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**My First Real Trick or Treat with My Own Voice**

Photo of Katiana

Katiana Vera-Cosme went trick or treating this Halloween speaking for herself. Her Speech Language Pathologist, Trish Ciccocioppo from RiverKids Pediatric Home Health, borrowed an augmentative communication device from the TTAP and her mother programmed it with the phrase "Trick or Treat." Katiana's mom, Amarillis Cosme said, "Katiana was able to participate and let herself be heard thanks to TTAP. It made our Halloween night super fun! Everybody was crazy in love with Katiana and her 'voice'."

**TTAP Welcomes New Staff Member**

Olivia Rains, Assistive Technology Specialist
orains@austin.utexas.edu

Photo of Olivia Rains
My journey first began when taking Sign Language classes through The Texas School for the Deaf after shortly moving to Austin circa 1999. I started to become aware of resources for my hearing loss and also, my rights. I had no idea that all of these wonderful services were so close! I had grown up in a very small town of about 1,200 and all my family was hearing so, they did not get the proper guidance on how to help me. With that, I managed to barely get through mainstream public school with a severe to profound hearing loss with no accommodations which means...no hearing aids, no personal amplifier or captioning or anything that would assist me. I was hiding my struggle while trying to blend in with everyone else when I knew I wasn’t like everyone else. That stigma, that “shame” was something I was accustomed to and really conditioned to accept since, I had no way of connecting with anyone else like me until, I became a young adult and moved to Austin, where I was exposed to so many of the resources available.

Over the years, working towards and making connections, I was then, able to become a contractor for DARS through The Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services for 6.5 years as, Hearing Loss Resource Specialist focusing in technology assessments and outreach for Deaf and Hard of Hearing in my 30 county region. Shortly after, I was invited to join the TTAP Advisory Board in 2010. This gave me even more insight and experience into the world of technology needs for disabilities. My experience was flourishing and my passion to grow more and reach more of the community, had blossomed with all of my involvements. As of this fall, I came into my next big journey and was welcomed in to join the department of Texas Technology Access Program at Texas Center for Disability Services with Roger Levy, Darlene West and the rest of the amazing team here. I look forward to growing and serving our community of Texas! Thank you!

**Latest News from the Device Loan Program**

In an effort to serve more consumers, TTAP has decided to make the loan period 30 days instead of 45 days. We hope this change in policy doesn’t inconvenience anyone. Special requests for extensions will be considered as they come in.

http://techaccess.edb.utexas.edu

Are there any new devices you would like to see available in the Device Loan Program? Please email us and let us know!

Darlene West  
Assistive Technology Specialist  
(512) 232-0750  
dwest@austin.utexas.edu
**Assistive Technology Q&A**

Q: Is Medicare going to stop funding speech-generating devices?

A: Policy changes about coverage for speech-generating devices (SGDs) issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have created confusion and raised concerns. Explanations for the actions taken to correct the issues, including capped rentals and types of SGDs and other devices covered by Medicare can be found at the site noted below.

http://www.alsa.org/als-care/augmentative-communication/medicare-sgd.html

**Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center**

By Peggy Cosner

**Who is HOCTIL, the Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center?**

First, what is a Center for Independent Living, or CIL? The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) explains: “a CIL advances independent living and the rights of people with disabilities.” Centers for Independent Living are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential, private, nonprofit agencies designed and operated within communities by local individuals with disabilities.

There are over 500 Centers nationwide, including 27 Centers in our great State of Texas. Heart of Central Texas Independent Living (HOCTIL) has been in existence in central Texas since 2001.

All CILs follow the same basic philosophy: “Consumer Directed,” and “Choice.” Because CILs are community-based, and independent from one another, we provide our core services according to the needs of our respective communities. HOCTIL provides services within the communities of Waco, Killeen, Temple and surrounding communities, and in partnership with our Central and Heart of Texas Council of Governments. There is a saying in the CIL culture, “When you see one CIL, you have seen one Center.”

