



DIRECTIONS

Technology in Special Education

Vol. 8 , No. 11

July/August 2002

A Message From Our Editor in Chief

Hello Dear Reader:

I hope this finds you well. Only those of you from years ago will remember my monthly *Editor's Note*. It's been almost 5 years now since an issue of *DIRECTIONS* carried those monthly words to you; however, Kathy (our ever competent Editor, one of my very closest friends,and a pretty smart girl!) thought I might like to chat a bit with the exciting changes in our newsletter format.

This will be the last paper issue you will receive of *DIRECTIONS*, since you can now find it on our website free of charge. We of course will continue our monthly publication schedule - now in its 8th year :-) - with excerpts from major Assistive Technology publications and informative articles from our own experts, however you'll find *DIRECTIONS* free on the web - rather than in your mailbox.

The past years have been exciting ones for me and for DREAMMS for Kids, as we watched the educational community slowly embrace technology - first believing that computers were the answer to everything - only to realize, and rightly so, that computers and technology are merely tools. Tools that when accessed and used appropriately, can make a world of difference in the life of a child.

We're very excited to be joining the large majority of businesses and going 'paperless', however I'd be quite remiss if I didn't mention Bob Blackburn and the reproduction department at Raytheon in St. Petersburg, FL. These folks have been donating their printing services since 1994, and I can honestly say we wouldn't have been able to do it without you. Thank you all - from the bottom of my heart.

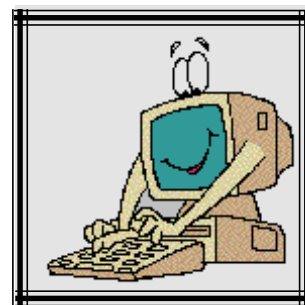
I hope that you enjoy our new format at www.dreamms.org, and continue to use *DIRECTIONS* as your source for understandable and useful information about Assistive Technologies. Please pop me off an e-mail. I'd love to hear from you!

Warmest Regards,

Janet

NEWS FLASH !!

***DIRECTIONS* Goes CYBER**



Starting with our next issue, September 2002, *DIRECTIONS* will be available **FREE OF CHARGE** on our website at www.dreamms.org

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Press Release - Enabling Devices

Hastings-on-Hudson, NY
April 5th, 2002

Enabling Devices and Toys for Special Children have innovative new toys and devices to welcome the wonderful spring season!

We are excited to offer the Boardmaker, which is a powerful communication display maker. This graphics database allows you to make professional looking communication displays in minutes. It's as easy as clicking the mouse and pasting the pictures in your display – any size and can save your display on disk for a later date. This program will help motivate and excite the client and the teacher!

Using a computer has never been easier with our extremely useful new items that can really change lives! The Switcheroo is an inexpensive button and switch interface for your computer that is designed to help teach pointer-finger use. Pressing the button acts like a mouse-click within any software. The best part is that it does not interfere with the operation of other pointing devices, such as a mouse. It works in addition to your mouse. Another helpful computer device is the Head Movement Hands Free Mouse. Simply move your head and control the computer! Great for people with carpal tunnel. There's more...SAM (Switch Adapted Mouse) Joystick and SAM Trackball for PC allows the user to control a computer cursor. Also, we now offer Big Keys

Plus, which is a multi-colored keyboard for users who are familiar with the QWERTY layout and Big Keys LX for adults with advanced keyboard needs who require large keys to operate a keyboard.

Enabling Devices is happy to introduce a number of fabulous new specially adapted items to their toy line. Hook & Ladder Fire Engine is switch adapted so anyone can turn on an adventure! The Dalmatian Chase, an exciting new slide toy that is great for teaching cause and effect and developing visual tracking. There is portable fun as well with the finger fun piano! It is lightweight and portable with volume control and a headphone jack so children can make beautiful music anywhere!

Visual stimulation gets tropical with our Magical Miniaturized Aqua Lamp! Watch streaming bubbles and three lively fish floating in colorful water. Writing will flow with our new soft, corduroy Pillow Writer that has a clipboard attached, angled at 4 degrees so it is perfect for your lap! It can also double as a vibrating pillow as well.

