

South Carolina
**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY
PROGRAM**

CENTER FOR DISABILITY RESOURCES

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE COLUMBIA



Annual Report 2023
Improving Lives through Assistive Technology



Dear families, colleagues, and friends,

Our 2023 year has been a year of change, restructuring and building new partnerships. We reorganized the structure and flow of the AT Resource Center making it more user-friendly during AT demonstrations and other events. We created a dedicated lending library area separate from the demonstration and training space, and we expanded our resource area to include more resources for visitors. As we move into 2024 I am excited about opportunities to expand our services and relationships with our community partners.

Deepest regards,
Rachell Johnson, MCD, SLP-CCC, ATP
Program Manager
SC Assistive Technology Program

Our Mission

Our mission is to enhance the independence, productivity, and quality of life for all South Carolinians through access and acquisition of assistive technology.

Our Overview

The South Carolina Assistive Technology Program uses technology devices and services to help people with disabilities live, work and learn more independently. We are federally funded and part of a national network of technology-related assistance programs that provide services that increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities.

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Dawson's Success

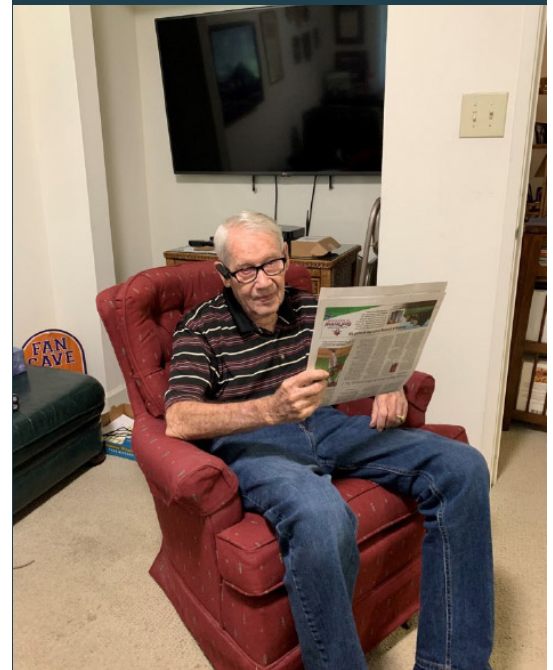
Robert Langston, an Occupational Therapist with Powerback Therapy, works with residents at Clemson Downs Retirement and Assisted Living facility. Robert worked with Mr. Luke to explore different types of vision devices to help him be more active at home and in the community. Robert reached out to SCATP to request a demonstration of multiple vision devices during one of Mr. Luke's occupational therapy sessions. Mr. Luke borrowed several of the devices that were demonstrated to help make his decision of which device would work best for him. Mr. Luke is a veteran and was able to get the devices from the VA the next time he went to his visit. Mr. Luke was very thankful that he had the opportunity to borrow the devices to try them out. Robert continues to work with SCATP to help other residents explore assistive technology options.

Device Demonstrations

Our Assistive Technology (AT) professionals guide individuals with disabilities and their support providers through demonstrations of various adaptive devices to help them make informed AT purchases. Support providers may include a speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, vision itinerant specialist, teacher, service coordinator, parent, spouse or other family member.

We do not sell products, so our demonstrations are free and impartial. **To schedule a demonstration, call (803) 935-5263.**

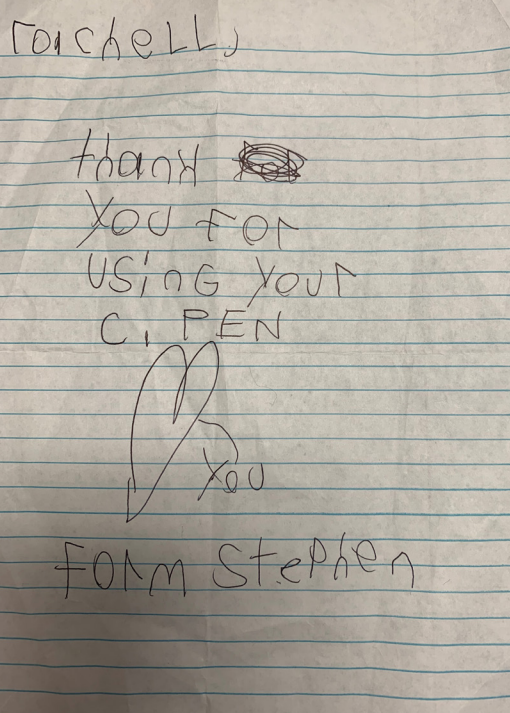
In 2023, SCATP provided 228 AT device demonstrations to 612 South Carolinians, and 1,078 devices were shown during the demonstrations.



