

MassMATCH Quarterly News: Winter 2016

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Live, Learn, Work And Play at the "New" Boston ATRC!

Open House is February 25th!

The AT Regional Center (ATRC) in Boston--funded by MassMATCH and operated by Easter Seals--has a whole new look. Now visitors can check out the latest assistive technology in designated try-out areas designed to inspire independence and satisfaction throughout life's journey.



"We wanted the Center to better reflect our mission statement," explains long-time Boston ATRC Coordinator Catherine Bly. "The ATRC was created so anyone can learn about equipment that assists individuals to live, learn, work and play. And so that's how we've reorganized the Center."



ATRC Staff: Cathy Bly and Flemmings Beaubrun



ATRC Entrance

The work began last fall when ATRC-Boston staff started moving devices out of cabinets and into display areas organized by purpose. "Now visitors can more easily see what the equipment is designed for in a realistic way."

The Learn Area, for example, is a place to get hands on with a variety of AT for education. Here visitors can try a [smart pen \(.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4527\)](#) to write notes synced to audio recordings and then upload to an email account or dropbox. Bly says they can also transcribe a Word document into braille and emboss it using [braille translation software \(.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4199\)](#) and an embosser.

The Play Area showcases an exciting range of new equipment, thanks to a grant from [AbleGamers](http://www.ablegamers.com/) (<http://www.ablegamers.com/>). These include different types of adapted switches including the L-shaped [Chincheeka](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4656) ([.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4656](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4656)) (which fits the chin and cheek area). The switch provides access to the Xbox 360 game, Child of Eden, where anyone can blast colored plasmic objects in a surreal tunnel galaxy.

"The goal isn't to show every device that exists," Bly emphasizes, "but to raise awareness of what is possible and get visitors to think and ask questions."

The Work Area boasts [Dragon Naturally Speaking](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4133) ([.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4133](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4133)) for voice-controlled computer navigation and turning speech into text. There's also a [talking calculator](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4293) ([.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4293](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4293)), special grip pens and a [foot mouse](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4727) ([.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4727](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4727)) set up to control a cursor on a monitor. An [electronic magnifier](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4642) ([.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4642](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4642)) not only enlarges print but also reads it back in different languages and voices.



Flemmings Beaubrun demonstrates a head-mounted pointer for operating a computer keyboard at the Boston ATRC



Beaubrun selects an icon on a monitor using an adjustable hand stylus

The Live Area has a [TouchStream tablet](http://www.touchstreamsolutions.com/) (<http://www.touchstreamsolutions.com/>) for daily living management and tracking (it will remind, alert, and track the daily activities of loved ones at home, easing the concerns of caregivers and allowing for more independence). There's also a hands-only automobile wheel and brake system to try, and a [talking blood pressure cuff](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4080) ([.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4080](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4080)).

MassMATCH funds [two AT Regional Centers](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/) ([.../inventory/](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/)): one in Boston and one serving western Massachusetts in Pittsfield (operated by United Cerebral Palsy-Berkshire). Both are open to the general public for hands-on opportunities with a range of assistive technology solutions in a no-pressure environment.

The open house will take place February 25th from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Easter Seals Technology Center - NPC Building 1st floor, 89 South Street, Boston. For more information [email Cathy Bly](mailto:cbly@eastersealsma.org) (<mailto:cbly@eastersealsma.org>) or phone 617-226-2634.

Also check out the [MassMATCH short-term device loan program's online inventory!](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/#device_loan) ([.../inventory/#device_loan](http://www.ablegamers.com/.../inventory/#device_loan))

REquipment Seeks New Program Partners

MassMATCH's Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Reuse program is gearing up to serve more of Massachusetts

It's official - [REquipment](http://dmerequipment.org) (<http://dmerequipment.org>) is accepting proposals to expand services beyond Greater Boston and Central Massachusetts! The

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission RFR

(<https://www.commbuys.com/bs0/external/bidDetail.sdo?docId=BD-16-1071-AO-CON01-00000007056&external=true&parentUrl=bid>) is now posted. The goal is expansion to the western, northeast and southeast/Cape/islands regions of Massachusetts.



REquipment will be adding two kinds of non-profit partners to expand its services: Drop-off sites and Reuse sites.