Finally, for IEP Teams, the practical and innovative book Assistive Technology Solutions focuses on K-3 curriculum standards and provides AT solutions and sample IEP goals.

For a copy of our FREE brochure or catalog featuring the above products and many more, call 800-832-8697 or fax 914-478-3603. Visit our web site at www.enablingdevices.com. §

DIRECTIONS

Technology in Special Education

ISSN: 1079-607X

Publisher & Editor in Chief

Janet P. Hosmer

Editor

Kathy S. Knight

Technical Editor

Chester D. Hosmer, Jr.

Regular Contributors

Lorianne Hoenninger

Susan Lait

DREAMMS FOR KIDS, INC.

273 Ringwood Road

Freeville, NY 13068-5606

VOICE: 607.539.3027

FAX: 607.539.9930

Greetings@dreamms.org

www.dreamms.org

DIRECTIONS: Technology in Special Education is published 11 times per year by DREAMMS for Kids, Inc., (Developmental Research for the Effective Advancement of Memory and Motor Skills), a non-profit service agency and AT information clearinghouse. Annual home delivery subscription rate is \$14.95 U.S., \$17.95 Canadian, and \$29.95 Int'l. (U.S.\$). Single copies are available in the U.S. for \$2.50. Add \$1.00 for postage outside U.S.

Authors - We welcome editorial submissions. Please include name, address and phone. Submission will be returned with self addressed stamped envelope, if desired.

Vendors - We welcome product news. Please include pricing and contact name with press releases.

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From the Editor

As *DIRECTIONS* ends its current year of publication and begins 2002-2003, with a brand new format, I reflect on my involvement with DREAMMS for Kids. I've been a part of the organization for five years, and been honored for the past three, to be the editor of *DIRECTIONS*. I believe in its purpose, and admire Janet for her passion and determination in reaching out to all those who have, and work with, children with special needs.

Two young men helped to solidify that belief — David and Matty.

I first met Matty several years ago when his father, Chet, joined the company that I worked for. Janet, his wife (and soon to become my best friend), brought their son, Matty, to a corporate function. I sat next to him for most of the festivities, and was enchanted by his smile, his laugh, and his enjoyment of the moment. I fell in love. As they were leaving, I remember asking Janet if Matty would allow me to give him a hug. She laughed and said that Matty loved hugs best of all. I had tears in my eyes as I felt his arms around me and I knew that he would become someone very special in my life.

Matty was born with Down Syndrome, like another young man in my life, David. David was my brother and he died in 1988 from heart failure; he was 27. My memories of David are both heartwarming and painful. Heartwarming because, like Matty, he was pure love. He gave it unselfishly and demanded nothing in return. He had a smile for everyone, and he was

a joy in our lives. Painful, not only because he was taken away so soon, but also because of the restrictions placed on him due to his disabilities, and the struggle my mother had during his lifetime to obtain the support he was entitled to.

Friendship grew quickly between Janet and myself, and it wasn't long before our families began spending a lot of time together. I loved my interaction with Matty, and was constantly in awe of the things that he was able to do — things that had been, so it seemed, beyond my brother's capabilities. I couldn't help comparing Matty and David. Janet explained that Matty had received support from infancy in a variety of areas. I couldn't help but remember my mother's frustration with the indifferent attitudes she'd had to deal with, as well as the doors that were constantly being closed as she sought help.

Matty would come home from school and it was a joy to hear him talk about his day (the highlights of which were usually breakfast and lunch <grin>). The Hosmers have a goal for each day — make it an excellent one. Matty leaves for school each day with those words. The program he is enrolled in challenges him to try new things, and offers him the opportunity to do so. When Janet gave me a run down of a typical week for Matty, I couldn't believe it!

