Alternative, Assistive Communication and Technology Teams

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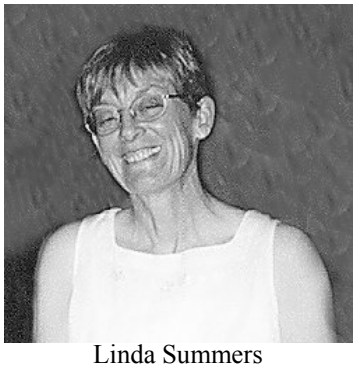
Highlights of our February Conference



Linda Summers

Jim West with award.

Craig Boogaard with award.

It was great to meet together and share ideas at our February UAAACT Conference. Emily Rubin, our keynote speaker, did a terrific job of setting the tone of the conference. Her SCERTS information provided more tools for our toolbox. Susan Johnston kept it going with her information on selecting and maintaining device use.

Thanks to all who led break out sessions.

The Ken Reavis award winners were Linda Summers and Jim West. They were recognized for outstanding service that has enhanced communication skills of students with disabilities. This award was established to recognize the leadership and pioneering efforts of Ken Reavis.

This year we initiated a new award– the Craig Boogaard Professional Service Award. Craig received the first one. The award is for outstanding service in helping individuals with disabilities access technology, increase their independence and their own quality of life.

Team Reports & Competencies Due June 10th

UAAACT Team reports are due June 10th. UAAACT members should list the students served this school year on the "UAAACT Team Member Report of Students Served" form and the number of UAAACT hours on the "UAAACT Team Member Report of Hours" form. These completed forms should then be sent to your UAAACT team leader who will compile the information from all team members on the "UAAACT Team Summary Report" form. The forms are in your UAAACT manual and online at www.uaaact.org

Team leaders must have their UAAACT Team Summary Report to Lesa Stone by June 10th in order to have this information considered in calculating your 2005-06 team equipment budget. Team leaders should mail the UAAACT Team Summary Report to:

Lesa Stone
Hartvigsen School
350 East 3605 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84115

"Documentation of UAAACT Competencies" levels are also due on June 10th. These forms will determine your team training budget for next year. If you have a team member who is eligible to move up a competency level, please complete the form and mail or fax it to:

Craig Boogaard
The Computer Center for Citizens With Disabilities
1595 West 500 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84104
Fax: 801-887-9382

Instructional Materials to be Accessible

Since some students have vision, motor, and other impairments and usually the primary instructional materials are textbooks, the reauthorization of IDEA will include requirements that publishers make the information available in electronic form. This will make it easier to convert instructional materials, including textbooks, to Braille, text to speech, and into other forms that are more accessible. In July 2004, the U.S. Department of Education authorized the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS). In July 2005, the reauthorization of IDEA will take effect. Many students and teachers will find it easier to adapt materials. You can read the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard Report at www.cast.org/ncac/.

New UAAACT Equipment

The UAAACT Leadership Council has asked that there be a regular section in the Newsletter to help keep team members aware of new equipment that has been placed in the Central Inventory. The following is a list of items that has been placed in the Central Inventory since the start of the school year:
All About…Materials,
All About… Numbers Level 1 and 2,
All About…Ourselves,
All About…Shape and Space,
All About…Weather and Seasons,
The Attender Personal FM System,
5 New Copies of Boardmaker with SDP for Windows,
Button Click Switch,
Dragon NaturallySpeaking Version 8,
Headmouse Extreme,
5 Copies of IntelliKeys Overlay Maker 3,
The Just Like Series,
2 Keytek Magic Touch Screens,
Link Plus,
Mighty Mo,
2 New Mini Mo Communication Devices,
3 Copies of the New Frog and Fly,
Super Talker Progressive Communicator,
7 Copies of Stages Software for Special Needs (1 full version and 6 copies of the book),
Test Talker Software,
4 Variable Pressure Switches (2 large 2 medium sized),
Voice Cue for Auditory Cueing/Verbal Prompting,
Write OutLoud To Go for DANA

Reminder of New Equipment Policy

The following is an excerpt from the UAAACT Policy Manual: "Items in the UAAACT central inventory are purchased for assessment purposes. UAAACT members who borrow equipment from the UAAACT central inventory will have a 30 day check out period. If the equipment is not requested by another UAAACT member during the 30 day check out period, the person who borrowed the equipment may continue to use the equipment for up to 90 days. After 90 days, the equipment must be returned to The Computer Center. If the equipment has been requested by another UAAACT member after 30 days, it should be returned to The Computer Center as soon as possible."

