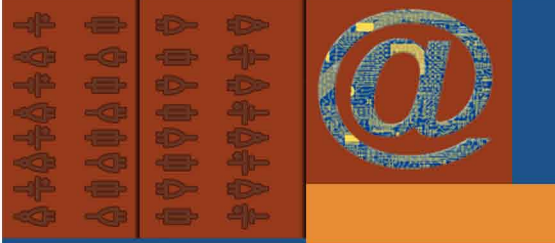
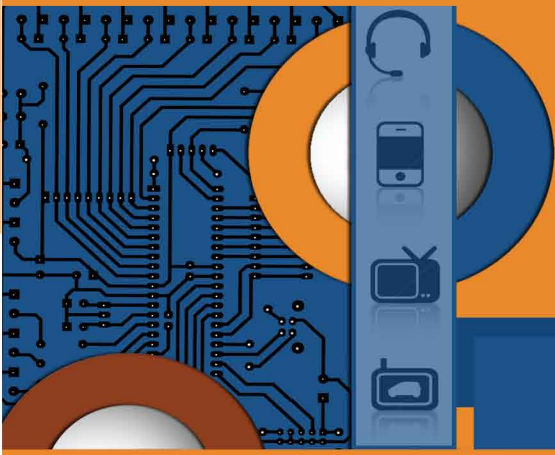




OCTOBER
DDS ASSISTIVE
TECHNOLOGY
NEWSLETTER



FALL
2019
SECOND
EDITION

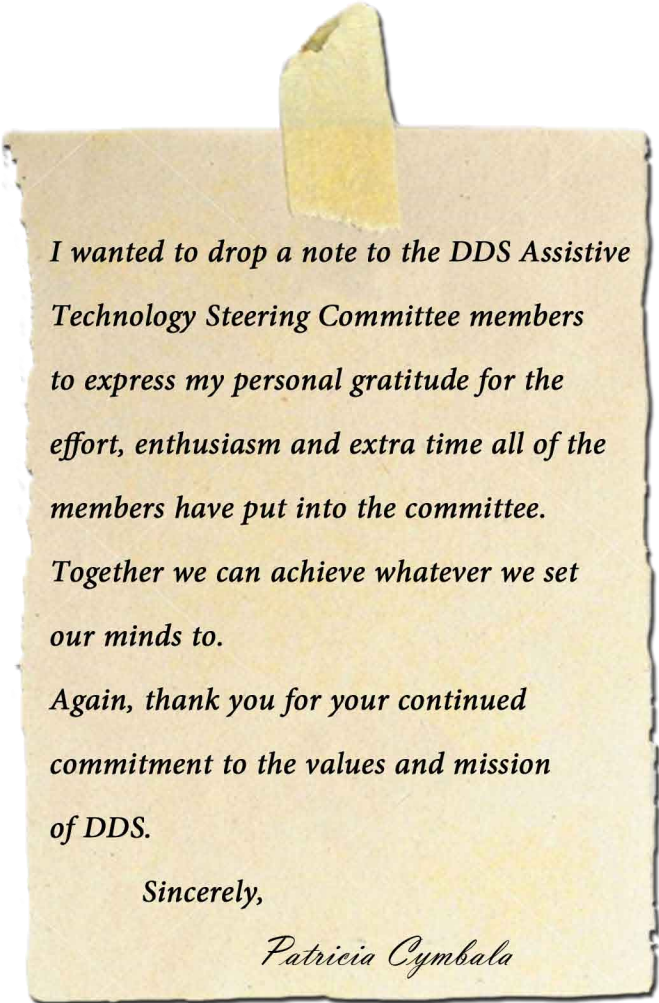


Editor's Letter

DDS Assistive Technology Steering Committee

On October 21, 2019 DDS had its first AT steering committee meeting and it was a great meeting. The committee is made up of providers, parents, individuals, DDS

staff, an occupational therapist, physical therapist, AT specialists and the head of the Connecticut Tech Act Project Program. By serving on this committee, members have the opportunity to guide the DDS Assistive Technology Program, and prepare individuals for their future, while promoting and advocating for the importance of assistive technology awareness, exploration and implementation.



I wanted to drop a note to the DDS Assistive Technology Steering Committee members to express my personal gratitude for the effort, enthusiasm and extra time all of the members have put into the committee. Together we can achieve whatever we set our minds to.