David was not allowed to attend school until he was almost 15 years old! After a lengthy battle, the schools were told that it was unlawful

to block him from attending. It was touching to see how much he enjoyed going to school every day. He loved it, and would wait patiently each day for the bus to arrive. Unlike most children who go to school, he hated those days when school was out! He had few years to enjoy it, however, because when he was 18, he was forced to leave. My mother, by this time, was a little savvy and was able to get David into a study program for the disabled. Because it was run on the same lines as his school program had been, he really didn't know the difference, other than the fact that the bus was a little different and took him to a different place.

With David as my only guideline, I was amazed at the things Matty accomplished — things that I thought were impossible for a child with DS. I was astounded that Matty could speak so well, as my brother had only mastered a few words, and those after he had passed his teenage years. Matty could read and write! I know my jaw hit the table the first time Matty brought a note home from school and read for me. David did not know what a letter of the alphabet was, and for the first half of David's life, it was difficult to get him to draw with a crayon!

A lot of damage was done because he was denied the professional help he needed during his early years. As a family, we tried, but it wasn't enough. Information on helping children like David was scarce. In fact, they were usually ignored. I have often wondered what David's life would have been like if my mother had been exposed to the

Continued on page 7

Traveling Buddies

Linking elementary classrooms to the Internet

by Tammy Payton

Part Two

Source: *The Catalyst*, Winter 2001, Volume 18 #2

Announcing Your Project

The Global SchoolNet Foundation has developed a simple and successful format to call for participation in a telecollaboration project. Follow this format to compose your call for participation. You may want to link up with no more than four or five classrooms over the course of the school year. Consider carefully how much time your buddy will spend in each location as it traverses your country or the globe.

Global SchoolNet Foundation
<http://www.gsn.org/teach/articles/design.project.html>

Once you have designed your announcement, you can post it on any educational mailing list, including those below. Readers of these forums will respond individually if they're interested.

Best projects from GSN
<http://www.gsn.org/lists/hilites.html>

Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections
<http://www.iecc.org>

Global SchoolNet's Project Registry
<http://www.gsn.org/pr/index.html>

Classroom Connect Mailing List
crc@listserv.classroom.com

Sharing Information

One other important part of your

project will be sharing information. How do you plan to share information and keep participants informed of the current location and activities of your traveling buddy? There are three ways to accomplish this.

1. **By Postal Mail:** In a perfect world, postal mail (sometimes jokingly called "snail mail") should not be your sole means for communicating with your partner classes. However, there will be parts of your collaboration that will lend themselves to "snail mail," such as exchanging postcards and exchanging simple research projects. All the rest of your communication should be done via email (much quicker!) or via Web pages.

2. **On the Web:** The best way for everyone to share and keep up-to-date is by publishing your information on your classroom or school Web pages. As you post new information to your project Web pages, send an email to your participants so they can share in the writings, photographs, and research data posted there. Visit these sites for ideas on getting your Traveling Buddy Web pages up and running.

Barney Bear's Travel
<http://hometown.aol.com/nkoeh48321/bamey.html>

Willie the Wandering Wallaby
<http://www.greeceny.com/ev/travelbuddy/index.html>

3. **By Email:** Don't have the ability to

make Web pages at your school? You can use electronic mail all by itself and still have a dynamic project. As participants receive your traveling buddy, they can email your class and report on its safe arrival. Schools can write a diary of events that occur every day or every other day and send it to you by email. You can forward this message to all of the collaborating schools about the events that the traveling buddy is experiencing.

a. You can forward images of the traveling buddy to all participating schools by email. Before you send attachments, you should ask the participants if they want or are able to receive these attachments. Some schools have email software that is unable to read attached files to messages.

b. As a host school for this project, sending electronic cards to all participants is a fun way to keep the project current for the participating schools. These cards can be seasonal greetings from you to them, reminding them to visit your Web site for current events, or the cards can tell them where your traveling buddy is visiting. These sites make it easy to send virtual postcards online.

123 Greetings
<http://www.123greetings.com>

Blue Mountain Arts
<http://www.bluemountain.com/index.html>

Setting Your Itinerary

Once you have enough participants for your project, you need to decide where your buddy will travel and how long it will stay at each location. Query possible participants on when their vacations will occur. Allow extra time for travel during those vacation periods. Allow one week for the traveling buddy to be mailed (ed.note: more for international destinations) and one to four weeks to visit each participating school. Be sure to include the complete itinerary (with full information on how to send your buddy to his next stop) within your package.