Mr. Luke borrowed many devices from the SCATP loan program before he found the device that works for him.

Stephen's Success

Stephen's mother scheduled a demonstration to find reading and writing supports for her son. Stephen has dyslexia and other disabilities that affect his ability to demonstrate his knowledge at school. During the demonstration, Stephen tried writing software and a handheld read-aloud device. Stephen could independently use the read-aloud device and his mother was excited to borrow it to try while doing his schoolwork. Stephen's mom reported that he uses the tool independently to complete his schoolwork and has more confidence in himself.



Stephen wrote a heartfelt thank you letter to SCATP Program Manager Rachell Johnson.

Device Loans

We believe it is important to try a device in the environment where it will be used before making the decision to buy. That is why we loan devices out for two to four weeks with a signed loan agreement. **To borrow a device, call (803) 935-5362.**

In 2023, SCATP provided 514 short-term equipment loans to 231 individuals allowing them to try AT devices.

AT Reuse Service

The Reuse Service can help individuals get used AT and durable medical equipment, for free. **Call (803) 935-5273 to ask if we have what you are looking for and to donate equipment.**

The Reuse Service provided 188 South Carolinians with 330 pieces of equipment for a savings of \$221,988 in 2023.

The South Carolina Assistive Technology Exchange

The South Carolina Assistive Technology Exchange is a free online reuse database that helps individuals connect with each other to find, give away or sell used equipment. On the database you can list items you need or are looking to sell or give away.

Any individual, agency representative or family member can participate in the exchange. **If you need help, call us at (803) 935-5273 for assistance.**

In 2023, the SCATP Equipment Exchange facilitated the exchange of four items from individual-to-individual for a savings of \$3,019.

Trainings

Assistive technology professionals provide free or low-cost workshops and hands-on trainings on functional strategies and the latest devices, along with information on accessible web and information technology. Trainings are held via Zoom, in-person, and at your location.

SCATP partnered with the SC Department of Education (SCDE) staff to provide its first annual Accessibility Boot Camp for K-12 educators and the annual AT Leadership Conference.

In 2023, 3,013 individuals participated in assistive technology trainings.

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Adapted Book Project

The SC Assistive Technology Program has offered the Adapted Toy Workshop for five years. In 2022, the SCATP staff identified the need to add an Adapted Book Workshop. Adapted books most often address one disability rather than being inclusive of children with different disabilities. The SCATP staff developed a hands-on workshop for families and school district professionals to learn to create inclusive adapted book kits that are flexible to use with children who have different disabilities. In 2023, SCATP held three Adapted Book Workshops with 54 people participating.

MUSC Student Nursing Association and The Brian Injury Association of SC partnered with SCATP to host two of the workshops.

This program would not be possible without the generous donations from individuals and community organizations. SCATP accepts toy donations all year long.

Jerry's Success

Jerry Evans retired from Applied Consulting and Training Services where he specialized in working with children with Autism. His plan was to retire and live in Charlotte, N.C., with Little Joe and Ho Chia, his two dogs.

In 2018, Jerry started to notice a change in his voice and body movements. After a great deal of testing he was diagnosed with Multiple System Atrophy. It affects one out of every 100,000 people. It slowly takes away your ability to walk and talk. As his speech got worse, he began working with a speech therapist to explore different ways to communicate. They found out about eye gaze technology, but insurance would not pay for the technology because Jerry lives in a skilled nursing facility. They were told to call the South Carolina Assistive Technology Program. SCATP's reuse program had a Tobii Dynavox speech device with a stand available to give to someone who needed it. The SCATP staff was able to set-up the device and provide training on how to use it at no cost. The SCATP staff was very helpful and knowledgeable. Jerry is thankful to SCATP for helping make his long journey easier.



