INNOVATIVE EYE-CONTROLLED COMPUTER DEMONSTRATED AT UMASS DARTMOUTH

Picture a man before a computer; on his eye glasses is mounted what looks like a small telescope. The man makes no discernible movements, yet the computer is typing a message. A scene from a science fiction movie? No—the man is demonstrating a device called VisionKey that enables a person to control a computer with only eye movements. This device was designed specifically to allow people with physical disabilities to use computer technology.

From July 28 to 31, Jan Heynen of H. K. Eyecan, Ltd. of Ottawa, Canada demonstrated his company’s innovative eye-controlled computer system at the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering at UMass Dartmouth. The presentation introduced the sophisticated VisionKey system to the technical personnel at the Center, local health care professionals, and some people for whom SHARE has provided adaptive computer systems.

"This is smaller and faster than anything we’ve worked with and a lot more affordable than anything else in its class," says SHARE president Les Cory.

Invented to allow people with limited motor abilities and impaired speech to access computer technology, VisionKey turns the user’s eye movements into commands to a computer. The user wears an eye-piece mounted on standard eyeglass frames and linked by a cord to a book-sized, portable display unit. The user sees a keychart before one eye and selects a number, letter or command from the keychart by focusing his/her gaze on one region of the chart. The selected characters appear on the display unit or the chosen command is forwarded to a computer.

"I’m excited about this new technology and the promise it holds for increased productivity and independence," says Cory. "It’s the first such device I’ve seen that is practical for use by a non-speaking person in a real-time setting, such as a classroom."
Ronald McDonald House Charities Awards Grant to SHARE

Recently SHARE was awarded a $25,000 grant for a project to benefit students in the public schools of New Bedford, Dartmouth, Lakeville/Freetown, Fall River, and Westport. SHARE will be evaluating the needs of special education students in these five communities to determine what computer adaptations could best meet their unique learning needs and physical abilities, and to provide appropriate computer equipment for students' at-home use.

"This funding will give us a wonderful opportunity to reach out and meet young people's needs, both in the classroom and at home," says SHARE president Les Cory.

SHARE is currently interviewing candidates for an evaluation specialist for the project, who is expected to begin visiting classrooms this fall.

Thank You

A group of SHARE Walkathon participants and volunteers enjoyed a flight to Martha's Vineyard courtesy of pilots Stanley Bielskiak, Kevin Highsmith and Les Cory. On July 12, the group flew to Katama, a grass airfield on the beach in Edgartown, had breakfast at Mel's Diner there, and enjoyed the sights before heading home.

Many thanks to Stan and Kevin for the use of their planes for this special outing.

Update from the UMD Rehabilitation Engineering Center Lab

Thanks to growing support from numerous grant sources and the increased generosity of our many supporters, SHARE has enjoyed the fiscal ability to serve greater numbers of waiting clients than ever before. In fact, output from the Rehabilitation Engineering Center has nearly doubled in 1998, with staff and volunteers providing equipment and services to 240 individuals so far this year as compared to 136 clients at this time last year.

June was a particularly busy month here, with SHARE serving 50 clients—more than double the 21 clients served last June. Here are just some of the children and adults who have benefited from your thoughtful support:

- Angie*, who is blind, received a new computer system complete with a 486 computer, internal modem, 12X CD ROM, Sound Blaster card, speakers and printer.

- Sheryl, who incurred a spinal injury, is now able to write to her family with her new 386 computer system.

- Dina, who has been diagnosed with HIV, is spending her days more productively with her new computer system featuring an Apple Quadra 605 computer.

- Ben, a recent high school graduate who has cerebral palsy, plans to further his education with a new Dual Communication system featuring linked 386 and 486 computers.

- A local center serving children with developmental disabilities received three new systems featuring Apple Ile computers.

As you can see, your kindness has touched so many lives. Thank you from all of us at SHARE for all the wonderful things made possible by your continued generosity.

*Client names have been changed

First Fed Donates Computers to SHARE

This year, First Federal Savings Bank donated 115 used network computers to the SHARE Foundation.

"These computer systems are among the most modern of any computers that have been given to us," says Les Cory. "They will be particularly useful to our clients who have visual impairments."

SHARE has already placed more than 50 of the computers in new clients' homes and expects to distribute the rest by the end of this year.


CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE...

to read about SHARE and the UMD Rehabilitation Engineering Center!

http://www.share.umassd.edu or http://www.eet.umassd.edu
S.H.A.R.E. Foundation

FUN WALK '98
FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Sunday, October 18, 1998
UMass Dartmouth
Official Start Time – 9 AM

PRIZES

* Hundreds of Dollars Worth of Gift Certificates
* Best Poker Hand Wins $100

HERE'S HOW...
Every walker who turns in $20 or more on the day of the walk will receive 5 tokens. At each of the first 5 check stations, tokens will be exchanged for playing cards. Walkers may exchange cards with one another to improve their hands, but the winning hand must contain one card from each check station. The walker who turns in the best poker hand by 2 p.m. will receive $100!

GAMES

* Map Reading Competition  * Sand Art
* Sidewalk Drawing   * Pumpkin Painting

ENTERTAINMENT

* PLANE RIDES for Top 6 Walkers
* Turn in $50 or more the day of the Fun Walk, and Receive a KEY to our Prize-Filled TREASURE CHEST!

FREE T-Shirts for Every Walker who Turns in $20 or More!

Refreshments

Sponsored by UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering

SHARE FUN WALK '98 Registration Form

☐ Yes, I will walk on October 18th. Please send me a Fun Walk Kit.
☐ I can help find walkers. Send me ____ more walker's kits.
☐ I would like to sponsor a disabled walker. Here's $_________

Name ________________________________
Street ________________________________
City, Town ____________________________ State ________ Zip ____________

Mail to: SHARE Foundation, UMASS Dartmouth, North Dartmouth, MA 02747
or CALL (508) 999-8482 to Register
Fourth Annual Auto Show and Fun Day Rolls Out the Classics

On Sunday, September 13, the Fourth Annual Auto Show and Fun Day for SHARE brought together hundreds of classic car enthusiasts and raised $3,000 to support the work of the UMass Dartmouth Rehabilitation Engineering Center. Sponsored by the Bristol County Street Rod Association, the event was an exciting showcase for over 150 antique and classic cars on display at the UMass Dartmouth campus. Other highlights included the SHARE Flea Market, food, games and prizes. Special thanks go to Sanford & Son Auto Parts of Tiverton, Rhode Island, who donated a restorable 1969 Thunderbird as a raffle prize for the event.

Antique and classic cars like these draw hundreds to the UMass Dartmouth campus each year for the Auto Show and Fun Day, which raised $3,000 for SHARE.

Ben Boyle Golf Classic Nets $3,000 for SHARE

A million thanks to the faithful SHARE supporters who made the 15th Annual Ben Boyle Golf Classic such a wonderful success this summer! As always, SHARE Board member Ron Kostyla, the Sunday Morning Golfers, Bob Bjorklund and the Pawtuxet Valley Rotary Club did a spectacular job of spearheading the benefit, which took place at the Richmond Country Club in Hope Valley, Rhode Island, and raised more than $3,000 for SHARE. SHARE thanks also go out to the individuals and businesses across the community who supported the event by donating prizes and sponsoring tees, as well as the many good sports who played the tournament! Golfers who want to be reminded of next year’s date should call Ron or the SHARE office.

SHARENotes

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