KU Life Span Institute at Parsons
Researchers Welcome Legislators

Kansas Senator Jeff King and Representative Richard Proehl paid a visit to the KU Life Span Institute at Parsons, Thursday, October 6 during a tour of the Parsons State Hospital & Training Center. Parsons’ project directors met with the legislators to discuss the scope and significance of their research and the impact of service programs and outreach activities to Kansans, locally, statewide and nationally.

Sara Sack, senior scientist, director of Assistive Technology for Kansans, noted, “Representative Proehl and Senator King listened to the researchers, asked probing questions, and demonstrated their understanding of the importance of research and service to helping Kansans lead independent, productive lives.”

In the picture, from left: Dean Saunders, PhD; Representative Richard Proehl, MS; Sara Sack, PhD; Senator Jeff King, JD; Dave Lindeman, PhD; Kate Saunders, PhD; Yusuke Hayashi, PhD; Katie Hine, PhD; Renee’ Patrick, PhD; Jerry Rea, PhD (photo by Jim Captain).

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JUST THE “STATS”

The Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS) provided training and technical assistance for all intervention and early childhood special education programs in all 105 counties in Kansas with an impact on 11,236 teachers, related service providers, administrators and family members.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Kansas Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program

Project Director: Sara Sack, Ph.D.

Project Coordinator: Sheila Simmons, M.A.

Assistant Technology for Kansans receives new statewide Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program award

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced that Kansas received one of 53 federally funded Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Programs.

The new DBEDP program, coined iKanConnect, was awarded to Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK), the statewide AT program with five regional access sites operated by the Life Span Institute at Parsons, University of Kansas.

Kansans who are deaf-blind and income eligible can receive communication equipment and software that helps access the Internet or use other telecommunications systems such as Skype, video relay, or messaging. An ATK specialist provides an assessment at no cost to the individual to review their equipment and software needs so they can achieve their telecommunications access goal. The Kansas ATK iKanConnect program has funds to purchase recommended equipment and software, but cannot pay for services such as phone lines or Internet access.

Individuals, family members or service providers interested in the iKanConnect program can contact the program by calling toll-free 866-666-1470 or email (ssimmons@ku.edu). Application forms will soon be available online at http://www.atk.ku.edu/. The program is funded through June 30, 2014 as a pilot funded by the FCC.

~ contributed by Sheila Simmons, ATK Coordinator
NEW PUBLICATIONS


PRESENTATIONS


Rinkel, P. (2012, September). *Using the AEPS to improve our practices*. Inservice training workshop for Turner USD 202, Kansas City, KS.


STAFF NEWS

**R. Michael Barker, Ph.D.**, recently published a review article titled "Reading Instruction for Children Who Use AAC: Considerations In the Pursuit of Generalizable Results" in the September issue of *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*. In addition, he was awarded the third year of a postdoctoral fellowship from the KU Life Span Institute's NIH-funded training grant. In 2011, he and his co-authors were awarded the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's Editors' Award for the article of highest merit for the article "Randomized Comparison of Augmented and Nonaugmented Language Interventions for Toddlers With Developmental Delays and Their Parents" published in the *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*.

**Adam Brewer, Ph.D.**, completed his doctoral degree this past summer from the University of Kansas and has accepted a position with the Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research at Texas Tech University. As a visiting assistant professor, Dr. Brewer is this year’s research postdoctoral fellow in the Burkhart Center.
ATK PARTNERS WITH KSHA AS SPONSORS OF 2012 AT EXPO AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Assistive Technology for Kansans joined forces with the Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association to co-sponsor the 2012 AT Expo and Annual Conference in Wichita on September 27-29.

The 2012 AT Expo and AT Conference strand were deemed worthy of an “A” by ATK coordinator and event organizer, Sheila Simmons, for the opportunities provided to educators, SLPs, audiologists, other professionals, persons with health conditions or disabilities of all ages, and their families to experience cutting-edge assistive technology as well as many other more familiar devices.

In the picture, Sharon Morton (far right), KEE Reuse Coordinator and Tammy Schoehofer, LSI/Parsons Accounting Specialist, provide information to attendees at the 2012 AT Expo.

The event showcases assistive technology up close and personal with the onsite expertise of more than 90 exhibitors and presenters. Expo attendees could visit one-on-one about technology and services at an exhibitor’s booth, attend an exhibitor’s presentation that linked the technology to real life situations or sit in on a conference presentation with state and national speakers on a variety of assistive technology and disability-related issues. To add to the excitement attendees participated in door prize drawings and enjoyed a variety of snacks at breaks and at the Thursday afternoon Grand Opening reception.

