RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES GRANT HELPS SHARE BRING ADAPTIVE COMPUTERS TO SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

A $25,000 grant from Ronald McDonald House Charities is helping SHARE enrich the classroom learning experience for numerous area students with special needs. This funding supports a new SHARE outreach program to local school systems to assess how adaptive computer equipment can benefit students with special needs and to provide needed alternative systems in the classroom.

Throughout the school year, speech/language pathologist Myrna Altshuler has been coordinating the program’s services with school systems in New Bedford, Westport, Freetown-Lakeville, and Acushnet, and has conducted needs assessments for numerous students.

As a result of these evaluations, dozens of computer systems have been placed in area classrooms, offering new and creative ways for students to learn and communicate. For example, a number of students with poor motor coordination or visual impairments are now using the BIGKEYS keyboard, with oversized keys that make typing and selecting commands easier.

For many students, these adaptive systems are helping to change the learning process from a frustrating experience to a rewarding adventure.

"Because of your program, SHARE, and your computers, you have enabled us to provide a means of communication to a nonverbal, developmentally delayed student as well as her classmates," says Maria DePina, a teacher at New Bedford’s Roosevelt Jr. High School. "We now have a different girl among us. We are, every day, discovering a new aspect of her, even a sense of humor."

Encouraged by the accomplishments of students served through the outreach program during its first year of operation, SHARE plans to expand its services during the coming academic year, with the goal of reaching students in need in additional community schools. Interested schools or school systems should call the SHARE office for details.

“My son is overwhelmed with his computer. It is the first thing on his mind and the last before bed. Maybe because of your generosity, he will be a computer teacher! Only the future will tell, but in either case, thanks for giving my son that chance."

Parent of a special needs student who received a SHARE computer system
**Job Opening**

SHARE has received funding for a **Client Services Coordinator**. Job responsibilities will include: contacting past and present clients to assess their needs; acting as liaison to the technical staff at the UMD Rehab Center; and training clients to use equipment provided to them by SHARE.

Requirements for the part-time position include:
- Knowledge of computers
- Internet familiarity
- Willingness to work with individuals with severe disabilities

Interested individuals may send their resume to:
Dr. Les Cory
SHARE Foundation
UMass Dartmouth
285 Old Westport Road
North Dartmouth, MA 02747-2300

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**Linda Texceira Publishes Book of Poetry**

Recently, Linda Texceira, SHARE's first client, realized another of her dreams by publishing her own poetry collection, *Memories With Love*. A compilation of her own writings, the slim volume contains poetry celebrating the people and places Linda loves, and includes photographs of Linda's subjects.

One of the first clients to try out the AceBus SKeys system (see story above), Linda is using SKeys to navigate the Internet independently and to design greeting cards.

SHARE congratulates Linda on her many creative achievements!

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**Update from the**

**UMD REHABILITATION ENGINEERING CENTER LAB**

The SHARE Foundation, Inc. and the UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering are proud to introduce a newly developed software program, AceBus Scanning Keyboard and Communicator—SKeys.

Created by engineers at AceBus, SKeys is an innovative computer software package that allows Windows software to be accessed by users who operate their computers through a single-switch system.

SKeys enables the single-switch command program to "talk" to any other Windows software. This means that people who must use a single-switch system because they cannot use the traditional keyboard and mouse, are no longer limited to a small range of computer tasks.

SKeys runs on a dual computer setup or on one Windows '98-equipped computer hooked up to two monitors. On one monitor, the user sees the instructions he/she would like to give to a Windows program such as Microsoft Word, Netscape, or Printshop. The commands chosen on the SKeys program instruct the computer running the Windows program to perform operations such as opening files, typing, pointing and clicking. The second monitor displays the Windows program.

SKeys also works with a variety of hardware and software speech synthesizers. SKeys can be programmed with customized word and phrase lists which can be modified by the user. Another of the advantages of the SKeys program is that it enables users to simulate the "point and click" functions of a mouse. By providing a navigational command to the pointer, SKeys allows users to make all the choices a mouse-user can.

With SKeys, a whole realm of computer applications—word processing, spreadsheets, games, desktop publishing, and the Internet—are open to people who were once restricted to simple communication programs.

Anyone interested in learning more about SKeys can call SHARE at (508) 999-8482.

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**SHARE Posts New Website**

SHARE has a new presence on the World Wide Web. Electrical engineering student Jason Fenino designed the site's new look. The sleek-looking site is easier than ever to navigate.

