SHARE Fun Walk Returns to the Zoo!

Last year, our largest fundraiser, the SHARE Fun Walk, was moved to the Buttonwood Park Zoo in New Bedford. Because so many participants loved the change, we’re doing it again!

Please join us on Saturday, September 29th for the 27th annual event, which will feature fun, food and prizes. Registration begins at 9:15 a.m. and runs through 9:45 a.m., when the doors open for your free admission to visit the animals and enjoy a great time with your family and friends.

Your donation of $50 or more will entitle you to more gifts than ever, including a SHARE T-shirt and a lunch ticket for the zoo cafeteria. If you bring your family, we will provide an extra lunch ticket for every additional $50 you turn in that day, as well as more chances in our gigantic raffle that is slated to once again feature the zoo’s star, Emily the Elephant.

Local businesses that generously support SHARE also will make it possible for you to win gift certificates to area restaurants and other establishments. And donations of $250 put you into SHARE’s special winners’ circle, with more opportunities to receive additional raffle tickets as well as an attractive SHARE folding chair. Now that’s a lot of winning!

More importantly, you’ll gain the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to make communication and more independent living possible for children and adults with disabilities. For the past 30 years, SHARE has provided funding to support the work at UMass Dartmouth’s Center for Rehabilitation Engineering to assist individuals with conditions such as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease), spinal cord injuries, and more.

Won’t you join the fun on September 29th? Of course, we look forward to seeing everybody there, but if you can’t make it in person and want to help, please fill out the enclosed support form and mail it in to us! Or, if you would like to become a Virtual Walker, visit www.sharefunwalk.kintera.org/2012.

For information or to register, call SHARE at 508-999-8482!
Independent Living Pleases SHARE Client

SHARE client Robert Maloney says it is his responsibility to educate other people “in the same situation I am in” about the possibilities available through assistive technology.

Since May of 2007, Bob, who has cerebral palsy and is quadriplegic, has been living independently in an apartment in North Easton. He previously worked with Easter Seals and was trained on Dragon Naturally Speaking, a software program that activates household items and the computer via vocal commands. He operates his several systems by pressing switches with his head, using his voice, and sipping on a special tube.

About a year ago, he began working with Tom Meggison, computer technologist at the UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering, which SHARE funding supports.

“T’m not serious very often, but honestly, without SHARE and Tom in particular, I wouldn’t be able to live independently,” Bob says. “He’s one of the best technicians I’ve ever worked with since I was exposed to technology way back in the 1980s. If I have any little problem and I call the SHARE office, he helps me very quickly. The whole SHARE program has been real responsive to all of my needs.”

Bob admits that the process to learn vocal commands and get the assistive technology to work can be challenging and frustrating at times. Those difficulties occur not because he isn’t adept at operating his voice-operated system, but rather because the user has to repeat the commands in the exact same way each time without deviation. “My voice can change from day to day. If I’m having a bad day, I use what I call my ‘falsetto’ type voice and it can’t recognize commands. That’s when there is a problem.”

Bob has what amounts to three separate and independent systems. The first employs a head switch mounted on his wheelchair that sends a radio frequency signal to a SHARE-modified garage door opener that Tom interfaced to the device that opens Bob’s apartment door.

The second system is a voice-activated infrared controller with which Bob can operate any device that responds to an infrared signal. He actually has two of these—one in his bedroom and one in the living area. By means of an X-10 interface, Bob uses his voice to control his TV, two separate air conditioners, his radio and CD player, several lamps, and overhead lights, as well as the buzzer system that enables him to open the outside door to the apartment complex.

The third system employs a “Quad Joy” mouse by which he controls his computer. With the Quad Joy, he moves the mouse with a rod that he clasps in his teeth, and he clicks the mouse by sipping on the Quad Joy mouthpiece. He writes e-mail and accesses the Internet using a combination of an on-screen keyboard and a speech recognition program called Dragon.

On the computer, he enjoys shopping online, browsing the Internet, writing and sending e-mails, and watching movies. He can change channels by speaking a word to indicate his viewing preferences, such as “comedy” or “news.”

“I want to use the knowledge I have every day to do for myself and rely on what I have,” he says.

Although Bob is assisted by personal care attendants, he spends a lot of time alone at home. “Technology is so important. If there’s a problem, I first try to figure it out and troubleshoot…”

Tom notes that Bob is different from typical clients because he is “proactive and recommends things to us.” For example, following a recent hospital stay, Bob saw other quadriplegic patients with cups mounted on their wheelchairs and at their bedsides.

