SHARE’s Fun Walk Scheduled for September 27!

Mark your calendar for the SHARE Foundation’s largest fundraiser of the year! You are all invited to the Buttonwood Park Zoo in New Bedford on Saturday, September 27, 2014 for our annual day of fun, food and surprises.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. at the zoo 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 entire family.

The Fun Walk around Buttonwood Park will leave from the carousel at 10 a.m. and will be back about 10:45 a.m. Those who prefer to only walk inside the zoo may set their own course and pace. One lap of the zoo’s outer walkway is equal to about a quarter of a mile.

Of course, before you set off, you’ll still get a chance to catch up with familiar faces and enjoy coffee and doughnuts courtesy of Towne Donut Shoppe. When you turn in $50 or more in pledges, you’ll receive a SHARE Fun Walk t-shirt or mug, and you’ll also get a ticket for lunch in the zoo cafeteria. If you bring your family, we will provide an extra lunch ticket for every additional $50 you turn in that day.

There’s more! You will also receive a raffle ticket in our gigantic raffle featuring the zoo’s most famous resident, Emily the Elephant. At noon, Emily will once again select the first prize winner. Last year, attendees had a blast watching Emily choose the lucky winner, so you won’t want to miss a minute of the action!

As always, you’ll have the chance to win valuable gift certificates to local restaurants and other area businesses that are generously supporting SHARE in this effort. Bringing in donations of $250 or more will put you into SHARE’s special winners’ circle with more opportunities to win several fine gifts.

To register, please fill out the enclosed registration form or call SHARE at 508-999-8482. If you can’t make it, you can still show your support by sending in a donation or sponsoring a friend. Would you like to be a virtual walker? Visit www.sharefunwalk.kintera.org/2014

Spread the word! We look forward to seeing you there.

For information or to register, call SHARE at 508-999-8482!
SHARE Client Uses SpeakQ + WordQ

Morgen, a SHARE client residing on Cape Cod, is looking toward the future. According to Client Services Coordinator Beverly Thorn, the 20-year-old is building her computer skills in the hopes of gaining future employment someday.

The Center for Rehabilitation Engineering recently supplied Morgen with a laptop computer and an Andrea Superbeam array microphone that is attached to her electric wheelchair.

Morgen, who has cerebral palsy, is unable to speak clearly, so most speech recognition systems do not respond correctly to her spoken words. Beverly located a software package called WordQ + SpeakQ, which is designed specifically for people whose speech is difficult to understand, and has trained Morgen to use the software effectively.

Morgen speaks a phrase into the microphone one word at a time, and as she does, the software displays nine options of what it thinks she said. Using a trackball mouse, Morgen then selects the correct word and places it in the document. The software also incorporates word prediction, making it easier to produce what she wants to write.

“It helps me to type documents and get things done,” Morgen said of the equipment loaned to her by the Center. “I can do it with less struggling.”

Morgen uses her laptop to write letters, emails and school work and says she has enjoyed her interaction with SHARE. She has especially enjoyed working with Beverly, who trained her to use the software.

“She’s very sweet and a hard worker,” Morgen said. “She’s helped me a lot.”

Five-Button Mouse Streamlines Cursor Use for SHARE Client

Bill has always had difficulty using a mouse because of the severely spastic motion of his arms and hands. He types with the aid of a key guard, but it is nearly impossible for him to move a mouse to position the cursor where he wants it on the computer screen. Sometimes he pushes the mouse so far away from him that he cannot reach it and then needs help to get it back. When he does manage to get the cursor where he wants it, it often moves off the target when he tries to click the mouse button. It almost seems that his spasticity gets worse as he gets closer to his goal.

Today, Mark Whittaker, head of the UMass Dartmouth Rehabilitation Engineering Center design team, is working on a stationary five-button mouse that can be positioned in an optimal place on Bill’s tray. Buttons 1 through 4 will move the cursor left, right, up and down to precisely position the cursor over the target. Button 5 is the “click” button to actually make the selection.

There may also be a need for a double-click button, unless Bill develops the ability to double-click. Similarly, there may be a need for another button for “click and drag.” The buttons will be arranged far enough apart that Bill is not likely to press the wrong button by mistake; if he does, he will simply press the opposite button to reposition the cursor where he wants it on the screen.

This device is one great example of how a fairly simple application of modern technology can have a significant impact on the quality of life for a person who has a disability.

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SHARE Foundation Classic Car Show
Sure to Please Entire Family

Car lovers will be able to admire more than 100 classic autos and trucks at the 20th Annual Antique and Classic Car Show to benefit SHARE on Sunday, October 19 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Held on the grounds of UMass Dartmouth, this special event offers something for everyone—cars, music, food and even a little shopping!

Awards will be presented in many categories such as “Best in Show” and “Professor’s Choice;” in addition, the top 75 entries will receive trophies. Special guest DJ Johnny Angel will bring back rock and roll the way you remember it while you enjoy a cookout with hotdogs, chowder and other treats and experience the camaraderie this outing always provides.

For individuals who like to shop, the fundraiser also will feature a giant flea market with dozens of vendors selling their wares.

The entry fee of $2 gives you access to all of the day’s fun! Presented again this year by the Down Shifter’s Car Club of New England, this event will likely be the last cruise for the season. Classic car owners and fans should come out for one last look before these mint condition vehicles go into hibernation for the winter. Proceeds from the event will benefit the SHARE Foundation, the fundraising arm of the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering at UMass Dartmouth. For more information, call John at 508-763-0576. Hope to see you there!

It’s not too early to start looking through your antiques, toys, tools and other “stuff” that you no longer need but somebody else might! A flea market will be held in conjunction with SHARE’s Classic Car Show on Sunday, October 19, and now’s your chance to help a worthy cause and make a few sales at the same time.

Simply put, we’re looking for vendors. Interested? To reserve a space or receive more information, call SHARE at 508-999-8482. Each space, measuring 12 feet by 20 feet, can be reserved for a $10 fee. You’ll be asked to provide your own methods of display, such as tables, back decks of trucks or whatever works for you.

Be a part of the fun. Whether it’s as a car enthusiast, shopper or seller, SHARE would love to see you there!
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 April 1, 2014 through August 27, 2014.

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Held at the Richmond Country Club in Hope Valley, RI, on July 27, the 31st Annual Ben Boyle/Ron Kostyla Golf Classic raised over $6,000 to benefit SHARE and the work of the UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering. Many thanks to the Pawtuxet Valley Rotary Club and the Sunday Morning Golfers, who sponsored the event, and to the many supporters who participated in this annual fundraiser!

The ALS Association Ice Bucket Challenge has been one of the most successful fundraising ideas in the entire history of fundraising, netting literally millions of dollars. If you are challenged, you have a choice of making a donation to the ALS Association or having a bucket of ice water dumped on your head. I wonder how many of those contributors have any idea that SHARE has provided equipment and services to nearly 500 people with ALS. I note that several of our donors sent their ALS challenge money to SHARE.

Why not challenge one of your friends to either send a donation to SHARE or do some crazy thing that you dream up? Maybe your challenge will be the next big thing. I will send a surprise gift to the person who comes up with the most successful challenge to their friends. Email me — LCory@umassd.edu — to let me know how your challenge played out. Remember to tell your friends that they must pass the challenge along! We will print a description of the best challenge in our next edition.

Dream Big!

Les