Again, thank you for your continued commitment to the values and mission of DDS.

Sincerely,

Patricia Cymbala

DDS Editors

HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE CT TECH ACT PROJECT?

by Arlene Lugo, CT Tech Act Project Program Director, at the Department of Aging and Disability Services

The Connecticut Tech Act Project (CTTAP) operates out of the State of Connecticut, Department of Aging and Disability Services. We have been in existence since 1992, established as part of the original federal Assistive Technology Act. Our goal is to help individuals with disabilities of all ages and all disabilities across Connecticut, as well as family members, employers, educators and others have access to Assistive Technology devices and services for work, school and community living.

We provide services in Connecticut through our partner agencies who offer:

AT Device Demonstrations which enable individuals to try a variety of Assistive Technology devices to decide what works best for them.

AT Device Lending which enables individuals to borrow an Assistive Technology device to test at home, in school or in other community settings before making the decision to purchase.

AT Reuse which allows individuals to obtain new and gently-used, refurbished equipment for free or at a low cost.

AT Loan Program which provides financial loans to individuals with disabilities or family members at lower interest rates for the purchase of Assistive Technology devices or services.

Access Through Technology Program provides free equipment to eligible state residents who are Deaf-Blind for internet access and telephone communications.

Information & Assistance: We're happy to provide general resources, potential funding options and any information related to Assistive Technology you may need.

Our partner agencies include Capital Region Education Council (CREC), EASTCONN, the Eastern CT Assistive Technology Center, the New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Center at Oakhill, State Education Resource Center (SERC), Southern CT State University's Center for Adaptive

Technology and Education, UCP of Eastern CT, and the Western CT Assistive Technology Center. In 2018, the CT Tech Act Project and our partner agencies served over 2330 individuals.



INTERVIEW WITH ARLENE LUGO

by Patricia Cymbala

Arlene Lugo is the CT Tech Act Project Program Director at the Department of Aging and Disability Services. Arlene's unique perspective on assistive technology makes her a lead in AT education and we are grateful for our collaborative work. Recently we had an opportunity to ask her a couple of questions in an interview for this newsletter.

How does AT improve the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities?

There is such a wide variety of AT that can improve independence and quality of life across all ages and all disabilities. AT can be used to provide prompts and reminders for medication or tasks, it can connect people to friends and family, it can help to detect falls or seizures, help with eating, drinking, dressing, standing, walking, being alone in one's home, accessing transportation in the community, and help someone perform their work tasks.

Technology is changing and improving at such a quick pace. There is something new literally everyday – apps, smart devices, wearables (devices you wear like fitness bands), smart homes have come a very long way.

With all these changes and advancements, how do you know what's the right AT device for you?

The best way to find out what's available and what might work for you (or someone you know) is to visit one of our AT demonstration centers to see and try out and learn about a device.

To learn more about the CT Tech Act Project visit the Department of Aging and Disability Services website or www.CTtechact.com, subscribe to our newsletter by entering your email at the bottom right of our website, or follow us on Twitter & Instagram: @CTtechact. We look forward to hearing from you!

ARTS FOR ALL: HOW THE BUSHNELL IS MAKING THE ARTS ACCESSIBLE

by: Yana Razumnaya DDS Self Advocate Coordinator

The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts is constantly on the forefront of making the arts inclusive to all members of the community. From ASL interpreters, to ADA accessible facilities, the Bushnell has it all. The Bushnell is also bringing another type of accessibility service to patrons, relaxed or sensory friendly programs and performances. These performances have brought families who normally would not be able to go to shows, back to the theatre. The Bushnell's volunteer program is also inclusive of people with disabilities.

Relaxed or sensory friendly performances are designed for people on the autism spectrum and others with sensory issues. Slight adjustments are made to the performance that include lower sound level, especially for loud or startling sounds, lights remaining on at a low level and a reduction of strobe lighting or lighting focused on the audience. Also, patrons are allowed to leave their seats and talk during a performance, there are quiet areas set up around the theatre that are staffed by autism experts and the staff and volunteers receive special training as well. These special performances have brought in families and individuals who otherwise would not be able to experience the thrill and joy of live

theatre. It's great to see parents be able to relax and enjoy a night out with their child without worrying that their behaviors might disturb others or that they may go into sensory overload and not be able to enjoy the show.