Mr. Jerry Evans received a Tobii Dynavox speech device from the SCATP reuse program.

SC Assistive Technology Expo

SCATP hosted the 30th annual SC Assistive Technology Expo in-person on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center with over 60 exhibitors and 12 workshops on assistive technology. This event is the go-to source for people with disabilities, their families, seniors, educators, veterans, and healthcare professionals.

Each year the event showcases AT solutions allowing for new opportunities to change lives. It is the only event of its kind in SC where participants can discover ability-enhancing products and services and attend informative workshops. In 2023, 887 individuals attended the Expo.

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Transition

Transition services prepare students for further education, employment, and independent living. Assistive technology helps every child with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meet their transition goals. The SCATP helps assess needs and provides loaner devices and training in the use of assistive technology.

SCATP collaborates with AbleSC's SC Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) for young adults with disabilities.

The SCATP staff partnered with multiple school districts across SC to participate in Transition Fairs sharing resources with students, their families and school staff.

SCATP participated in transition activities with 46 individuals attending.

Save the Date

2024 Assistive Technology Expo

The 2024 Expo will be held in-person on Tuesday, March 12, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

On-site and on-line registration is available. Event details can be found by scanning the QR code below.



Adapted Toy Project

The SC Assistive Technology Program offered its fifth Adapted Toy Workshop on November 17 and 18. Children with disabilities often have difficulty interacting with toys. The SC Assistive Technology Program invited families, professionals, and school staff to bring battery-operated toys to adapt for switch use. The staff taught workshop participants how to assemble 3-D printed switches to operate the adapted toys. SCATP hosts the Adapted Toy Workshop annually because the need for these toys is so great.

SCATP has switches and toys adapted for switch use available for demonstration and loan. **For more information, please call 803-935-5263.**

Twenty-four people adapted toys during the workshop.

Social Isolation Project

SCATP is honored to partner with the SC Department on Aging (SCDOA) and Walton Options Centers for Independent Living to participate in a grant project.

The pilot program helps people aged 55 and younger with a disability who are at risk of social isolation. This program is being piloted in two nursing homes. The program provides each participant with an iPad and training on how to use it.

SCATP staff provided demonstrations of assistive technology and helped set up each iPad for ease of access. The staff also helped participants select apps to connect with family, friends and participate in other activities.

Participants will participate in peer-to-peer counseling facilitated by MUSC's SC Safe Seniors Program. All participants who successfully complete the training and participate in the peer-to-peer sessions will be able to keep their iPad following the pilot's conclusion.

Roosevelt's Success

Roosevelt was in a car accident when he was 24 years old resulting in a spinal cord injury. He has head and neck movement only. Prior to his accident he was outgoing and able to independently operate his computer and cell phone to connect with family and friends. Since his accident, Roosevelt cannot independently access technology.

Roosevelt was selected to participate in the Social Isolation Pilot Program. Due to his limited mobility, the SCATP staff knew he would need additional assistive technology to access the iPad. The staff tried multiple devices to help him access the iPad and head tracking technology was the best choice for him. Roosevelt was provided with the iPad and the head tracking technology he needed to use the iPad.

Roosevelt was a quick learner. The first day of training he was able to access ESPN and read an article about his favorite team.

"This program has made me curious about technology and the possibilities I can have." Roosevelt



Roosevelt was provided life changing head tracking technology from the SCATP program.

You Fuel Our Success

SCATP has a long history of providing hope and support to families and professionals.

Our Partners

Thank you to all the agencies and organizations that we partner with throughout South Carolina. The work we do is made possible and maximized by working with agencies and organizations that have a similar mission.

You can help us improve lives through assistive technology. It's easy!

Make a Referral

Do you know an individual with a disability that could benefit from using assistive technology? If the answer is yes, refer them to 803-935-5263.

Keep Up To Date

SCATP on the web

<https://www.sc.edu/medicine/scatp>

Facebook

<facebook.com/scassistivetechnologyprogram>

Twitter/X

<twitter.com/@scatptweets>

This is a publication of the South Carolina Assistive Technology Program at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Center for Disability Resources, University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

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