Include a Folder

Include a folder inside the traveling buddy package. You can decorate the cover of the folder like a suitcase. Folders that have pockets on the inside and have three-hole prongs are the best for this project. The pockets will come in handy if you want to include travel brochures or other information that is difficult to attach inside of the folder. Information that is relevant to all participants should be attached inside the folder. (Loose papers can be easily misplaced as your buddy travels from school to school.) The content of the folder can include:

1. Introductory letter that includes the following:
 - a. A thank-you note for participating in the project.
 - b. Your postal mail address and your email address (plus Web address if you have one). You may want to include your school telephone number.
 - c. Description of the activities that each participating school is to complete, including journal entries, graphing activities, postcard exchange,

research project, or sending memorabilia.

d. Mailing guidelines for sending the packages. Suggest to your participants that they use priority mail.

e. Guidelines for taking photographs with the disposable camera (if included). Reminder to email you immediately when the traveling buddy arrives. It would be helpful to you to ask the host school to email you the day that they send your traveling buddy to the next school.

2. Complete itinerary for the traveling buddy. Include the name and address of the school, the name of the teacher responsible for the package, the email address of that teacher, and the departure date.

3. Camera log for the pictures they will be taking (if a disposable camera is included).

4. A checklist of the items that should be in the box before it is shipped it to the next participant.

Traveling buddies are an excellent way to show your students, school, and community how telecollaboration can actively engage students in their learning. Students will be motivated as they learn how to collaborate with other students and exchange data. Begin planning this project now.

by Tammy Payton
tpayton@dmrtc.net

For information on subscribing to the Classroom Connect Newsletter, call 1-800-638-1639
<http://www.classroom.com>

Ed. Note: Classroom Connect sponsors valuable conferences on using the Internet. Contact 1-800-638-1639, or go to <http://proflern.classroom.com/ProfDev/> §

HalfthePlanet News

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) released a Briefing Paper written to help parents, teachers, and others interested in the education and special needs of children and youth with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD).

Parent with a Disability

Through the Looking Glass program at the National Resource Center for Parents with Disabilities is conducting a nationwide project to learn more about families in which a parent with a disability is raising a teen (11-17 years old). If you fit this description and want to participate, please contact them before the end of August 2002 or read more at <http://www.lookingglass.org/parentteen.php>

HalfthePlanet Foundation Releases TechAccess Resource Directory

HalfthePlanet Foundation today released a new **TechAccess Resource Directory**, the result of a survey (conducted over the past year by the group) of national level programs to identify existing projects working to ensure that information and electronic technology is accessible to and usable by people with disabilities.

To learn more about these stories and more, visit our website at: <http://www.halftheplanet.com>. §

New from MARBLESOFT

We are pleased to announce a new version of our **Money Skills** program for Macintosh and Windows. **Money Skills** now features the same four activities from older versions plus an entirely new activity: How Much Change? The program supports American, Canadian and European currency. We've been praised for our realistic money graphics in **Money Skills**. Well, now we've made them even better. **Money Skills** supports monitors up to 1280 x 960, and the real-looking money helps kids learn a lot faster.

As usual, **Money Skills** has built-in single switch support, and can be used with all popular input devices. **Money Skills** 2.0 comes on a single CD for Macintosh and Windows. **Money Skills** 1.4.1 is still available for older Macintoshes. You can check out both on page 4 of our catalog.

We are also featuring the **Early Learning Suite** CD for Macintosh, our biggest seller. The high demand for this product on CD-ROM has allowed us to lower the price to you from \$160 to just \$125. **The Early Learning Suite** is described on page 2 of the catalog.

Also, we would like to announce that we are carrying a third party developer's products for the first time. We checked on a lot of other small developers to find the software that would best fit with our own. We think you'll like our choice: Simtech's Single Switch Collection on CD-ROM for Macintosh and Windows is featured on pages 12 and 13.

