SMU POPS ORCHESTRA TO GIVE MAY CONCERT FOR SHARE

The strains of music will fill the springtime air when the SMU Pops Orchestra performs a Mother’s Day Concert to benefit the SHARE Foundation. Set for Saturday, May 12, the 8 p.m. concert will be staged in the Main Auditorium at Southeastern Massachusetts University. Dr. Josef Cobert will conduct the 70-member orchestra and has planned a musical program that promises an evening of enchantment.

Proceeds from this fundraiser are earmarked for the purchase of a computer system for blind SHARE client Anna Ouellette (see story below) and to provide equipment and services to meet the communication needs of other blind individuals still awaiting help from SHARE.

General admission tickets for open seating are $5 per person. A limited number of reserved seats are available at $50 per couple, which includes a pre-concert reception in the Sunset Room. We also will be accepting a limited number of half-page ads ($100 per ad) for the program booklet. Call SHARE at 999-8482 to purchase ads or tickets. Tickets are also available at the SMU Box Office.

ANNA OUELLETTE PURSUES QUEST FOR LEARNING WITH SHARE SYSTEM

Talking with Anna Ouellette, you wonder at her energy. She confesses she was at her computer until midnight working on a report for the medical transcription course she’s taking. Then, in the morning, she headed off to her job at St. Anne’s Hospital, where she works in the darkroom developing X-ray film.

By mid-afternoon, she was back home, playing the gracious hostess and talking candidly about the inner philosophy that inspires her to expand her horizons despite society’s expectations of how a blind woman in her seventies should conduct her life. Anna calls society’s attitude
sought SHARE’s technical assistance in providing a system that could be used by a blind person. Their solution—a computer equipped with a “talking screen” program that speaks through an attached speech synthesizer what Anna has typed on the screen. “This computer gives me an idea of what I wrote,” says Anna. “It’s a great help to me.”

And thanks to an on-line demonstration dictionary recently installed in her computer, Anna is able to do something she has dreamed of since childhood—look up words in a dictionary by herself.

“The computer widened my horizons,” she says. “It was like another dimension.”

Anna is using her system to do her course work for the medical transcription degree she is pursuing through a correspondence school for the blind. But the system—an XT computer, a speech synthesizer, and a printer—is on loan from SHARE. With proceeds from the upcoming SMU Pops Concert, they hope to be able to purchase a system for her to keep.

Meanwhile, Anna is wrapping up her studies, which she hopes will lead to some additional work for her. And she talks about taking a course in writing someday, and about helping others have an easier time at their own similar quests for learning.

“If they want me to tell them [whatever I’ve learned], I’ll tell them,” she says. “You have to feel empathy for others. That gives you the kind of heart that you need.”

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A SPECIAL NIGHT OUT FOR SHARE VOLUNTEERS

Marge, Nonie and Rick Walder enjoy a fun evening at the SHARE banquet.

Photo by Pat Cory

SHARE volunteers got a little something back for all their work on behalf of the organization at SHARE’s annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet this past January. Although the rain poured down that night, 145 guests found warmth and friendship awaiting them inside JT’s Restaurant (Somerset, Mass.) as they gathered to acknowledge the many volunteers who have given of themselves to help make SHARE a success.

SHARE gave out 13 certificates, 25 gift pens, and 7 plaques in recognition of volunteers’ diverse contributions—from building communication systems to organizing fundraisers to tutoring SHARE clients.

But at the close of the award ceremonies, even SHARE founders Les Cory, Phil Viall and Rick Walder managed to walk away with a special award—one with SHARE’s name on it. Massachusetts Elks Association president Joseph Antonietta presented SHARE with a $1,000 check in support of its endeavors on behalf of disabled people.

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Did You Know ...

According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, more than 24 million Americans have a speech, language or hearing disorder.

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Thank You

A note of sincere appreciation ... to all the many SHARE supporters whose efforts and attendance made our Navy Choristers Christmas concert an especially rewarding fundraiser.

Proceeds from the benefit totalled $5,500, and because of that generosity, SHARE client Steve Resendes recently received his own communication system for use at home. It enables Steve, who has cerebral palsy, to “speak” on the phone, write letters and control objects such as a lamp, a radio and a television. Most importantly, it gives him a greater chance for independence as he reaches adulthood.

From Steve, from all of us at SHARE ... thank you very much.

2 A Publication of the Society for Human Advancement Through Rehabilitation Engineering Foundation, Inc.
SENIOR E.E.T. STUDENTS “SHARE” THEIR SMARTS, SKILLS

This semester, four groups of SMU Electrical Engineering Technology students have labored at their senior design projects with SHARE in mind, building these devices for the benefit of disabled clients:

- A television controller that enables a person to turn a TV on and off, select channels and adjust volume—all by pressing a single switch. (Laurie Paine and Frank Hatch)

- A telephone dialer that lets a person answer incoming calls and dial any number by using a single switch. (George Teixeira and John Grady)

- An active stimulation controller which keeps statistics on a mentally retarded youngster’s appropriate and inappropriate use of switches during switch-training sessions by a therapist. (Louis Simoes and Nidal Bitar)

- A digitized speech “yes-no” talker which speaks “yes” when one button is pressed, and “no” when another is pressed. It can be made to speak in a human-sounding male, female or child’s voice. (Richard Rosa and Janice Coyne)

All projects will be completed and packaged by the end of the semester. Public presentations of these and other electrical engineering projects will take place during the week of April 30; call SHARE for further details.

