



Ability Beyond Embraces Technology to Promote Independence

At Ability Beyond we are integrating and piloting new technologies across our programs and we are seeing the positive impact it is having on the people we support

At Ability Beyond we pride ourselves on being on the cutting edge of services for individuals with disabilities. We continually strive to find new approaches to providing the best quality of care while fostering the greatest level of independence for the people we serve. Over the past few years we have spent a great deal of time researching the latest trends in technology and finding ways to incorporate them into the day to day lives of the men and women we support. We are currently working on some exciting pilots that could completely change the way people with disabilities receive the support they need.

From iPads and apps to remote monitoring and security systems, we are looking at all the possibilities of how the latest and greatest in technology can make life better for those we serve. We were recently approached by two industry leaders,

AMC Health and Phillips, to participate in clinical trials on two products that have great potential to change the way we are currently offering support throughout our residential programs. The first is a Biometric Telemonitoring kiosk which we are using in two of our group homes and the second is an Automated Medication Dispenser being tested in a few of our Supported Independent Living apartments.

The Biometric Telemonitoring kiosk allows for an off-site nurse to be able to help remotely diagnose an individual that may need to be transported to a doctor or the emergency room on the spot.

By utilizing the Biometric Telemonitoring kiosk the nurse is able to monitor blood pressure, heart rate, pulse, blood glucose,

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...TECHNOLOGY CONTINUED

body temperature, and weight with the help of on site staff. This new technology helps to ensure the individuals we serve are receiving necessary medical care as quickly as possible and allows our nursing team to use their time more efficiently by eliminating travel time. In addition the pilot will also offer us the opportunity to decrease unnecessary emergency room and urgent care visits, improve access to medical data and determine the value of the equipment in our settings.

The Automated Medication Dispenser that is being used in our Supported Independent Living apartments is being tested to increase independence with medication administration and decrease the need for staff assistance. The machine helps to make it easy for the people we support to know when and how much medication to take. Many of the people we support have complex medication schedules that are difficult to manage on their own. By utilizing the automated medication dispenser we are able to help reduce the risk of medication errors while offering the people we serve the ability to successfully maintain their medication schedules.

In addition, we have expanded the use of remote sensors into eight homes which has allowed the individuals in the homes to be better cared for while maintaining more privacy and independence. We

are also testing the use of environmental controls in both group home and Supported Independent Living settings. An environmental control allows an individual to use an app on their iPad to control different things in their home. One individual is able to easily control his television and DVD player wirelessly through one device which has made things easier for him. Another individual living on his own in a wheelchair is able to control his lights, thermostat and opening and closing his doors. This is decreasing his need for staff assistance and increasing his independence.

Personal technology devices have also made their way into our programs and are having a positive impact. We recently began testing the use of Fitbits, a device that helps individuals meet their personal health goals by tracking things like steps, distance, calories, and sleep patterns, in one of our young adult programs. Two young women have been using them with great success and some of the outcomes we have seen from this technology are ones that we didn't expect! One of the young women had some fitness goals that she wanted to reach and it inspired another young woman in the program to try it out as well. Now two of the young women and their staff are using Fitbits to reach their health goals. Check out the Q&A with the residential coordinator at the home to learn more about how the Fitbit has changed all of their lives.

Q&A with Residential Coordinator Kellie Reedy

Q: Why did you introduce the Fitbit?

A: We introduced the Fitbits for a variety of reasons. Today's world is all about technology. Combine that with the young adults' curiosity and the desire to have the "newest gadget" on the market and you have caught their attention for sure! Wearing the Fitbit is a great visual reminder and motivator in itself; it lights up as you are progressing towards your goal, vibrates when you meet your goal to alert you and you can set timed reminders for a scheduled activity.

Q: What were the goals that this would help achieve?

A: The goals we set with this was to increase their physical activity, to be aware of their activity level, and to hopefully grow their interests in health and nutrition. Use of the Fitbit has also allowed the girls to independently make healthy choices in their lives. The girls selected their own goals in the Fitbit program (# of steps, distance, calories burned, active minutes) and are able to monitor their own progress. They receive prompts that motivate them to achieve their goals without the need for staff prompting. We were noticing that often times when staff were prompting physical activity among the individuals, even in the most positive way, it was perceived to be completely opposite, leading to power struggles between staff and the individual. Implementing doesn't replace staff prompting but it significantly reduces and changes the manner or approach of the staff. We are now "Fitbit Buddies" with the two individuals and we can "cheer them on" through the app and ask about their goals via the chat feature. The interaction is positive now.

Q: How long have you been using the Fitbits?

A: We all started using them the middle of March 2014

Q: What are some of the benefits you have seen so far?

A: Aside from some things mentioned above, overall it has been GREAT! Activity level is up! The two young women are out at the YMCA, going on hikes with staff or mentors, going for walks, occasionally using the equipment at the house.

Q: Are there benefits you hadn't anticipated?

A: Definitely! The improved relationship between the two young women is something we did not expect and we did not expect them to be encouraging staff to get moving! What a great way to develop a therapeutic relationship with us all doing this together instead of it being something that only they participate in. There is also a function of the Fitbit that can track your sleep cycle. This has been very useful for one of the young women. She had complained about restless sleep and being tired due to nightmares, etc. We have been able to monitor her sleep cycle, the patterns of restlessness and use this information in processing with her as well as our Clinical team. After reviewing this data, we have been able to reduce medication in one instance and we are seeing a more physically active young woman, who appears to be sleeping more soundly and is having more positive interactions and conversations with staff and peers vs. the previous persistent questioning/provoking others- again progress!