Much of the writing for the site was done by Paul Remy, a client and a loyal supporter of SHARE. Paul also created the clever graphic that welcomes visitors to the SHARE homepage.

Links to the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering, the UMass Dartmouth home page, and the engineering college are all new additions.
Fun Walk ’99 Kicks Off on October 17th

Join us on Sunday, October 17, 1999 for Fun Walk ’99—a fun-filled day of games, entertainment and prizes the whole family can enjoy! The walk’s official start time from the UMass Dartmouth campus is 9 a.m.; come early and warm up on coffee and donuts at 8 a.m. Walkers may begin the walk any time between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., and walkers may choose from several different routes covering distances between 2 and 10 kilometers.

And don’t miss all the festivities on campus, including sand art, pumpkin painting, Walkathon Bingo and Poker, food and more!

Funds raised during Fun Walk ’99 will go directly to providing equipment and services for people who have disabilities. Call SHARE now at (508) 999-8482 to register.

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR FUN WALK ’99

SHARE needs you to help make its biggest fundraising event of the year the success it needs to be to ensure that waiting clients received much-needed equipment and services.

Please consider joining our team of volunteers who will be organizing Fun Walk ’99, recruiting walkers and sponsors, and planning the event’s festivities.

Interested individuals may call Dorothy at SHARE (508) 999-8482.

SHARE Client Seeks Biographies for Inspirational Book

SHARE recently heard from Yvonne Hansen, a writer and former client. Ms. Hansen is the author of The Silent One, a book that touchingly captures the enormous changes she experienced after a stroke left her paralyzed and unable to speak at age 27.

Ms. Hansen is planning a second book compiled of biographies about people with all kinds of disabilities. She has contacted SHARE to help spread her request for stories about dealing with disabilities. Ms. Hansen is looking for biographical sketches of between 200 and 400 words. The book, tentatively entitled Collection of Courage, will cover the stories of people with a wide range of disabilities. Ms. Hansen says she is interested in the lives of people who are visually or hearing impaired; who have such conditions as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, or muscular dystrophy; or who have lived with head injuries, the results of strokes, or obesity.

Biographical sketches can be sent to:
Yvonne Hansen
OSF Saint Clare Home
5533 N. Galena Road
Peoria Heights, IL 61614
or email to: PZPX92@prodigy.com

Earleen Gamache Memorial Gifts Top $1,000

It is with deep regret that we note the passing of Earleen Gamache, accomplished artist, devoted wife and mother, and long-time SHARE volunteer.

Her husband Ray, also a volunteer, requested that memorial gifts be sent to SHARE. The result was an outpouring of donations which will benefit the many children and adults awaiting SHARE’s services.

SHARE extends its deepest thanks to Ray and the Gamache family and friends who remembered Earleen so generously through their gifts.

FEEDBACK? SEND US E-MAIL AT share@umassd.edu

Visit us at our website to read about SHARE and the UMD Rehabilitation Engineering Center! www.share.umassd.edu
16th Annual Ben Boyle Golf Classic Slated for Sunday, July 25th

Plan to join the fun and win some prizes on July 25, when the 16th Annual Ben Boyle Golf Classic gets under way! This community event to benefit SHARE is graciously sponsored again this year by the Sunday Morning Golfers and the Pawtuxet Valley Rotary Club. Tee times start at 10 a.m. at the Richmond Country Club in Richmond, Rhode Island. A $75 per person entry fee includes a cart, green fees and a prime rib dinner immediately following golf.

For more information on the event, call Ron Kostyla at 401-821-6203 (w) or 401-821-7527 (h), or call SHARE at 508-999-8482.

Mark Your Calendars for the Fifth Annual Auto Show and Fun Day to Benefit SHARE

On Saturday, September 12, cruise on down to the Fifth Annual Auto Show and Fun Day for SHARE and get a glimpse at the automobile's glorious past!

Sponsored by the Bristol County Street Rod Association, the event runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will showcase antique and classic cars on the UMass Dartmouth campus.

Other highlights include the SHARE Flea Market, food, games and prizes.

Last year, this popular fall event attracted hundreds of classic car enthusiasts and raised $3,000 to support the work of the UMass Dartmouth Rehabilitation Engineering Center. SHARE invites you to stop by and help make this year's Auto Show another great success!

SHARE Foundation
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
285 Old Westport Road
North Dartmouth, MA 02747-2300

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED