Abilities Expo 2012, Houston
(pictures: TTAP expo booth, Roger Levy, Steve Thomas, John Morris, Darlene West)

This year’s Abilities Expo was another huge success with more than 2,800 adults touring the exhibit floor and participating in various workshops and sporting events.

Though the Abilities Expo debuted in Houston three years ago, this was Michael William’s first experience. “I had fun and stayed until it was over,” he said.

There was no shortage of things to see and do at the event! The Expo displayed the latest accessible products and services to people with physical disabilities, their families, seniors, caregivers, healthcare professionals, individuals with vision and hearing impairments, and those with developmental disabilities. The workshops resonated with the community, addresses important issues like travel, home modification, music therapy, disability accommodations in the workplace, choosing the best mobility device, intensive PT for children and so much more!

The Assistive Technology Showcase, sponsored once again by the TTAP, gave expo-goers of all ages the opportunity to test drive cutting-edge devices for a variety of disabilities. Whether individuals needed help with vision, hearing, communication, computer access, early childhood development, or daily living, the TTAP demonstrated the essential technologies to enhance their lives.
Spectacular interactive sports and activities rounded out Abilities Expo. Attendees enjoyed their choice of dancing—hip-hop, zumba and line dancing. They played a host of adaptive sports like tennis, biking, sled hockey, quad rugby, power soccer, and hand cycling. To top it all off, they saw first-hand how assistive dogs and horses can help people with disabilities.

“Each show reminds me of what a dynamic and passionate community I am a part of because of my disability, and I continue to be inspired by the people I meet and the experiences we all share,” said Kristina Rhodes of Vehicle Production Group (VPG), one of the Expo exhibitors.

Admission was free! Join TTAP next year at Houston’s Reliant Center, August 2-4, 2013. The next Abilities Expo will be in San Jose, California on November 16-18. For more information visit: www.abilitiesexpo.com

**Latest News from the Device Loan Program**

We’ve added six new iPads® to our inventory in order to meet the growing demand. There’s still a waiting list, but the wait time should be shorter with the new and larger inventory.

Visit our website at http://techaccess.edb.utexas.edu for a full list of items for loan. For more information, contact: John Morris, Assistive Technology Coordinator, at (512) 232-0753 or e-mail John at jcmorris@austin.utexas.edu

**Assistive Technology Q&A**

Q: What’s so different about Windows 8®?

A: Windows 8® is designed as a touch screen interface which is compatible with both Personal Computers and Tablets, although most of the Windows based tablets have a Windows 7® core which runs most Microsoft programs such as Microsoft Office.

**Tech Corner:**

Painting with Your Eyes

You can now draw, doodle, sketch, and paint using only your eyes. There are several assistive technology devices that enable all of these undertakings. One of them is the EyeGuide Assist® which is made right here in Texas.
EyeGuide Assist® uses Microsoft’s Paint application or most any painting or drawing software and can be used on any Mac or Windows system. Based in eye tracking technology, Assist allows a camera worn by the user to record eye movement. That eye movement is correlated back to the computer monitor via linked hardware, thereby acting like a mouse cursor. The cursor moves where the eye looks and the user then is able to initiate commands like clicking, typing, and painting, etc. by speaking or blinking.

For further information, visit:  http://www.grinbath.com

The Tobii CDot Tracker® is a head mouse tracker that replaces a regular mouse. It works by tracking the exact movements of a small reflective dot that is placed on the forehead, nose, glasses or any other visible area of the body. Once the dot is placed, its movements are tracked by a high-resolution, intelligent camera and are instantly translated into accurate mouse cursor movements. Clicking can be done through dwell (the pausing of the cursor over an object on the screen for a preprogrammed amount of time), by using a switch.

Simply put, any action done with a regular mouse can also be accomplished with the Tobii CDot Tracker. For further information, visit:  http://www.tobii.com

Spotlight on TTAP Demonstration Centers

RISE Center for Independent Living

RISE provides training and skills development to improve the ability for persons to promote their own needs. Also, RISE works at the community, state and national levels to advocate for services benefiting those with disabilities.

RISE provides resources, information, support and empowerment to help individuals make informed choices.

RISE staff and volunteers who have dealt successfully with their own challenges draw upon their experiences to help others explore options, solve problems and develop new skills.

RISE offers training in skills for independent living designed to match the needs of each person and might include operating a computer, money management, cooking and other areas critical to independent lifestyles.

For information:

RISE Center for Independent Living
755 S 11th Street
Beaumont, Texas 77701
Beep Baseball

Beep Baseball is only one of many sports in which individuals with a disability are active. Since the Austin Blackhawks have won numerous world championships, perhaps it’s time to learn the rules and start playing!

(Basic Rules Provided by the National Beep Baseball Association)

Setup:

Beep Baseball is played on a grass field with six fielders (generally a first-baseman, third-baseman, shortstop, left fielder, right fielder, and center fielder, though two-four defensive sets are not unheard-of) and one or two "spotters" from one team, and the pitcher, catcher, and batter from the other team. Fielders and batter are blindfolded. There is also a D.H. and D.F. (designated fielder). They must also be legally blind in most cases. Catcher, pitcher, and spotters do not wear blindfolds and are usually sighted, although there have been a few who are partially blind. The ball is a modified, and oversized, softball that beeps. The bases are blue, nearly five feet tall, and have a mostly foam interior with the electronics that cause it to buzz steadily when a switch is thrown. They are each placed 100 feet from home plate and are in the equivalent positions to first and third bases in regular baseball.

How a run is accomplished:

When the batter hits the ball, a base operator turns on one of the two bases (first or third) for the batter to run to. If the batter touches the base before a fielder can pick up the ball, the offensive team scores a run. It takes four strikes to strikeout a batter. If the ball goes beyond the two base lines or doesn’t travel at least 40 feet, it is a foul ball and counted as a strike unless it is the potential fourth strike, when the batter just swings again. If the ball ceases to beep and becomes a "dead ball," the strike count is reset and the batter swings again. A dead ball must not be touched. If it is touched, it is said to be back in play and the runner must be put out.

Spotting:

The spotter or spotters call out a number to signify toward which part of the field a ball is travelling. Generally, the middle of the outfield is labeled “six,” and either side, left and right, is numbered one to five in a mirroring pattern. The spotter
must not say anything beyond the numbered region on the field, and two spotters cannot make a call on the same play. If either event occurs, the run scores. The fielders then move toward the called section and listen for the ball, often diving to the ground to get it. When a fielder picks up the ball before the batter reaches the base, the batter is out. The spotter must also watch to ensure that fielders do not collide.

**Innings:**

Beep Baseball generally has six innings. If one team is up by 12 or more runs, the other team has the opportunity to have short innings in which the losing team bats every inning and the winning team fields. This is known as the 12-run rule and when it occurs, one team is said to "12-run" another. If the other team makes up the difference, then the team that had been winning gets back all their missed at-bats.

There are no age or gender-based restrictions in Beep Baseball; people as old as 70 and as young as 12 have played.

Texas has four teams:

“Blackhawks,” Austin (7 + times world champions!)

“Bayou City Heat,” Houston

“Lone Star Road Runners,” Ft. Worth

“Tigers,” Tyler

Individuals with a disability participate in many sports including:

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Golf
- Rugby
- Cycling
- Tennis
- Soccer
- Swimming and water sports
- Wheelchair dancing
  - And many, many more . . .

(picture of wheelchair rugby match at Abilities Expo Houston)
Resources:

National Beep Baseball Association
www.nbba.org

United States Association of Blind Athletes
www.usaba.org

Adapted Athletics
www.adaptiveathletics.org

Wheelchair Sports
www.pva.org

What’s on “TTAP” for Fall

September 20-21

7th Annual Black Hills Brain Injury Conference
Rapid City, South Dakota
Community Transitions
(605) 343-7297
E-mail: rsasso@bhws.com
www.brainrehab.org

October 25-28, 2012

Inclusion International Conference Achieving Inclusion Across the Globe
Washington, DC, USA
Contact: The Arc
Tel: 202-534-3700 / Toll-free: 800-433-5255
FAX: 202-534-3731

November 28 - December 1

2012 TASH Conference
Long Beach, California, USA
Contact: Haley Kimmet
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 235
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 540-9015
FAX: (202) 540-9019
Just for Laughs

(picture of cat looking around a corner at a computer mouse coming out of a mouse hole)

Any suggestions, comments, or article you would like to have included in our newsletter, please contact us:

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(512) 232-0772/jayhawker@austin.utexas.edu

Texas Technology Access Program
The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Center for Disability Studies
Commons Learning Center
10100 Burnet Road
Austin, Texas 78758-4445
http://techaccess.edb.utexas.edu

TTAP Demonstration Centers

- Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living, Bryan
- Paso Del Norte Children’s Development Center, El Paso
- Ability Connection, Dallas
- Goodwill Industries of Fort Worth
- Easter Seals of Greater Houston
- Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living, Corpus Christi
- RISE Center for Independent Living, Beaumont
- East Texas Center for Independent Living, Tyler
- Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, Austin
- Brazoria County Center for Independent Living, Angleton
- Helping Hands, Amarillo
- Not Without Us, Abilene
Portable Computer Demonstration Centers

- REACH Center for Independent Living, Plano
- Houston Center for Independent Living, Houston
- Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center, Belton
- VAIL – Valley Association for Independent Living, McAllen