Finally, a lot of you have been asking about the Windows version of **Early Learning I**. Well, we demonstrated it for the first time at the CSUN conference in March, and we expect to be shipping it in the summer of 2002. We'll let you know!

MARBLESOFT
12301 Central Ave NE
Blaine, MN 55434
763.755.1402



Total Technology 2002

CT's Premier Assistive Technology Trade Fair for People with
Special Needs or Disabilities
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10:00AM 4:30 PM

Connecticut Expo Center, Hartford (exit 33 off I-91)

Call 860-424-4871 or e-mail evelyn.knight@po.state.ct.us for more information



HAVE A GREAT SUMMER !!!!

Continued from page 3

information that is available today for parents with a special needs child. Would he have talked to me with words instead of gestures? Would he have been able to pick out words on a printed page and read them? Would he have been able to write 'I love you' and sign his name? I think he would have – and a lot more — but we'll never know.

Janet and I discussed my brother, and the limited abilities he had in comparison with Matty. She began to enlighten me on things like the IDEA and IEP – words that meant nothing to me at the time. Janet told me of her determination to make sure that her son was given every opportunity he was entitled to under the law, and how it was an ongoing process that started from his birth to the present day. That's when I first heard about DREAMMS for Kids. In her crusade,

she discovered many parents who had children with special needs that didn't know where to turn for answers, or apply for help. With a lot of hard work, and help from some special people, DREAMMS for Kids was born.

What a wealth of information is out there for parents, teachers, administrators, and all those who work with children with special needs. 'Society' is finally changing how we respond to disability issues, and those with special needs have found strong, dedicated advocates to fight for their rights. The technology available to help give them quality of life is mind boggling. Every day, someone is coming up with a new 'widget' that assists in learning, playing, and living.

DREAMMS for Kids will continue to support, enlighten, and promote Assistive Technology and other special

needs efforts with information on our website, including our newsletter *DIRECTIONS*, which is now offered free.

A final thought....

Sitting at her dining room table one afternoon, Janet and I were visiting when Matty came home from school. We were soon in happy tears as Matty entertained us with his special brand of love and humor. How he can brighten a day!!! After giving us a hug, he left us to go to his room to listen to his music, wearing a big smile. With eyes streaming, Janet looked at me and said ...'and they say that he's a broken one.' David's face flashed in my mind and I remembered seeing him wear that same smile.

How little 'They' knew.... §

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NewsSTAND Notes

Moral Courage Award Honors STAND Couple

Keith and Nikole Whitehead (members of the Board of Directors and Advisory Board of STAND) received the Hillsborough County Commissioner’s highest honor on March 27, 2002. The Moral Courage Award recognizes citizens who stand up to government for the betterment of the community. The Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce nominated the couple. Keith and Nikole Whitehead spent ten years and hundreds of thousands of dollars seeking to honor a commitment of services from the school district for their son Andrew who has Down syndrome.

The fight brought changes to the system, and made a difference in the lives of other families statewide. Commission Chairwoman Pat Frank stated, “The determination of Keith and Nikole Whitehead has changed the way other parents and educators interact. Local parents of disabled children have praised the efforts of the Whiteheads and have credited them with having significant impact on their children. A Riverview father who had wrestled with the system on behalf of his deaf and blind son said that he firmly believes that his son would be in an institution if the Whiteheads had not won their court fight. Another parent stated that Nikole Whitehead’s attendance at a district staff meeting with parents to discuss services for their disabled children resulted in her daughter being provided the large-print books and special chair that was needed due to spina bifida.”

“In addition their pure courage, what makes the Whiteheads ideal nominees for this prestigious award is their determination to keep up the fight despite the realization early on that none of their efforts were going to make a difference for their own son Andrew - but that they might make a difference for other children faced with the same challenges in the future.”

Congratulations to both Keith and Nikole.



STAND Inc.
PO Box 1845
Brandon, FL 33509

 **DREAMMS
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