- Drop off sites will be responsible for intake and storage of REquipment DME donations and for providing outreach within the local community.
- Reuse sites will additionally clean and repair donated DME and deliver the refurbished items within a defined region.

For more information [email Ann Shor \(mailto:ann.shor@mrc.state.ma.us\)](mailto:ann.shor@mrc.state.ma.us), MRC's Director of Assistive Technology and Independent Living Services. [Email REquipment \(mailto:info@dmerequipment.org\)](mailto:info@dmerequipment.org) with questions about donating or acquiring DME.

FY17 Budget Update for Assistive Technology Services

All eyes are on MRC line item 4120-4000 for Independent Living

Last year the Massachusetts state legislature approved an increase of above \$500,000 to Mass. Rehabilitation Commission account 4120-4000 in an earmark for assistive technology services. The new funds are supporting AT services including the expansion of REquipment, the MassMATCH DME Reuse program, statewide. The expansion means more Massachusetts seniors, persons with disabilities and families will have access to gently-used, refurbished durable medical equipment at no cost. (See [REquipment Seeks Program Partners \(#REquipment Seeks Partners\)](#) above.)



So far this budget season the Governor's Budget has been finalized. The Governor's Budget, historically, does not include earmarks. For FY17 it recommends funding account 4120-4000 at \$9,423,606. FY16 spending for this account is \$9,479,758 (according to the Governor's Budget).

In advance of the release of the House Ways and Means Committee's budget bill, Health and Human Services agency representatives, consumers, advocates and representatives of disability organizations have been meeting with lawmakers. There was a legislative roundtable at the Metrowest Center for Independent Living on February 5th, and on February 16th there was a Joint Ways and Means budget hearing at Springfield Technical College to hear from multiple EOHHS state agencies including the Mass Rehabilitation Commission.

Joe Bellil of Easter Seals attended both events. Easter Seals has made the assistive technology services earmark (\$1,286,590 in FY16) an advocacy priority this year, as well as an increase of \$250,000 to support the operating expenses of the Massachusetts AT Loan Program (MATLP). MATLP provides alternative financing (low-interest cash loans) for individuals with disabilities to purchase assistive technology and assistive technology services, and is one of the oldest alternative financing programs for assistive technology in the United States.

Following the release of the House Ways and Means Committee's budget will be the Senate Ways and Means Committee's proposal and then differences between these budget bills are settled in the House/Senate Conference Committee. The governor then reviews and approves the Conference Budget which can include line-item vetoes and further action by the legislature.

Learn more and follow the Massachusetts budget cycle at this [Mass.gov webpage \(https://malegislature.gov/Budget/Process\)](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/Process).

Register for EdCampAccess Boston!

MassMATCH is pleased to once again sponsor this popular "unconference" for K-12 educators

EdCamp Access Boston is returning April 30th, 2016 to the Marshall Simonds Middle School in Burlington. In the tradition of the broader EdCamp professional development tradition, this is a FREE opportunity for K-12 educators to learn directly from one another following their own "unconference" agenda.



EdCamp Access attracts educators with an interest in technology and reaching struggling learners. The day begins with a panel of students discussing their own experiences and it ends with an apps smackdown (sharing session) and prize give-aways (such as software licenses). In between are sessions (often discussions) proposed and led by whomever shows to participate.

This is a non-commercial event that attracts prominent AT and education thinkers as well as tech developers, but they come without their wares and participate along with everyone else. EdCamp Access in Boston was co-founded three years ago by AT Specialist and MassMATCH AT Advisory Council Member Karen Janowski; and Patric Barbieri, Executive Director of the LABBB Educational Collaborative. This year's organizers also include Beth Lloyd and Sean Sweeney.

Janowski recommends teachers come with their teams if possible, so if you are interested gather up your colleagues! Students and parents are also welcome, and anyone with an interest in supporting learning. Registration is free and attendance has grown dramatically each year (so don't delay!)

Register and learn more at this [EdCamp Access wiki page](http://edcamp.wikispaces.com/edcamp+Access).
(<http://edcamp.wikispaces.com/edcamp+Access>)

The Best Job

AT Specialist Karen Janowski looks forward to K-12 educators putting her out of business...