A POSITIVE PROGRESS REPORT FOR SHARE CLIENT LOIS FLOYD

by Robin Singer

Longtime SHARE supporters will remember SHARE client Lois Floyd, whose disabilities prevent her from talking and limit her controllable motions to raising her eyes, tilting her head, and sticking out her tongue. Born with cerebral palsy, Lois communicated—up to the age of 29—only by using up and down eye movements to signify “yes” and “no.” In 1986, SHARE was called in to help Lois communicate better, and Lois has been using a variety of computer-based devices ever since.

The challenge to provide Lois with a communication system was particularly formidable because she is unable to read. Nevertheless, tests indicated that her memory and word recognition skills would allow her to use a device with a limited vocabulary.

Using a specially-designed head switch, Lois began building her computer skills through a variety of scanning programs on a TRS-80 computer, including a colored blocks building game, Tic Tac Toe, a phonetic combination program, numbers learning software, and a word matching program with a voice synthesizer feature. Thanks to tutoring from SMU student and SHARE volunteer Wendy Malenfant, Lois practiced her new skills and rapidly gained proficiency in using the computer.

Lois’s first communication device was an expansion of a word matching program which allowed her to string words together and “speak” them through her system’s voice synthesizer. She quickly mastered the technique and, in her first sentence, requested a visit from a favorite brother. Before long she was ready for an expanded communication system, and I was ready to provide it.

At Les Cory’s suggestion, I designed a sentence communicator for Lois, which allows her to “speak” any one of approximately 60 sentences with two hits of her head switch. The sentences, which can be easily changed by editing a text file, were chosen by Lois and me over a period of several weeks and reflect many of Lois’s interests and needs. The program runs on a Zenith Z-180 lap-top computer, an IBM-PC compatible MSDOS computer with CGA graphics and a backlit LCD monitor.

Lois has already used this system to flirt with a male employee at the nursing home where she lives—and she asks everyone within range to tell her a joke. The nursing home has demonstrated a commitment to developing Lois’s communication abilities by offering her weekly tutoring on her system by their speech pathologist and rehabilitation staff.

The eventual goal for this system is to convert it to battery operation and mount it on Lois’s wheelchair for her everyday use. M.I.T. graduate student and SHARE volunteer Andy Trivett has designed accessories that will make using the battery-operated computer more convenient. A shelf that fits below Lois’s wheelchair will hold the computer, and a custom swivel post (mounted much like the rudder on a sailboat) will support the detached monitor. Lois is already using the adjustable switch mount Andy designed for her wheelchair. When the battery module is completed and Lois fully masters the operation of her device, the wheelchair mounting phase will occur.

At that time, Lois Floyd will have a voice. I think the folks at the nursing home had better start collecting jokes.
HELP WANTED

- To sell tickets for the SMU Pops Concert—May 12
- To recruit walkers for the Knights of Columbus Walk-A-Thon—June 3
- To recruit walkers for the 5th Annual SHARE Walk-A-Thon—October 21

Call SHARE to volunteer!!

WANTED: Magazine Subscription Orders

SHARE client Patti Swift runs her own home-based business filling clients' magazine subscription orders. Although Patti has been in this line of work since 1948, she continues to welcome new customers seeking new or gift subscriptions as well as renewals. If you wish to buy a magazine subscription for yourself or as a gift, or if you need to renew a subscription, consider Patti’s service. Patti says there are very few magazine subscriptions (Reader’s Digest is one) which must be sent directly to the company, and subscription costs through her service are usually less than single issue prices.

To renew subscriptions through Patti, simply tape your current magazine address labels to a piece of paper; mark the name of the magazine beside each label, and be sure to include your telephone number. Patti or her assistant will contact you approximately 3 months before the expiration date(s) to confirm renewal, terms and price. To renew or order subscriptions, contact Patti at the following address:

Miss Patricia Swift, 51 Massasoit Avenue, Fairhaven, MA 02719
(508) 992-2941

Many, many thanks from Patti for your patronage!

SHARE Golf Tournaments

The Third Annual SHARE Foundation Golf Tournament
June 2, 1990 • 12 noon Tee-off
New Bedford Municipal Golf Club
New Bedford, Massachusetts
For more information and/or tickets, contact Bob Martin at (508) 996-8210 or Bob Barbero at (508) 999-4665

The Seventh Annual Ben Boyle Golf Classic
August 4 & 5, 1990 • 12 noon to 2:00 p.m. Tee-off
North Kingstown Golf Course
Quonset, Rhode Island
For more information and/or tickets, contact
Ron Kostyla at (401) 821-6203

Knights of Columbus
Second Annual "Share the Spirit" Walk-A-Thon
Sunday • June 3, 1990

The Walk-A-Thon begins at 9 a.m.
from the Father Boehm Council K of C
Home at 28 Fish Road in Tiverton.
Last year’s Walk-A-Thon raised
$6,500 for SHARE; this year’s goal is
$10,000.
For more information, call:
SHARE (508) 999-8482
K of C (401) 624-4924 (after 7 p.m.)