But autism is not the only disability that the Bushnell accommodates. The theatre is fully handicapped accessible. Bushnell's friendly staff and volunteers are always happy to direct you to the nearest accessible facilities.

The Bushnell also has an infrared listening system to assist patrons who are hard of hearing. Headsets and neck induction loops are available at the customer relations desk to assist with sound amplification and clarity. A driver's license or other form of photo ID must be presented. Patrons bringing their own headset should make sure it functions at FM frequency 2.3 MHz. Also, The Bushnell offers performances that are American Sign Language interpreted. Sign Language Interpretation is scheduled for the 2018-2019 Broadway Series on Sunday evenings at 6:30p.m. For more information, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at info@bushnell.org. To purchase tickets please send requests to info@bushnell.org; 860.987.6097 (TTY); 860.987.5900 (VOICE). For patrons with visual disabilities, the Bushnell offers large print programs and volunteer readers upon request.

Everyone should experience the thrill of live theatre and accessibility programs like the one at the Bushnell are bringing in wider audiences to the theatre. The Bushnell Center For the Performing Arts will offer a sensory

AROUND TOWN



friendly performance of DR. SEUSS' HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS on DECEMBER 14 at 10 am. For more info on this presentation and tickets go to: <https://bushnell.org/relaxedgrinc> For more information on what the Bushnell has to offer, please check out their website at <https://www.bushnell.org/>. The Bushnell is one of Hartford's biggest gems, so please visit today!



OCTOBER IS NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

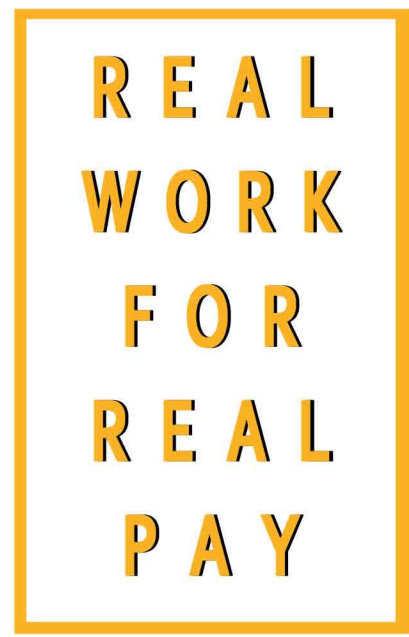
DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS

by: Karen Quesnel Operations Coordinator / RETAIN CT Project Lead
 CT Department of Labor and Office of Workforce Competitiveness

As we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month this October, the American Job Centers (AJCs) are providing workforce development services to thousands of job seekers with disabilities every day. The CT Department of Labor, has been fortunate to have been awarded U.S. Department of Labor grants like the Disability Program Navigator and Disability Employment Initiative grants that have given the agency a greater ability to enhance our services for individuals with disabilities. Additional funding has also been provided for AJC staff training to increase their knowledge and comfort for serving jobseekers with disabilities. Participants also receive training and earn industry-recognized credentials. This effective service delivery strategy called the Integrated Resource Team, has allowed us to expand and vary the array of assistive technology (AT) available in DOL offices.

In addition, as part of a pilot project funded by the Disability Employment Initiative, our Hartford and Waterbury AJCs host AT lending libraries, providing staff and customers with increased exposure and opportunities to learn and try out an array of AT. The pilot included staff training conducted by AT professionals from New England Assistive Technology, and purchases of a wide variety of AT; such as several ergonomic computer keyboards, keyboard stands, ergonomic mouse and trackballs, adjustable armrests; handheld video magnifiers, C-Pen Dictionary Readers, Livescribe Echo Smartpens, Redcat Access audio systems; as well as talk-to-text, screen reader, note taking, and learning-to-type software.

As a result, customers of the AJCs now have access to many types of assistive technology (AT) to assist them in taking part in the employment services available in the centers. Screen readers and magnification devices, adjustable tables, ergonomic and large print keyboards are available in all of the comprehensive AJCs. Just as automatic door openers are useful for people with and without disabilities, we have observed that the accessible workstations, with their large screen monitors, large font keyboards, and adjustable tables are frequently sought out and used by many AJC customers not based on a particular need, but because accessibility is helpful for everyone.



THE RIGHT TALENT, RIGHT NOW

National Disability Employment Awareness Month
 #NDEAM | dol.gov/odep

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 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Inclusion drives Innovation

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH
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