Mary Joyce Phillips says she loves to explore, and her computer allows her to do that and more.

“I don’t know what I would do without it. I can’t watch TV all day and I can’t hold a book or magazine, so the computer fills in all the gaps for me,” she says.

A SHARE client for more than 12 years, Mary Joyce has lost most of her ability to use her hands, and she uses a wheelchair as the result of her condition, post-polio syndrome.

Thanks to specialized equipment, she is able to live independently in an apartment and control her television, telephone, lights and fans using Center-provided adaptive control units. Mary Joyce explains that she operates switches on her wheelchair with her finger and a switch on her bed by touching it with her head.

Continued on page 2

Computer and Environmental Controls Enhance SHARE Client’s Life

On May 3, the 32nd annual Ben Boyle/Ron Kostyla Golf Tournament to benefit SHARE will be held at the Richmond Country Club in Rhode Island with a shotgun tee-off time of 8 a.m.

In addition to 18 holes of golf, there will be team awards, tour prizes and a sit-down dinner, all for $135 per person. Please invite your friends, neighbors and family so that we can make this year’s event the best ever! To sign up or receive more information, call Bob at 401-585-0156 or SHARE at 508-999-8482.

Continued on page 2
Golf Tournament Celebrates 32-Year History
Continued from page 1

The golf benefit began when the Pawtuxet Valley Rotary Club was looking for a way to honor and support a fallen founder, Ben Boyle. The event was established as a way to allow a large number of his friends and fellow Rotarians to help Ben in a special way while enjoying a day of golf and friendship.

When Ben was approached with the idea, he said, “Thank you, but I’ll only allow my name to be used if all the proceeds go to an organization I’ve been working with called SHARE.”

Ben, a former president at Centreville Bank and a founding member of the Pawtuxet Valley Rotary Club, was partially paralyzed as the result of an auto accident. He was working closely with SHARE and understood the value of its work.

Because the Rotary Club did not have the experience to run a golf tournament, Rotary Golf Committee member Bob Bjorklund enlisted the aid of his friend, Ron Kostyla, who was also a friend to Ben.

It wasn’t long before Ron was the “go-to” person on the committee. Ron, an avid golfer, along with his friend Ron Jalbert, had formed a group called the “Sunday Morning Golfers” that met at his home every Sunday morning at 5:30 a.m.

Ron would make breakfast for everyone and they would travel to a golf course for weekly play. Bob Bjorklund and Ben Boyle were also members of this special group.

Early Ben Boyle tournaments were held over two days, with golfing on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and the awards banquet held on Sunday evening. Events typically raised $1,500 to $2,000 for SHARE.

Years later, Ron became a SHARE board member and continued to be active in charity work. When he passed away nine years ago, the tournament name was changed to

organized by Bob Bjorklund with assistance from Maria Shank, Bill Pimental, Bob Pimental, Chad Bjorklund and Bob Petiepas. Supported by local businesses and golfers, the tournament is now played on a Sunday morning, with the dinner and awards following play.

Some participants have supported the event for more than 25 years! SHARE would like to thank all of these wonderful people for their dedication and generosity. The annual event remains a wonderful and lasting tribute to two outstanding men — Ben Boyle and Ron Kostyla.

Computer Enhances SHARE Client’s Life
Continued from page 1

She also has a button to open and shut her door. “In the summer, I’m able to go in and out of my apartment at will,” she explains. “In the winter, I can turn my back on the windows and sit and focus on the computer, ignoring the snow,” she jokes. (The interview was conducted on a March day when a foot of snow hit the area).

“I’m able to do all kinds of things on the computer,” she says, including using a voice recognition program called Dragon Dictate that allows her to dictate, edit and transcribe documents without having to type. Instead, the actions are done using verbal commands.

She enjoys going on Facebook, playing games, sending email, and writing and researching information, as well as using a memory stick to view photos that her brother sends her from his travels.

Mary Joyce first heard about SHARE and the work of the UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering when she worked as a skills trainer for Community Directions at the former Mediplex.

“There were SHARE clients there who were nonverbal, and I remember them using computers for communication and to play games. So when the time came for myself, I called for help.”

Describing herself as “independent and well-trained” on her equipment, Mary Joyce interacts with Center staff periodically. For example, rehabilitation designer Mark Whittaker recently made adjustments to her PC sound level, and she notes that computer technologist Tom Meggison is responsive whenever she has a problem and needs assistance.

“They’re wonderful,” she says of SHARE and Center staff members. “Overall, I’ve had a positive experience. I think SHARE is a great program that helps out a lot of people. I’d encourage everyone to donate and support the work they do.”
Douglass Tree Farm Donates More Than $9,000 in Tree Sales to Benefit SHARE and its Work

Last winter, our friend Dick Douglass, owner of Douglass Tree Farms in Fairhaven, Mass., generously donated the total proceeds from Christmas tree sales at his farm to SHARE and Compassionate Care ALS.

The tree sale has been held every year since 2001 when Dick’s son Ken was first diagnosed with ALS. Ken was a longtime SHARE client who passed away in July 2014.

Many buyers have returned year after year in what has become a family tradition of selecting that perfect tree from among the hundreds growing there. Volunteers were on hand to help cut, load and secure the trees to a wild assortment of cars, trucks, vans and trailers. Some trees were so big they nearly obscured the cars they were tied to!

SHARE is so very grateful to the Douglass family and their great team of volunteers for their hard work and donation. They did a great job on some very cold and windy days. Free hot cider and donuts for buyers and workers helped make the sale a very festive occasion.

“We started working with Ken in February 2003,” said Les Cory, SHARE president. “He was a great guy and a joy to work with. I’m glad so many people went home with some terrific trees, including some to be planted and enjoyed for years to come.”

Mr. Douglass noted that over all of these years, he has received help from a multitude of loyal volunteers, including Joe and Jeanette Devall of Vermont, who did the initial plantings in 1994 and have come every year since! Sue and Bill Wilbur come from New Hampshire every year to help, as does Tom Francis from Hudson, Mass. Hockey team members from Fairhaven High and Old Rochester Regional High get into the act as well. Thanks to the extended Douglass family and the many volunteers who pitched in to make the tree sale such a colossal success!

Mr. Douglass said that the tree sale has generated a number of meaningful memories, such as the time when a woman and her family came to the tree farm on the day their brother passed away to select a large tree in his honor. He is also gratified that he has been able to give help and information to other people coping with a new diagnosis, as well as their support groups.

“It doesn’t get any better than doing good and having fun,” Mr. Douglass said.

Can YOU HELP US? SHARE could really use your help. We are running low on computers that we adapt for our clients. Have you upgraded recently? Do you have an extra that you could spare for a good cause?

SHARE needs working laptops running Vista or a newer operating system. Please be assured that your data will be removed from the hard drive without a trace, and your donated computer will then be loaned out to a person with disabilities on our waiting list.

Your computer can open up a window of opportunities for someone! Please call SHARE at 508.999.8482 to discuss delivery or pickup.
WITH OUR GRATITUDE...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.

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People who are challenged are offered the choice of donating $100 OR dumping ice water on their heads. If you are challenged, we hope you stay dry.

Thank you to those who have donated to SHARE in response to the challenge. Since 1981, SHARE has helped more than 500 people with ALS. We are actively working with 64 of them today.

ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE

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