Please Remember to Get any equipment you have back to the Computer Center for the Summer

ATA's Guide to Low Cost/ No Cost Online Tools for People with Disabilities

The Alliance for Technology Access' (ATA) newest tool for finding technology is now available. It's called "Guide to Low Cost/No Cost Online Tools for People with Disabilities." You can download it free from ATA's website at http://www.ataccess.org/resources/lowcostnocost.html.

This document was created through a collaboration at ATA, CTCNet and the Illinois chapter of CTCNet led by Dave Grass, Director of the ATA Center in Rockford, Illinois. Did you know that there are other resources that can be downloaded free from ATA's website? Here are just two. "We Can Play" has many ideas for families with kids with disabilities. It can be accessed at www.ataccess.org/resources/fpic/default.html. "Starting Points" is a document that has checklists for community organizations to evaluate their accessibility. www.ataccess.org/resources/acaw/startingpoints.html.

By exploring ATA's website (http://www.ATAccess.org), you can find other helpful information.

Accessible Games for Everyone

Have you ever tried to adapt popular games for students with disabilities? If you have, you will be glad to know that the game industry is beginning to correct the problem. You will know that many of the games that are available in CD format and on PlayStation are currently not accessible. The International Game Developers Association has an Accessibility Special Interest Group whose main purpose is to "collaborate with the rest of the game development community to develop methods of making games universally accessible to all." You can read about them and add your comments at their On-Line Forum at http://www.igda.org/articles/tsestin_access.php. Thomas Westin has an article on this site where he states," More than 40 years has passed since the first computer game was developed.... Yet you still have the same implied prerequisites to play a game, i.e. full sight, hearing cognitive, motoric, etc. functions. In short, the game industry excludes many (or most) disabled, potential gamers. Compared with the web industry (only about 10 years old), the game industry has done very little (if anything) in the accessibility area...After winning the 'Innovation in Audio Award 'at the 2003 Independent Games Festival with Terraformers, we feel confident that virtually any games can be made accessible."

Because you are reading the newsletter, your team may be eligible to receive a Boardmaker Educational Bundle. Call Lynn Marcoux by Friday, May 20th if you would like to receiver this software. You can reach Lynn at 801-887-9380.

While we are waiting for the game industry to catch up, there are many fun and educational games out there that you can play with switches and other assistive hardware and software. The HeadMouse by *Origin Instruments* enables a person to move the arrow on the computer monitor by one's head movement. Crosscanner by *R.J. Cooper* enables a user to select items on the screen through scanning and selecting by using a single switch.

A person with quadriplegia can use the AT hardware to operate the computer, explore the Internet and play games. An on-screen keyboard can replace the regular key board. Another program, called Dragger, helps with the clicking and dragging functions of the mouse. An on-screen selection box allows the user to operate those functions.

Here is a list of games that anybody can play with the help of AT software and hardware. Bookworm, Mancala, and Risk III are a few of the software programs that are also available on the Internet sites (such as Gamehouse.com and Shockware.com.)

We hope that the game industry will work toward making more games accessible in the future.

(Taken from Computer Access Center)

Free upgrade for Co:Writer, DraftBuilder, and Start-To-Finish Books

There is a free download to upgrade Co:Writer SE, Co:Writer 4000, and Co:Writer Smart Applet on the AlphaSmart available at donjohnston.com. Topic Dictionaries are available which save keystrokes and reduce fatigue. Also available are free downloads for DraftBuilder and Start to Finish Book Quizzes that work with TestTalker, which creates electronic versions of teacher's tests. The teacher can scan tests or create tests with this software. The computer will read the exact test, highlighting each word and then the student can choose the answer independently.

Benefits of Assistive Technology for Infants and Young Children

Assistive devices and services can be of great value in providing infants and young children with disabilities opportunities to learn and interact with their environment in ways that they might not otherwise be able to. For example, assistive technology can help a child to: play successfully with toys and other children, communicate his or her needs, make choices, and move independently. According to IDEA, all children who are eligible to receive special education or early intervention services are also eligible to receive assistive technology at no cost to the family, if it is included as part of their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (ISFP). Assistive technology evaluation, selection, training and maintenance should be carried out by qualified professionals, with active participation on the part of the family. IDEA requires that all special education services be family centered and directly related to the family's priorities and concerns for their child. According to Judge (2000), AT abandonment (rejection, non-use of the device) is often due to the fact that family input played only a small role in the AT evaluation and selection process.

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In time for summer, there are some inexpensive computer games that can be downloaded for free at www.levelgames.net.

Other sites where you can access inexpensive computer games are:

www.arcess.com/access.htm

www.brillsoft.com

www.deafgamers.com

Www.oneswitch.org.uk

www.whitestick.co.uk

www.e-bility.com