Have I ever written that I absolutely LOVE what I do? That the ability to impact students through the use of technology is the greatest job ever? That effective technology implementation removes the obstacles to academic success and promotes independence? That it doesn't matter what a student's evaluation scores show, we still presume competence and can change lives through technology?



I love my job.

Two IEP team meetings this week highlighted what I continually experience.

During the first meeting, the excellent special education teacher shared the results of the implementation of a recommendation I made in the AT Evaluation she had received two days earlier. (She is that good; she wanted to try it BEFORE we discussed the recommendations in the IEP team meeting!) The student struggles with pencil control, letter and number formation and often dictates to a scribe. He completed half the math worksheet using pencil (putting random numbers in correct order). The result was illegible and incorrect. She then gave the student the shared classroom iPad, as she had installed [SnapType](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/snaptype-for-occupational/id866842989?mt=8) (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/snaptype-for-occupational/id866842989?mt=8>). He took a picture of the worksheet, cropped it, added text boxes and correctly completed the rest of the worksheet. It was beautiful and CORRECT. Removing the difficulty with number formation reduced the COGNITIVE LOAD and the student completed it CORRECTLY! Not only that, he didn't need any prompts, something he needed constantly to complete his work.

Technology made an instantaneous difference!

The second student I evaluated is a high school student who scored poorly on cognitive testing. With assistive technology, it doesn't matter where evaluation

scores fall. Instead, what matters is, what is it we want the student to do but they are unable? How can we use this student's strengths to promote success and independence? This student is highly motivated by and exceptionally proficient with technology. He told me, "Technology has changed my life!" He is so confident with his use of technology he stated, "I could definitely help my ELA teacher with technology because she doesn't use a website." Not only that, he has his own YouTube channel and uploads self-made videos daily! So let's capitalize on his technology proficiency and confidence and help him use that skill in his role of a student! Fortunately, there is an AT Specialist who works full-time at the school who understands how technology integration strategies promote learning and academic success.

Technology makes a difference!

Are you offering technology to your students with special needs? Or are you withholding it with the belief that remediation is more important? Please reconsider your position - it is essential that accommodation (with effective technology implementation) and remediation occur simultaneously. Help me work myself out of the job that I love, because AT Consultants/Specialists will no longer be needed!

Until that happens, I will continually strive to ensure all students have access to the technologies they need.

Karen Janowski is an assistive and educational technology consultant and a member of the MassMATCH AT Advisory Council. This article first appeared at her blog [TeachingEveryStudent](http://teachingeverystudent.blogspot.com/) (<http://teachingeverystudent.blogspot.com/>). Meet her in person at EdCamp Access Boston!

Thank You MassMATCH and Easter Seals!

From The Children's Center for Communication/Beverly School for the Deaf (CCCBSD)

CCCBSD serves a varied population of students, each with their own unique challenges and opportunities. Students attending CCCBSD may experience autism, cerebral palsy, developmental or cognitive delays as well as hearing loss. Our goal is to ensure our students have access to all facets of academics, life skills, social skills and most importantly, communication. The technology supports provided by MassMATCH and Easter Seals are helping to ensure our students' success!



Over the past two years, CCCBSD has developed a wonderful relationship with the MassMATCH Assistive Technology Regional Center-Boston, operated by Easter Seals. The MassMATCH Short-Term Device Loan program allows us to borrow low and high-cost assistive technology devices at no cost, the very technologies that can make a dramatic difference in the lives of our students. The program enables CCCBSD students and staff to [borrow devices](http://www.massmatch.org/inventory/#device_loan) (http://www.massmatch.org/inventory/#device_loan) for up to four weeks at a time to trial at school and home. It allows our students and staff to make informed decisions about possible purchases or recommendations for future needs.

MassMATCH also provides a [Long-Term Device Loan Program](http://www.massmatch.org/find_at/borrow.php#Long_Term_Device_Loan_Program) (http://www.massmatch.org/find_at/borrow.php#Long_Term_Device_Loan_Program) which loans devices valued at less than \$500 for as long as the device is needed by a Massachusetts resident with a disability. There is no cost to the borrower if they meet the financial need to qualify.

