SHARE'S YELLOW BOX BRINGS BRIGHT PROMISE TO GUY BORGES

A yellow box holds a lot of promise for Guy Borges. In it he finds many gifts—fun, excitement, and the power to communicate with the world around him.

Guy’s “Yellow Box” is a SHARE communication system currently on loan at New Bedford’s Kennedy-Donovan Center where Guy is a student. Unable to speak or use his hands productively due to cerebral palsy, Guy selects letters, words, and sentences from screen menus by pressing his head against a switch attached to his wheelchair. The computer can print his messages on paper or “speak” them through a voice synthesizer.

A therapist’s tool for diagnosing a student’s individual needs and abilities, the Yellow Box contains generic menus listing words and sentences that express basic needs, wants, and interests. At present, Guy communicates any specialized expression—a classmate’s name or a favorite T.V. program—by spelling it out letter by letter.

SHARE president Les Cory says the next step in helping Guy is to build him his own system with customized menus listing the people, places, things, and feelings that are unique to Guy’s world. “Now the objective is to make one for him which will more efficiently meet his needs,” says Cory.

Since Guy has been using the Yellow Box both to communicate and to complete school work for the past two years, Cory says his new system is a high priority among projects pending at the SMU Rehabilitation Engineering Center. Although it is a “question of time and money,” Cory plans to assign the work to the Center’s research assistants in the coming months. “It’s certainly my hope that we’re going to get something together for him by the early part of the summer,” he says.

SHARE SEEKS SUPPORT FOR FULL-TIME SUMMER STAFF AT CENTER

“I don’t know where we’ll be if we don’t have them,” says Professor Les Cory, Director of Southeastern Massachusetts University’s Rehabilitation Engineering Center. “We’re going to be in trouble—that’s where we’ll be.”

Cory is noticeably concerned. The summer months lie ahead, and the Center needs a full-time staff to handle the season’s especially hectic work schedule. Part-time research assistants John Macedo, Kate Keay, and Nick Allan could tackle the brunt of that work if SHARE raises the $15,000 to fund full-time positions for them through August.

The three SMU graduate students were hired part-time in January to reduce the backlog of requests for assistance and increase the work flow at the Center. Cory says that since they joined the staff, the Center has been able “to design and build some highly innovative equipment” for many waiting clients.

“They all have done some very professional work for us,” says Cory.

But as the client list gets longer every day, the Center’s workload has anything but diminished. Cory says several projects have been under way for “far too long” and need the “concentrated attention” that John, Kate, and Nick bring to the task.

While the assistants have built standard communication systems and custom switches, they each have made unique contributions through their work at the

(Continued on page 3)
SHARE NEWSMAKER: PHIL VIALL TAKES HOME NATIONAL AWARD

On April 22, 1989, Professor Philip H. Viall received the AMVETS Silver Helmet Rehabilitation Award for his work in designing communications systems for the disabled. Unanimously selected by AMVETS delegates throughout the nation, Viall traveled with his family to Washington, D.C. to accept the prestigious award.

A silver replica of the World War II G.I. helmet, the Silver Helmet Award is the highest honor the AMVETS organization grants. Along with other 1989 honorees such as former Secretary of State George Schultz, Professor Viall joins "a distinguished group of Americans who have set themselves apart by their accomplishments," said National Commander Jimmy T. Smith.

All of us at SHARE and the SMU

FAMILY SKATE IS HOT FUN AT HOT WHEELS

A family skate was held at Hot Wheels. Skaters pause to pose at Hot Wheels. Photo by Rick Walder

SHARE's most recent fundraiser had everyone going in circles—quite literally—as families and friends filled Hot Wheels Roller Rink for the Second Annual Skating Party. Held on April 20, the event raised over $400 for SHARE and attracted about 150 children and adults to the New Bedford skating spot.

"I was really pleasantly surprised at the number of people who showed up," says SHARE supporter Kris Kaylor, who organized the fundraiser in memory of her parents, Alphonse and Shirley Fournier.

While last year's event was held for adults only, this year Kris planned a "Family Skate" during spring vacation week for area schools. Although she landed the date by "pure luck," Kris says that kid power doubled the fun that night. Hot Wheels management even extended the event an extra hour because "the children were having such a great time," says Kris. "The kids had a ball!"

2 A Publication of the Society for Human Advancement Through Rehabilitation Engineering Foundation, Inc.

I-N T-H-E L-I-B-R-A-R-Y

If you have ever wondered what it might be like to live another's life, coming to know Harold "Laddie" Holt will help take you there. His latest book, In The Other Fellow's Shoes, is a collection of autobiographical sketches which offers an intimate look into the mind and heart of an ordinary man faced with the extraordinary physical challenge of cerebral palsy.

Each page tells the story of Laddie’s world—the paths he has followed, the people he has met along the way, and the perceptions he has formed on that journey from boy to man. Laddie’s humor and optimism are woven throughout his words as he retraces his "Roots" and "Roots," particularly entertaining is the chapter, "Out Racing the Law," which details Laddie’s escapade with local cops while traveling the neighborhood in his battery-powered wheelchair. Ever candid, Laddie also reveals the pain and frustration he has weathered because of his physical limitations.