After trying what Bob describes as “frustrating Velcro and duct tape-type alternatives that ended up spilling all over,” Tom installed a Drink-Aide on his chair. Designed by and for people with disabilities, the Drink-Aide has served him well.

“The reason I’m proactive is because I’m so in love with technology and I want other people with disabilities to be exposed to SHARE and this equipment because I know it can help them.” ■
Rescheduled from its usual August date to Sunday, October 21, 2012, the 18th Annual Classic Car Show & Fun Day presented by the Down Shifter’s Car Club of New England offers something for everyone in your family.

Not only will car lovers be able to admire hundreds of classic autos and trucks, but children will have the opportunity to “touch a truck” at the event thanks to Dartmouth’s Fire District III, which will display one of its shiny emergency vehicles.

The Dartmouth DPW will show off one of its newest trucks, and Mike Leduc, of Tiverton, will display his latest acquisition, a modified U.S. Army Deuce and a half, familiar to almost everyone who has ever worn a military uniform. SHARE is still looking for more trucks to delight the youngsters. Any landscaper, oil company, contractor, or other truck owner who would be willing to bring a truck should call the SHARE office for details.

For individuals who like to shop, the event will feature a giant flea market with dozens of vendors selling their wares. And for those who like games, music, and food, the UMass Dartmouth grounds will have it all. This fundraiser runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will benefit the SHARE Foundation, the fundraising arm of the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering at UMass Dartmouth.

Since 1981, SHARE has helped thousands of children and adults with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease), multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, blindness, spinal cord injuries, and other conditions. Using adaptive equipment, SHARE’s clients are given the opportunity to communicate independently—many for the first time in their lives—and also to independently operate items such as lights, phones, TVs, and other devices in their living spaces.

For more information, contact SHARE at 508-999-8482.

**Giant Flea Market Beckons Treasure Hunters**

Just a small segment of the treasure trove of antiques, tools, toys, and “stuff” offered for sale by the 40 or so vendors who displayed their wares at the 2011 Classic Car Show and Flea Market last October…

**Laddie Holt Poetry a Special Find**

We have just come across a cache of books written by the late Laddie Holt, formerly of Riverside, Rhode Island. Laddie, who had cerebral palsy, did his writing by means of a hook attached to his shoe, with which he typed on an IBM Selectric typewriter on the floor. He was often referred to as the “Poet Laureate of Riverside.”

SHARE built Laddie a communication device and a number of foot-controlled, single switch devices that enabled him to live independently in his home near Crescent Park. SHARE will send a copy of his very well-written book of poems to anyone who is willing to pay the postage. Or stop in at the SHARE office for your free book while 50 copies last.■
Generating $6,000 to benefit the SHARE Foundation, the 29th Annual Ben Boyle/Ron Kostyla Golf Classic was a great success and brought together 80 golfers, many of whom have played in the benefit tournament since its inception. Held on July 29th, the event unfolded under sunny skies perfect for the outdoor fundraiser.

“The day was gorgeous and everyone had a great time,” says Les Cory. “We enjoyed terrific raffle prizes, a wonderful meal, and signature sausage and pepper sandwiches on the grill prepared by Ron Kostyla’s grandchildren, Ryan and Brenna Fox.”

Many thanks to Bob Bjorklund, Bill Pimental, and their terrific team of volunteers who organized and ran the event. Everyone involved did a wonderful job—from golfers to sponsors Pawtuxet Valley Rotary Club and the Sunday Morning Golfers to the folks at the beautiful Richmond Country Club in Hope Valley, RI.

These event organizers, sponsors, and supporters have shared their time and talents for nearly three decades! On behalf of all our clients, thank you for your longstanding commitment to SHARE and its mission.

IT IS WITH GREAT SADNESS that we report the passing of Jeanne Holen, longtime SHARE volunteer. Jeanne and her husband Bill have attended every Fun Walk for the past 26 years. Together they were the friendly folks who distributed T-shirts, coffee mugs, hats, and other incentives to more than 1,000 walkers.

We are grateful that Bill has requested that donations in Jeanne’s memory be directed to SHARE. Jeanne will be greatly missed by all of us who have such wonderful memories of this very giving person. Her warmth, kindness, and generosity of spirit will be remembered always.
WITH OUR THANKS We extend our gratitude to the many supporters who have donated to SHARE over the past few months. Your generous gifts are making it possible for us to provide the opportunity for independent communication to more children and adults with disabilities.

The following donations were received from March 17, 2012 through July 31, 2012.

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