Both of these programs are making a real difference for CCCBSD students. To date we have borrowed a [PowerLink](http://www.massmatch.org/inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4099) (http://www.massmatch.org/inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4099) and a [Headmouse](http://www.massmatch.org/inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4163) (http://www.massmatch.org/inventory/inventory_detail.php?equip_id=4163) for trialing by our students. Our plan is to continue to broaden our horizons by supporting additional functional life skills in our transitional programs. Future device loans will likely include flashing doorbells and additional testing with the PowerLink to increase student independence.

Thank you MassMATCH and Easter Seals! We are very grateful for your support and look forward to continuing our relationship with your program and helpful staff.

Sincerely,
Janice Coughlin
Assistive Technology Specialist
Childrens' Center for Communication/ Beverly School for the Deaf

REquipment Wheelchair Windfall!



Last month REquipment (<http://dmerequipment.org>), the MassMATCH program that accepts gently-used durable medical equipment (DME) donations, was the recipient of a wheelchair windfall. The Hartford, a Connecticut-based insurance company, contacted REquipment interested in finding homes for 16 brand new manual wheelchairs they planned to assemble themselves.



The project was a team-building exercise chosen by the company for its national sales meeting in Boston. Sales reps grouped into small teams competed on trivia questions to "win" parts to build a wheelchair together. REquipment Program Director Randi Sargent and Reuse Technician Jim Smith attended the event to accept the donation, thank the staff and explain REquipment's services. Also in attendance was two-sport phenom and para-athlete Alana Nichols. The result was 16 brand new wheelchairs posted to the REquipment inventory (<http://www.dmerequipment.org/>) (each checked over by a technician)... and a good time had by all!



Teams competing to build wheelchairs



Randi Sargent with Alana Nichols and Dawn Brenner of The Hartford



Wheelchairs ready for donation

Interested in having your company build wheelchairs for donation, team building and good karma? Check out www.bestcorporateevents.com/program/build-a-wheelchair (<http://www.bestcorporateevents.com/program/build-a-wheelchair/>)

REquipment Inventory Highlights

REquipment refurbishes a wide variety of DME free of charge for use by individuals and families in Greater Boston and Central Massachusetts. As of this

writing, items available at the REquipment inventory includes:

- 1 adapted stroller -- the Mighty L by Kid Kart (for a teen or small adult)
- Invacare half-length electric bed rails (for an adult)
- 4 mechanical/sling lifts, including a Drive Medical for bariatric use
- 1 Shower Buddy shower chair system (for an adult)
- 1 stander with tray by Prospect Designs (for a child)
- 6 power wheelchairs, including a bariatric-sized Pronto Sure Step M91
- 20 manual wheelchairs, including a 6 brand new by Medline (for an adult) thanks to The Hartford's generosity!

Have equipment to donate? Learn more at this [REquipment webpage](http://dmerequipment.org/DonatingYourDME.php) (<http://dmerequipment.org/DonatingYourDME.php>).

GetATStuff Highlights



The Assistive Technology Exchange in New England and New York is the "Craig's List" for AT. Currently there are dozens of items posted for sale or free.

As of this writing, GetATStuff highlights include:

- 2 Vision-related items, including a portable video magnifier (ONYX Deskset XL) in North Providence, RI for \$2,000 OBO.
- 3 Hearing-related item: including a portable amplifier for telephone for FREE in Salem, MA.
- 47 Mobility, Seating, and Positioning related items, including a Free brand new never used Transfer Board in Boston.
- 47 Daily Living related items, including a Free electric hospital bed with rails in Watertown, MA.
- 6 Environmental Adaptation related items including a raised toilet seat in West Charleston, VT for \$20 OBO.
- 6 Transportation and Vehicle Modification related items, including a 2013 Honda Odyssey Touring Elite wheelchair van for \$50,000 in Brockton, MA.
- 3 Computer-related items, including a Footime Foot Mouse with programmable pedal for \$95 OBO in North Providence, RI.

Go to [GetATStuff](http://www.getatstuff.com) (<http://www.getatstuff.com>) to search items by category or geography or to list what you need.

[Learn about additional AT reuse sites](http://www.getatstuff.com/learn_about_additional_AT_reuse_sites) (http://www.getatstuff.com/learn_about_additional_AT_reuse_sites).

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