But for every struggle, Laddie inspires readers with his triumphs—the joy of learning, the freedom of writing, and the call to use these talents to speak out for the rights of the physically and mentally dependent. Like Laddie’s previously published book of poetry, As I Am, In The Other Fellow’s Shoes offers everyone a meaningful message about life . . . "that happiness comes from appreciating what you have instead of what you lack."

Laddie has agreed to donate a number of copies of his new book to SHARE. For every donation of $25 or more made to SHARE during May and June, we will send a complimentary copy of In The Other Fellow’s Shoes.
Center. John devoted much of his time and expertise to a complex communications package built around an IBM PC. The system, controlled by a single switch, enables a paralyzed, non-speaking person to dial the telephone, turn on a light, or activate a voice synthesizer. "An ideal system for a person who needs to stay in the mainstream," the unit is being used by an Ohio man to run his business from home, says Cory. Similar systems have been delivered to four other SHARE clients as well.

Although John spent "literally hundreds of hours" developing the complicated system, the final product can be duplicated in one day. Cory considers it John's "crowning accomplishment." "It's certainly the most sophisticated communication system I have ever seen," he says.

Kate's pet project involved the debugging and setting up of an active stimulation unit. Designed for nonvocal, physically and mentally disabled people (some of whom have destructive tendencies), the system enables a therapist to determine which activities spark a patient's interest. Basically, the unit is comprised of a computer connected to a number of switches (head, knee, foot, etc.) and devices such as a fan, a music box, and a foot massager. As the patient uses the unit, the computer keeps statistics on which switch and device a patient favors.

In use at a state hospital, the system helps therapists there evaluate patients' abilities and redirect their negative behaviors; hence a patient's head banging is replaced with listening to music. "The people who have it tell me it is the most sophisticated system of its kind anywhere," says Cory. "They love it."

Nick's special assignment began in January when Cory asked him to design a custom program for SHARE client Tim McFarland. Because Tim has cerebral palsy and lacks the physical dexterity to answer a telephone and write messages, he needed a system to help him perform his duties as an operator at the Maher Center Workshop in Newport, R.I. Nick devoted three months to modifying Tim's IBM PC and writing a program to meet his needs. (See Tech Talk--page 4.)

Cory notes that Nick's project was especially challenging because he "did it entirely from scratch." "We told him what was needed and he went off and designed and built it," he says.

Cory says he wants to reap the benefits of his skilled staff before they embark on further educational and career pursuits. "If we don't have these folks here this summer," says Cory, "the people out there who need and deserve our attention and help won't get it."

Editors' note: If each reader of this edition of SHARE Notes sent in a $15 check, it would help provide equipment and services for 50 disabled children and adults over the course of the summer. Remember--you can make a difference in the lives of others.

Research assistants John Macedo, Nick Allan, and Kate Keay

Photo by Rick Walder

ANNOUNCING

The Second Annual
SHARE Foundation
Golf Tournament
June 4, 1989
1:00 p.m. Tee-off
at New Bedford
Municipal Golf Club
New Bedford, Massachusetts

For more information and/or tickets, contact Robert Martin at Seacoast Construction
(508) 996-8210

AND

The Sixth Annual
Ben Boyle Golf Classic
July 29 & 30, 1989
12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. Tee-off
at North Kingstown Golf Course
Quonset, Rhode Island

For more information and/or tickets, contact Ron Kostyla at Kostyla Service Station
(401) 821-6203

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ON THE JOB WITH THE MESSAGE TAKER

Tim’s IBM XT computer. Nick then wrote an accompanying program to enable Tim to control the answering machines and construct/print messages using the computer.

Basically, the Message Taker program works this way. An initial menu displayed on Tim’s computer screen lists three options: 1—Take Message, 2—Record Message, and 3—Quit the Program. When a telephone call comes in to the Maher Center, Tim can choose to take the message as the call is taking place or record the caller’s message on tape for later transcription.

If Tim wants to take a message immediately, pressing “1” on his keyboard will display on the screen the names of frequently called Maher Center personnel. Beside each name is a corresponding letter. Once Tim types this letter—choosing who the message is for—the next menu appears on the screen.

Similar to the previous menu, this one lists people who frequently call the Maher Center. When Tim types the letter corresponding to the caller’s name, another menu comes up on the screen displaying the chosen name and that caller’s telephone number as stored in the computer’s memory. If the number is correct, Tim simply types the letter “Y” for “yes.” If the number is incorrect, Tim types the letter “N” for “no” and then types in the correct telephone number.

By typing “Y” or the correct telephone number, the next menu—a list of possible messages—is displayed. Again, Tim chooses the correct message by typing its corresponding letter. And with that, the completed phone message is printed on the printer and the initial menu returns to the screen.

If, in the course of taking a message, Tim needs a name, number, and/or message not listed, he can choose the “Z” option and type the item manually. By typing “0,” Tim can record the conversation while it is taking place in order to transcribe it at a later time. The program also allows Tim to edit any of the original menus or to tape other incoming calls while he is busy taking or transcribing a message.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
SHARE Walk-A-Thon ’89
Sunday, October 15