HOCTIL, with other Centers of Independent Living, seeks a common goal: Enhancement of the ability of the individual regardless of disabilities to determine their own destinies, to participate in all aspects of society and to contribute to, as well as accept, responsibility in their lives and live their life.
HOCTIL represents and serves individuals with disabilities to include physical and chronic illness for all ages and income. Our service is based on our tag line, “Your Life...Your Way.”

HOCTIL assists individuals realize Dreams, Reach Goals, and Increase Choices. HOCTIL assists individuals to pursue an action plan or objectives that address the personal needs and/or dreams of the individual, as well as improve aspects of their local communities. HOCTIL encourages individuals to participate in community and society.

HOCTIL advocates for individuals, as well as systems advocacy, to increase accessibility and inclusion for all. HOCTIL promotes partnerships and relationship building within our communities based on “pro-active action to increase inclusion in our communities for all.” HOCTIL partners with our County Commissioners to bring awareness of positive contributions in our community from our citizens who have a disability. HOCTIL partners with the U.S. Army at nearby Fort Hood to bring awareness of assistive technology for all. HOCTIL partners with our Central ADRC (Aging & Disability Resource Center), and our new Heart ADRC. HOCTIL partners with various peer support groups, including our Parent Support Group, and so many more community partners and collaborative relationships.

HOCTIL services are designed to promote abilities, expand options, and develop self-management skills and responsibilities. Examples of HOCTIL services are:

1. HOCTIL supports individuals through life transition, connecting to peers, and increasing participation in the community.
2. HOCTIL navigates “systems” in order to connect individuals to available resources, services, technology, and options that fit each life.
3. HOCTIL provides employment & training, focusing on possibilities, options, abilities, and skill development in order to obtain that specific job.
4. HOCTIL assists in transition from school to work, or back to your community, or next step in life, by understanding options & benefits; providing peer support; learning how to achieve and manage benefits; introduction to assistive technology, and more.

HOCTIL services can assist individuals realize personal options and control over life choices, services, and activities. HOCTIL will assist in exercising and understanding the right and risk of success.

HOCTIL has various services, partners, and options to assist individuals with disabilities. HOCTIL is a Demonstration Site for the Texas Technology Access Program. This partnership introduced us to the world of assistive technology and how technology, even the simplest technology, can enhance one’s life.
HOCTIL provides demonstrations, having individuals test drive various assistive technology, and we provide presentations, showing how low tech devices can improve life by completing various types of daily tasks.

Through this experience, we were always asked, “Where can I get that?” So we decided, with our Board support, to open up our “COOL TOOLS” store; which gives our customers and clients awareness of various tools and gadgets that can enhance anyone’s life. The surprise for HOCTIL was the opportunity for our community to be introduced to HOCTIL services. We truly became part of the whole community. HOCTIL is a service that is diverse and unique, and so are the staff, Board, and individuals we serve.

Your Life...Your Way

Check us out on our website www.hoctilc.org or like us on Facebook.

HOCTIL’s Core Services

1. **Information and Referral** – HOCTIL maintains a comprehensive information file on availability in their communities of accessible housing; transportation; employment opportunities; rosters of persons available to serve as personal care attendants, interpreters for hearing impaired or readers for visually impaired people; and many other services as it relates to persons with disabilities.

2. **Independent Living Skills Training** – HOCTIL provides or coordinates training opportunities to help people with disabilities gain skills that would enable them to live more independently. Training may include using various public transportation systems, managing a personal budget, dealing with insensitive and discriminatory behavior members of the general public, self advocacy, career and employment planning, goal setting, and other subjects.

3. **Peer Counseling** – HOCTIL offers a service in which a person with a disability can work with other persons who have disabilities and who are living independently in the community. The objective is to explore options and to solve problems that sometimes occur for people with disabilities; for example, making adjustments to a newly acquired disability, experiencing changes in living arrangements, or learning to use community services more effectively.
4. **Advocacy** – HOCTIL provides two kinds of advocacy;

   • **Consumer Advocacy**, which involves the HOCTIL staff working with persons with disabilities to obtain necessary support service from other agencies and/or services in the community.

   • **Community Advocacy**, which involves HOCTIL staff, Board members, and volunteers initiating activities to make changes in the community that promote access for all persons with disabilities to live more independently.

5. **Transition** – HOCTIL has two areas of transition services

   • **Relocation** – HOCTIL provides relocation services under the program called **Home By Choice**, HBC. The Home By Choice program coordinates services and support that will assist the consumer living in a nursing home to obtain their goal of relocating to the community.

   • **Transition from school** – HOCTIL provides assistance to students at their ARD’s and/or in obtaining information regarding services and opportunities after school. HOCTIL will assist as an Advocate, Coordinator of services, or Information and referral.

6. **Community Education** – HOCTIL attends community events and provides public speaking opportunities in order to promote awareness of “self-determination,” person-center planning, consumer control, and Independent Living philosophy, among other topics relating to persons with disabilities and HOCTIL.

**Tech Corner:**

**The Digital Audio Prescription**

*Photo of Digital Audio Prescription label*

This is a Digital Audio Prescription label adheres to a pill bottle or package and, with the press of a button, reads aloud information about the medication, including name and dosage details.

The label is designed to enable persons who are blind or visually impaired to manage prescriptions safely even if they cannot read what’s printed on the label.
The audio label is two inches tall and one inch wide and contains an embedded speaker through which users can hear verbal descriptions of contents as prepared by the pharmacist.

**Spotlight on Demonstration Centers**

Heart of Central Texas Center for Independent Living

**HOCTIL believes and Advocates for YOU to have the Right to Choose:**

To live in your Community

Appropriate Education and/or Training Meaningful Employment

Participation in your Community

*Your Life...Your Way*

*We Will Assist You*

**HOCTIL serves Bell, Coryell, McLennan and Hill Counties**

Belton Office
222 E Central Ave
(254) 933-7487
Toll Free: (800) 326-4921
www.hoctic.org

Waco Office
6801 Sanger Ave, Suite 268
(254) 754-7050
What’s on TTAP for Winter

December 3-5
Annual TASH Conference
Renaissance Downtown
999 9th St NW
Washington, DC

http://conference.tash.org

January 28-31
ATIA 2016 Orlando
Orlando, Florida
Contact: Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA)
330 North Wabash Avenue
20th Floor
Chicago, IL 60611-4267

Tel: 877-687-2842 (Toll Free) or 312-321-5172
FAX: 312-673-6659
e-mail ATIA 2016 Orlando

Just for Laughs

Cartoon: Two brown horses talking in a pasture over a fence. One has left hind leg from a zebra. “I can’t say I’m entirely pleased with my hip replacement.”

TTAP Values Your Input

Any suggestions, comments, or article you would like to have included in our newsletter, please contact us:

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(512) 232-0750/dwest@austin.utexas.edu
(512) 232-0772/srthomas@austin.utexas.edu

Texas Technology Access Program
The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Center for Disability Studies
Commons Learning Center
10100 Burnet Road
Austin, Texas 78758-4445
http://techaccess.edb.utexas.edu
TTAP Demonstration Centers

- Ability Connection, Dallas
- Brazoria County Center for Independent Living, Angleton
- Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living, Bryan
- Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living, Corpus Christi
- Disability in Action, Abilene
- East Texas Center for Independent Living, Tyler
- Easter Seals of Greater Houston
- Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, Austin
- Goodwill Industries of Fort Worth
- Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center, Belton
- Helping Hands, Amarillo
- Houston Center for Independent Living, Houston
- Paso Del Norte Children’s Development Center, El Paso
- REACH Center for Independent Living, Plano
- RISE Center for Independent Living, Beaumont
- VAIL – Valley Association for Independent Living, McAllen