In the 20+ years since its beginnings as the Kansas statewide assistive technology program, ATK is driven by dedicated and tireless staff who make the AT Expo the premiere event it is today, easily recognized nationally as one of the largest of its kind. As the last attendee exits the Exhibit Hall and the last speaker packs up her projector and computer, ATK staff pack up the truckloads of technology they’ve brought to show and tell and head back to their regional offices, in Wichita, Topeka, Salina, Oakley, Garden City and Parsons. They’ve talked to hundreds of potential clients about a wide array of technology, they’ve explained how access to their expertise can be at no cost to a qualified person, how a person can try out AT from the statewide loan program before they buy it. They’ve talked about funding issues, the availability of no-cost refurbished equipment, and the weather. They load up, head to the four corners of Kansas and when they get together next year in September (Topeka in 2013) they will have served more than 2000 customers in most of the 105 counties in Kansas. And yes, they are famous, all over the country for what they do. Evidence to that is the travel schedule of ATK director, Sara Sack. In this past year, she provided technical assistance to twenty-one Statewide Assistive Technology Programs focusing on program development, collaborative partnerships, and providing statewide services.

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To understand how Assistive Technology for Kansans works, think of ATK as the umbrella encompassing a variety of AT related programs. For example, two new programs start this year, the Kansas Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program and the Kansas Fire Safety Solutions program. ATK partners with Kansas State University to implement the Kansas AgrAbility program that supports farmers, ranchers and their families to access assistive technology that helps them continue their rural work and lifestyle. KATCO, Inc., provides low-interest loans to qualified applicants who may not be eligible for more traditional bank loans.

And time after time, assistive technology works. AT provides a young child her first successful communication with her family, provides a mother with a shower chair that cuts bath time from 45 minutes to a few minutes and both mother and son are happier, provides a man with the “lift” needed to access his tractor and mow his own hay, and provides a student with the power mobility to be an active, engaged member of the student body.

When asked how ATK came to be, Dr. Sack says, “Nearly twenty years ago over 600 Kansans came together and said that they wanted professionals who knew about the newest assistive technology close to home, help with identifying and trying out technology that would meet their personal needs, and assistance in figuring out how to fund the technology that would support their independence, learning, and productivity. This group designed the Assistive Technology for Kansans Program and the five regional Assistive Technology Access Site model that is in place and going strong today. It’s amazing what people can do when they work together! “

NEW GRANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

David Lindeman, Ph.D., Director of the LSI at Parsons and Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS), in partnership with Eva Horn, Ph.D., Professor with the KU Department of Special Education, announced a new collaboration with University of Connecticut, Florida State University and University of Oregon following the award of a new project designed to support the establishment and operation of an Early Childhood Personnel Center. The five-year grant begins January 1, 2013 and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to University of Connecticut with a subcontract to University of Kansas.

Reneé Patrick, Ph.D., Director of the Kansas School Readiness Project, has been awarded a new contract to complete a program evaluation for the Demonstration Early Learning Communities preschool collaboration project. This project is funded by Kansas Head Start Association as part of a grant from the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet.

Sara Sack, Ph.D., Director of Assistive Technology for Kansans, has been notified of a new one-year grant award, Kansas Fire Safety Solutions, funded by U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Additionally, The University of Kansas, through Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK), has entered into a one-year contract, Kansas Infant Toddler AT Services, with Kansas Department of Health and Environment, through June 30,2013. Planned activities include: conducting six regional workshops for local providers on assistive technology topics related to the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families; arranging for follow-up demonstration, training and loan of specific assistive technology devices to local providers and families after participation in a regional workshop; and conducting follow-up evaluation regarding the services provided.
COMMUNITY SERVICE

Rock Chalk Jaywalkers/ PSHTC 2013 Relay for Life Team

Nora Manier and Karen Lawson are co-captains for the Rock Chalk Jaywalkers/PSHTC team for the 2013 Labette County Relay For Life. The team’s goal is to raise $4,000 for this American Cancer Society event by next June. Other team members include: Patti Blake, Niki Collins, Laura Hanigan, Cynthia Huebner, Michelle Hughes, Joe Kinder, Dave Lindeman, Chris Miller, Debbie Moody (treasurer), Jessica Moss, Kristi Nelson, Kathy Olson, Renee Pierce, Marlys Shomber-Jones and Lou Ann White.

