A birthday is a special time—a day for presents and parties and blowing out candles with hopes for a bright new year. When Kim Sherman turns 22 this winter, she can expect these traditional festivities. But her wish may be especially poignant as she faces an uncertain future. For Kim, February 18, 1988 will mark more than just another year of living. It will change her entire life.

Kim Sherman, a young woman with cerebral palsy, has attended the Kennedy-Donovan Center since she was ten years old. A year earlier, in 1975, Public Law 94-142 came into effect, entitling all handicapped individuals between the ages of 3 and 22 to a public education. Under this law, Kim was given the chance to attend school for the first time in her life. But after 12 years of enjoying her second chance at learning, Kim is nearing the day when the town of Dartmouth, Mass. no longer will be responsible for providing that education.

"As it stands now, on your 22nd birthday the state says, 'that's it, the funds are no longer there,'" says SHARE board member Barbara Bell, Kim's speech pathologist at the center. "And that's your birthday present."

Although she says that Kim has "definitely benefited" from PL 94-142, Bell sees Kim's situation as unique and wishes the law could provide retroactive services to her student for the five years she missed as a child.

"She's not been able to really experience the world and learn as you and I did," Bell says.

For Kim, the Kennedy-Donovan Center became the world where she learned of life, friendship, and the joy of communication. A facility specifically geared for students with special needs, the school developed Kim's academic skills through interdisciplinary routines. This program allows time daily for a number of activities from school work to personal hygiene to leisure. And Kim hates to miss a single minute.

"She doesn't get out a lot, so her big thing is coming to school," says Bell. "Her attendance is perfect. If she misses a day, she gets really mad."

Perhaps Bell can read Kim's emotions so well because she has worked with her nearly every day for the past five years. Beyond the usual teacher-student rapport, the two women share a special relationship. Bell visits Kim throughout the school day to chat about her lessons, as well as two of Kim's favorite topics—General Hospital and boys. To add some spice to the day, Bell often takes Kim for a stroll around the block to scout for cute guys and a little adventure.

Kim practices for these social encounters with a communications system provided by SHARE. During a typical communication/participation routine, Bell sets up a scenario requiring Kim's ability to think abstractly and then respond concretely through her computer—"Say you saw this cute boy and you wanted to ask him out for a soda, what would you want to say to him?" By pressing her head to a special switch attached to her wheelchair, Kim can select a category named "ME" and then choose a sentence stating "Hi, my name is Kim Sherman."

(Continued on page 7)
TO OUR READERS... When most of us have something to say, we just start a conversation, pick up the telephone, or maybe jot a letter. So automatic, so simple--it can be easy to overlook the magic of communication. We at SHARE often are reminded of this precious ability through our encounters with our clients and their families. Their experiences never fail to move us, to make us think. We'd like to let them tell you in their own words what the gift of communication means to them.

Dear Les Cory,

The doors were closing on me very fast. Muscles in my arms and legs had diminished. Then the most important thing that I had left was my voice, and now that has gone.

I can't explain how much this computer means to me. The doors that were closing have opened, and the fear I had of not being able to communicate is over. Thank God for your computer. I hope that your program can reach out and help more people like myself.

What a relief it was when I heard the computer talk for me the first time. You and the program have made life easier not only for me, but for my family as well. Never have I seen one of my daughters so excited as when I had my wife phone her at the college she is attending. When she answered the telephone and heard the message by computer voice, she screamed, cried and laughed. Tears of happiness came into the eyes of everybody in my family once they knew I could communicate by either computer voice or messages.

I could go on and on about the many joys we have experienced since I have had the computer. I want to thank you again for the miracle of the computer.

Thanks again,
Roger Dorman

Dear Professor Cory,

My family and especially my father want to thank you, Mr. Viall, and all those affiliated with the Foundation. As put in my father's words, "Words can't express what it feels to be able to communicate once again."

Dad spends many hours a day with the computer. It fills his day and gives him a great sense of independence.

Thanks again,
Cheryl A. Monroe
(Roger Dorman's daughter)

Dear Prof. Cory,

Thank you very much for my computer. I use it for everything. Now I can write a letter to you and say thank you like the other kids do. Thank you very much.

I love you,
Sheri Keighley

SHARE NEWSMAKER: PROFESSOR WALTER MIERZEJEWSKI

When SHARE board member Professor Walter Mierzejewski embraces a project, he doesn't let go until he gets results. A Professor Emeritus at SMU, Mierzejewski has embarked on a one-man campaign to expand SHARE's Honorary Advisory Board. Through letters, phone calls, and visits, Mierzejewski is inviting state and national politicians to fill the seats of this prestigious SHARE office.

Recently Mierzejewski's endeavor merited celebration when Kansas Senator Robert Dole and Massachusetts Senator John Kerry accepted the professor's appeal. They join Southeastern Massachusetts University President John R. Brazil, who is also a member of the SHARE Honorary Advisory Board.

SHARE thanks Professor Mierzejewski for his steadfast efforts. We are proud to welcome Senators Dole and Kerry to the SHARE team!

* * *

We all need some kind of help
Some people need help to tie their shoe
Some people need help just to chew
Some people need help to scratch their back
Others to hold a baby on their lap
But the best help that you can find
Comes from a great heart and a fantastic mind

by Linda Texeira,
SHARE's first client

Walt Mierzejewski  Photo by Les Cory

2 A Publication of the Society for Human Advancement Through Rehabilitation Engineering Foundation, Inc.
They say everything good comes to those who wait. So when the day finally arrived, walkers were more than ready to stir up the autumn leaves and have a good time at the second annual SHARE Walk-A-Thon.

On October 25, 1987, over 190 people turned out at SMU to walk or ride wheelchairs along the 10-kilometer route through the quiet Dartmouth countryside. And when it was over, SHARE had netted over $15,000 in pledges to support the work of SMU’s Rehabilitation Engineering Center.

But Walk-A-Thon ’87 was more than a great fund raiser. It was a gathering of many of SHARE’s friends and supporters. Like last year, quite a few SHARE clients came to mingle with each other as well as to tread the course. They also took turns typing messages on a communication system SHARE had placed on display at the Athletic Center. They read like spirited graffiti—“LADDIE HOLT SAYS HELLO,” “JERRY WAS HERE,” “HATS OFF TO SMU.”

The festivities even lured participants from around the country. A California couple visiting relatives in New Bedford volunteered to staff one of the route checkpoints. Roger Bennett and Melissa Bouffard Bennett, SHARE volunteers while students at SMU, drove down from New Hampshire in their new pickup truck just to join in the action. And a group of SMU alumni working at the Naval Underwater Systems Center in Newport.

Rhode Island sent a $65 check along with their best wishes for the Walk-A-Thon’s success.

Perhaps the best words to describe the day were left behind on the communication system’s printout sheet. Walk-A-Thon ’87 was a “SHARE VICTORY” indeed!

**SHARE Salute**

JEAN LIMOGES: WALK-A-THON WHIRLWIND

There were hot dogs, popcorn, fruit, and drinks to satisfy the troops. There were scores of walkers to raise thousands of dollars for the cause.

But appearances can be deceiving.

In reality, months of preparation preceded this celebrated day. Meetings had to be arranged. Calls had to be made. Schedules had to be planned. Every detail had to be checked and rechecked. And someone had to take charge of it all.

Enter Jean Limoges, key organizer of the event.

"She is the person who was on scene, making it all happen," says Les Cory, of the woman who made the Walk-A-Thon’s success look so easy.

A member of SHARE’s Board of Directors since 1986, Jean adopted the Walk-A-Thon as her pet project. And fellow board members say that this "bundle of energy" gave much of her spare time to making the fund raiser come together.

"She took vacation days from work to come and plan the Walk-A-Thon," recalls Phil Viall.

Les Cory speaks for the entire SHARE Foundation when he expresses his appreciation for Jean and the months she devoted to producing one very special day. "She’s a super person," says Cory. "Jean has done a lot to benefit the Foundation as a whole."
Happy Holidays To All
Since 1952 Camp Jabberwocky on the beautiful island of Martha's Vineyard has been considered a second home for many physically and mentally disabled individuals. Some campers at Jabberwocky have speech impairments. Through eye movements and other forms of body gesturing they are able to have only limited conversations. Other campers have vocal ability but cannot write or use a typewriter independently because they have limited hand coordination.

Before the 1984 adult camp season started, two counselors from Jabberwocky, Elisa Marony and Mary Beth Grady, visited Phil Viall at SHARE. Viall showed them communication systems and explained how they can be adapted to help individuals with severe speech impairments. After the demonstration, Grady felt some campers could benefit from this new technology. So she asked Viall if he could visit Camp Jabberwocky.

Viall was welcomed at Jabberwocky and spent a weekend. A round table was set up to hold switches, a black-and-white television, and a SHARE system called The Yellow Box which talks in a deep, robotic voice. With the equipment at his reach, Viall was ready to evaluate campers that he felt could benefit from using communication devices.

Campers used foot, head, and other types of switches to operate the computers. By pressing these switches, they could select letters of the alphabet or words that appeared on the T.V. screen. As campers created words and sentences, the letters appeared on the top of the white glowing screen. After campers selected the "TALK" command their sentences were spoken by the voice synthesizer. A few campers were able to express themselves for the first time.

Since the campers were able to use computers to communicate more effectively, the camp decided to get into the computer age. So at the following camp session, a trailer was rented and served as a temporary computer cabin. SHARE loaned a computer and related equipment, while two campers brought their own.

Clark Hanjian, a counselor at the camp, was eager to design the necessary switches and programs so campers could use the computers. Often he travelled to the island's Radio Shack to purchase parts which were needed to make the switches, spending long hours making sure they worked properly.

When the switches and programs were in proper working order, campers walked or were pushed in wheelchairs into the computer cabin to learn how to operate the modern-day machines. Many campers never had a prior opportunity to use computers. Hanjian and other counselors taught them how to operate the computers. A few campers needed help in spelling and writing sentences because they had little formal education.

During the 1985–86 winter season, campers, campers' parents, and counselors raised $15,000 to build a permanent computer cabin. Woods were cleared in a quiet area of the camp to erect the new home for the computers. Under the leadership of Mr. James, a camper's father, the computer cabin was quickly built. And it was christened "Outgrabe".

Through the months, several computer systems were donated by various organizations. And each year campers and counselors think of new ideas to express themselves through computers—from writing messages, to talking with friends, to composing short stories.

With the help of a counselor, camper Tim McFarland, who has cerebral palsy but no speech impairment, wrote a poem using a computer. Due to his limited hand dexterity, he found it strenuous using a typewriter because he often typed unwanted keys. Using a word processor, McFarland could delete letters and words simply by pressing the backspace key on the computer keyboard.

McFarland's poem was read to guests during the Jabberwocky's open house. Since this was his first poem he composed, he became overwhelmed with the feeling of accomplishment, and tears started filling his eyes.

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The following verses are excerpts from Tim McFarland's first computer-created poem.

**Countdown to Camp**

I'm miles apart from everyone
When it is snowy and cold.
I am bound up inside of my home
And I feel like I am locked inside a
Prison and there are bars on my door.
I feel like I am tied down.

I'm homebound, but I want to get out.
Because when I'm home, I can't go
downtown, or to the movies, or out
To dinner, or out to breakfast.

But then, when April and May finally
Roll around, the Camp Countdown begins.
My friend counts down the days with her
Calendar. Everyone gets jealous
Because they have to stay behind and work
But I will not be homebound.
TECH TALK: THE SENTENCE TALKER

When Les Cory and Phil Viall first learned of Peg Kelly's plight, they were intrigued. They had helped other clients diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, but none quite like Peg. Unlike most patients, Peg did not lose her motor skills during the early stages of the disease. Instead, she lost her ability to speak. Still able to walk and even write, she not only wanted her voice back--she wanted to talk on the telephone again.

From that request, the Sentence Talker emerged. And with a bit of computer wizardry, the new system solved Peg's problem by speaking her thoughts for her.

This is how it works. A television monitor and a keyboard are connected to a microcomputer containing specialized lists of commands called "menus". Once the computer is turned on, the letters of the alphabet appear in columns on the T.V. screen. Next to each letter is a special category name--for example, "H--HOLIDAY". If the letter "H" is typed on the keyboard, sentences about holidays, numbered "0" through "9", will appear on the screen.

Sentences can be as general as "I--Merry Christmas" or as specific as "7--Best wishes on this most beautiful of holidays, Aunt Mary".

Once a number is typed, the corresponding sentence appears across the top of the screen and a voice synthesizer attached to the computer immediately "speaks" the selection. The user also can create sentences not found in the list by typing them directly into the system. By replacing standard messages with new ones, a person can customize the program to his or her own needs.

With additional hardware such as a printer and telephone hook up, the Sentence Talker can turn its sentences into a friendly letter or a long-distance chat.

* * *

Editors' Note: Six months ago, Peg Kelly died from Lou Gehrig's disease. Peg's family says that she used her Sentence Talker, affectionately named "Oscar", throughout her final days.

WITH SPECIAL THANKS

October's Walk-A-Thon was a great success thanks to all those who participated in the fund raiser. We appreciate your enthusiasm and support! We'd like to express our gratitude to those groups and individuals for donating their time and services to SHARE... Claflin Home Health Care Center, McDonald's, State Fruit Co. Inc., Telephone Pioneers of America, the Shriner's clowns, SMU's Student Engineering Societies, and the many behind-the-scene volunteers who made the event run smoothly.

We especially want to thank everyone who made their way along the 10-kilometer route--your efforts will help SMU's Rehabilitation Engineering Center turn technology into triumph for the disabled.

KIM SHERMAN
(Continued from page 1)

To add to her response, she can repeat this process, building a message that can be printed out or spoken by a voice synthesizer.

"When you and I sit down, we can talk. We can have a satisfying sort of interchange," says Bell. "But for someone like Kim, it's usually a frustrating experience."

Kim's cerebral palsy makes each session at the computer a physically draining workout. Because "the muscles in her body are always going against each other," Bell says that for Kim communication is a struggle--but a rewarding one.

"The first time that Kim was able to operate the device and the speech came out ... I was crying, she was crying," recalls Bell. "It's such a moving experience, because here's someone who's never been able to say anything that's been understood. She's come a long way."

And she has a long way to go. Come February, Bell hopes that Kim will attend the Fall River Dayhab Program, an adult center that uses SHARE communication systems. Bell says this program is especially good for Kim because it will allow her to "continue to work on her academic skills and her skills on the computer." And if these computer skills become refined, Bell envisions a productive future for Kim in that industry.

But for now, Kim is happy working with her system and finding adventure around the block. And her teachers at the Kennedy-Donovan Center are readying Kim for her transition to a wider world where she will not be alone in her quest for learning.

"There are a million Kims out there," says Bell. "And they have every right to be able to communicate like the rest of us."
On a Christmas past, a young couple sat before a crackling fire and reflected upon the riches around them. They shared a home, now bedecked with red ribbon, draped garland, and a glittering evergreen. They knew love and laughter and the joy of giving their lives to each other. And in their newborn child, they found the greatest treasure of all.

It was a special time for them, and they wanted a fitting celebration for this baby's first Christmas. But did he really need another stuffed animal to join the others lining the nursery shelves? Did they really need to stack packages under the tree for a son too young to understand the tradition?

They decided on a unique way to spend the money they had set aside. Instead of giving their child toys and clothes, they would give a donation in his name to a favorite cause. To them, it was the perfect gift--one sent from the heart and wrapped in the true spirit of the season.

That year SHARE received a check for $100 from a young family wanting to make a difference through their holiday celebration. We at SHARE thank them for giving in such a creative way, as we thank all of you who have made our ongoing work possible through your generosity.

Have a holiday filled with love, laughter, and the best of life's riches.

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