**ACCESS Technology Program Renovation**

Upgrades include new displays, equipment, and features

Access to Independence is spending the rest of the Summer renovating its assistive technology program with the generous support of a grant from Wistech, Wisconsin’s assistive technology program that is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. With this grant, ACCESS has been able to acquire a number of new assistive technology devices, and has also embarked on updating our very popular main assistive technology room at the ACCESS office.

**The Room**

Anyone who has seen the space (see page 1) where hundreds of assistive technology devices are stored and displayed has been wowed by the array offered, but not so wowed by the space itself. To provide more storage that gives better opportunities to view and try these devices, ACCESS has upgraded the space (see page 1). Instead of wire racks with piles of boxes and devices, there are now new glass display cases that line the sides of the room, and at the back of the room. Along both sides are newly installed slat walls that will allow for better shelving for organization and display, much like what was done in our telecommunication room a couple of years ago. One of the other noticeable changes is along the back wall where a motorized sit-stand desk (previously in our computer lab) sits below a new 40” monitor that will be used for demonstrating the different tablet computers used for their apps that assist with employment, daily tasks, and communication. The monitor will also allow computer software like Dragon Naturally Speaking to be demonstrated on a larger screen, as well as new gaming technologies. Finally, the space will have the tablet computers on display with security locks. The upgrades extend beyond the room itself as there is a new display case in the lobby for devices that ACCESS is giving away, and a new case for alert systems that are housed in the telecommunication room (see page 6).

**The Device**

While the new room will be a noticeable improvement, it is the plethora of new devices that will be of significant benefit to the people we assist. ACCESS is purchasing over 50 new devices, and is excited to share about some of those devices:

**Tecla Sheild:** The Tecla Shield gives those with limited upper body mobility access to their touchscreen devices. Tecla makes it possible to use iOS and Android smartphones and tablets, as well as computers. All are accessible via assistive buttons, switches or wheelchair driving controls.

**PC Gaming Eye Tracker:** This technology allows computers to understand what you are looking at – using an eye tracker. With it, you now can complement keyboards, mice and gamepads as an input method for a new game experience. ACCESS will have a gaming system and games that can be demonstrated.

**Google Home:** ACCESS already has the Amazon Echo (Alexa), which will be set up and on display in the new space, and will have the Google Home set up as well. This hands-free technology is perfect for numerous daily activities from making shopping lists to home automation. ACCESS will be able to demonstrate two options that can do a host of activities.

**Wandering GPS Watch - MX-LOCare:** This device reduces the risk of elopement by alerting caregivers or loved ones if a wandering episode were to happen, and is a mobile personal emergency response system, optional panic alert, fitness tracker and GPS personal locator
all in one.

These are just a few examples, and as always, every device is available for a free demonstration, and some items may be available for free short-term loan. While ACCESS does not sell any devices, staff members will be able to assist with selection and purchasing, as well as with set-up and training – all services are at no cost to the individual.

**2017 Brat Sale a success**

Good weather, 3000th bratwurst, and a prize pond made for a successful event

June 23rd was the 6th year of our annual Brat Sale. We were excited to see hundreds of hungry customers come by for a fresh-grilled brat and fixings. Being our 6th year, we hit a milestone by selling our 3,000th brat, and with it came a nice prize package for the lucky customer who came by late that afternoon. In addition to great food and gorgeous weather, we had a prize pond, which was a promotion for our Reel Access to Real Independence Fundraiser. Participants paid $1, and were able to fish out bags filled with prizes from bobbers and candy, to fishing reels, to free tickets to the Reel Access event. Reel Access tickets were also on sale. ACCESS thanks our sponsors, which can be found in the donor section of this newsletter, and of course those who came by and purchased brats.

**Reel Access to Real Independence
Fundraiser is going on now**

The Spring phase brought winners, and more
will be announced in September and November

Reel Access to Real Independence is an inaugural fundraiser benefiting Access to Independence. It is a prize raffle and fishing contest with a $1,000 grand prize and free membership to an online fishing club. For $10, participants get a ticket that gets them automatically entered into a prize raffle, as well as automatically entered into the $1,000 grand prize drawing. The ticket can also be used to enter a bass, bluegill, musky, or walleye into a fishing contest. Finally, every ticket comes with a card that is good for a free membership to an online fishing club called fishwithme.net, which is up to a $40 value. For full details and contest rules, as well as to purchase tickets, go to www.reelaccess.org.

May and June made up the Spring Phase of the event, and on July 5th, winners of the prize raffle and fishing contest were announced at the Madison West Walmart. Ed K won $92 for his bluegill that was in the 10-11 ounce range, and Arthur W won $92 for his bass that was in the 18-19 inch range. Names were drawn for dozens of prizes valued over $500, and included fishing equipment, apparel, and gift cards to local businesses.

Tickets are on sale now, and can be purchased at ACCESS, online at www.reelacess.org, and at our local partners, D&S Bait and Tackle, and Orvis. Prize drawings and contest winners will be announced for the Summer Phase on September 6th, at 5:00pm, at the Monona Walmart. The Fall Phase prize drawings and contest winners will be announced at 5:00pm on November 1st at the Access to Independence office. All tickets purchased in any phase will be entered into the $1,000 grand prize drawing, also on November 1st.

**ACCESS celebrates 40 years in 2018**

While subsequent editions of The Open Door will have plenty more on our ruby anniversary, we’re looking now for people who would be interested in volunteering on our planning committee, as well as past staff, board members, and consumers who would be willing to share about their time and experience with ACCESS. If you’re interested, please contact Dee Nash at 608-242-8484, ext. 233, or deen@accesstoind.org.