Pictured from left: Renee Pierce, Debbie Moody, Karen Lawson, Nora Manier.

The team is off to a great start, having already raised $1,344.80 from Nora’s cookie sales, the team’s ice cream social on August 23rd and a cook out on September 19th.

The team is taking preorders for homemade cinnamon rolls through Thursday, October 18th for delivery on Monday, October 22nd. If you are interested, contact Michelle at ext. 1920 or Bev Cline at ext. 1688.

Other fund raising activities are being planned.

Anyone interested in joining the team or making a contribution should contact Karen Lawson at klawson@ku.edu or ext. 1618, Nora Manier at nora.manier@pshtc.ks.gov or at ext. 1798, or Debbie Moody at dmoody@ku.edu or at ext. 1959, or any other team member.

Volunteer Opportunity:
E-Waste Collection Drive
In Oswego, Saturday, Oct. 20

The KU Life Span Institute at Parsons is a co-sponsor of the Labette County E-Waste Collection Events that have been held in Parsons, Altamont and Oswego on a rotating yearly basis. Our commitment is to inform KU staff and friends of the e-waste events and encourage participation either through recycling e-waste or volunteering to help with the collection event.

On Saturday, October 20, the E-waste Collection event will be in Oswego, from 9 – 12 Noon.

If you can help by volunteering a few hours of your time for e-waste recycling, your help is needed. If you have electronic waste to recycle, this would be an excellent and no cost way to accomplish that and if you did both, even better.

For more information or to sign up to volunteer, please contact Patty at pablack@ku.edu.
A Sunbelt Special Rodeo Volunteer’s Perspective

On a Saturday in September, Dave Lindeman, LSI at Parsons Director, spent the day in the rodeo arena. He had this to say:

There are service activities that many of us engage in as a part of our professional lives. Those include service to professional organizations, review of manuscripts for publications, or working on various committees and advisory boards. Recently, I took a little time to support a different kind of service -- the activities of the Gary J. Daniels Sunbelt Special Rodeo. This is the only rodeo designed specifically for persons with disabilities – those with physical as well as intellectual disabilities. The rodeo is hosted in Parsons and usually has around 300 or more participants. The rodeo cowboys and cowgirls usually come from at least four states and in past years have come from as far as Canada. The rodeo events are designed to be responsive to different skill levels of the participants. Most have the opportunity to ride a horse (some using one of the many saddles that have been adapted) - while others lead their horses through obstacles. Being outside with those engaged in the rodeo is a great event. Seeing the smiles and expressions of joy — make giving away a little well worth the effort.

Pictured, Dave Lindeman (left) assists a rider using the adapted mounting steps at the PSH&TC riding arena.

KATHY OLSON RETIRES

On September 11, 2012, the Parsons Research Conference Room was filled with colleagues, friends and family all in attendance to celebrate Kathy Olson’s career, in particular as an associate scientist and project director with the KU Life Span Institute at Parsons.

Dave Lindeman presented Kathy with an engraved crystal memento that reads:

In recognition of the achievements of Kathy Olson and her many contributions in development of training materials, programs, and services for persons with disabilities and their families. Her dedicated work has enriched the quality of life of those she has touched. Kathy’s commitment to creating new knowledge, promoting best practices, providing meaningful training and developing state-of-the-art materials for direct care providers has resulted in a deepened appreciation of full inclusion for individuals with disabilities in all aspects of community. Her quiet dignity, effective leadership in advocacy, and excellence in training are recognized and appreciated by her colleagues.

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Kathy said, “The luncheon was a wonderful ending to the tremendous experience I had working and learning from you over the years. Keep up your amazing and valuable work. I will miss you all.”

And we will miss Kathy.

(In the picture, Kathy’s daughter Rachel and grandson Alex approve of Kathy’s retirement gifts.)

MORE STAFF NEWS: Baby Jayhawks

Cynthia Huebner welcomes a new grandson, Isaac Andrew Willey. Isaac was born July 12. He weighed 7 pounds and arrived 20 inches tall. His parents are Jamie and Diane and his proud grandparents are Rick and Cynthia Huebner.

Suzanne and Jeff King welcome the arrival of their new baby daughter, Isla Bliss, born September 9, 2012 at 5:52 pm. Isla weighed 8 lbs. 3 oz. and was 21 inches tall.

Visit the KU Life Span Institute (LSI) at Parsons website at http://www.parsonslsi.ku.edu