Howland is Now Open!

Howland officially opened in December 2013 and over the course of the very harsh winter all fourteen residents moved in! We are very excited to have the house up and running. Now that the weather is starting to get warmer we are looking forward to our first ever volunteer day with Citrin Cooperman. Citrin Cooperman has **generously donated \$8,500** and over 25 volunteers from the company will be coming in early June to help construct a vibrant garden for the premises of Howland. With the help of a landscape architecture firm, Ability Beyond has thoughtfully designed this garden to attract birds through its shrub trees and flowering plants, in turn bringing color, joy and sensory stimulation to the residents of Howland. The bird viewing garden will occupy a patch of green space outside the community room where residents spend upward of six hours a day receiving occupational and behavioral therapy, engaging in recreational activities and communicating through video conference with family members, friends and medical doctors.

In addition to working on the garden, volunteers will also be helping to install bird feeders and bird houses.



Support through recent grant awards:

\$50,000	The Vince and Linda McMahon Foundation — for Vision Campaign
\$30,000	The John H. and Ethel G. Noble Charitable Trust — for Young Adult Residential Programs
\$20,000	The George Link Jr. Charitable Trust — for General Operating
\$10,000	Doug Flutie Foundation for Autism— for Roses for Autism
\$10,000	Ceres Foundation— for General Operating
\$8,500	Pitney Bowes — for General Operating
\$5,000	The MENTOR Network Charitable Fund — for Roses for Autism
\$5,000	TJX— for Supportive Independent Living
\$2,500	Bob's Discount Furniture Charitable Foundation— for Residential Programs
\$2,000	Fairfield County Community Foundation— for General Operating
\$2,000	Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund —for General Operating
\$750	Rotary Club of Fairfield— for Household Purchase of Generator

2014 Safari Gala a Huge Success!



Above: Greg Smith, Gala Co-Chair & Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Meghann Smith, Gala Co-Chair; Paul Hamilton, Robert S. Young Humanitarian Award Recipient & Chairman of the Board of Directors; Tom Fanning, President/CEO and Roy Young, Director Emeritus

Above: Roy Young, Director Emeritus and Ginny Young, Decorations Committee Chair

Below: Jack Walsh, son of founding family and Paula Walsh, Board of Trustees

Below: Nancy Hawley; Elizabeth Hawley; Elaine Cox, Auction Committee Chair

Below: Kevin Cox, Director Emeritus; John Berisford; Chester Elton

On Saturday, April 26th we held our 2014 Safari Gala at the Amber Room Colonnade in Danbury, Connecticut with co-chairs **Greg and Meghann Smith**. The evening raised over \$850,000 in support of the services provided by Ability Beyond including employment training; cognitive and life skills instruction; clinical and therapeutic support; housing and other programs

This year we honored **Paul Hamilton** with the Robert S. Young Humanitarian Award for his unwavering support of Ability Beyond and his dedication to championing employment for individuals with disabilities. He inspired attendees with his speech about his connection to Ability Beyond and the formation of Disability Solutions, a new service provided by Ability Beyond to help companies diversify their workforce with individuals with disabilities on a larger scale.

Thank you to everyone who attended the gala and for your continuous support of Ability Beyond and the individuals we serve!



Humanitarian Award Winner Gives Inspirational Acceptance Speech

Here at Ability Beyond we feel truly blessed by the generosity and compassion we see in people each and every day. For those who could not join us for our annual gala we wanted to share some highlights from Paul Hamilton's acceptance speech at the gala.

"Tonight, I would like to step back and tell you about my journey. It starts with a story that changed my perspective on how I could personally make a difference.

Not too long ago I had the opportunity to hear the story of Patricia. Patricia spoke about her many challenges and her desire to become part of her community. She spoke about how her life could be made better if only she had a job. Not because she wanted the money, not because she wanted to buy the newest iPhone. Not for any of the reasons that most of us work. More than anything else, she wanted a feeling of belonging, a feeling of self worth... a feeling she believed would only be possible by working at a real job. And that's where Ability came in... Through our connections to the community we helped Patricia find that job and her story has a happy ending. But our challenge is that there are thousands of Patricia's that need our help. All across the country.

So while this award is a tremendous honor, it is also a tremendous responsibility. Let's make a difference in the lives of those Patricia's we have yet to meet. This day is theirs. This award is theirs. It is my privilege to accept it on their behalf. Thank you."

Kessler Foundation Awards Ability Beyond \$450,000 Grant

We recently received a \$450,000 Signature Employment Grant from Kessler Foundation to expand our Disability Solutions employment initiative with PepsiCo called Pepsi ACT (Achieving Change Together). The grant is part of more than \$2.7 million distributed by Kessler Foundation to organizations around the U.S. to create or expand job training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

“We are thrilled to receive such a generous gift from Kessler Foundation to support the Pepsi ACT initiative,” said Thomas H. Fanning, president and chief executive officer of Ability Beyond. “This project underscores our commitment to close the employment gap for people with disabilities, not only in our neighborhood but throughout the nation. Additionally, we are pleased to offer our deep well of knowledge and experience to companies as they strive to align their workforce demographics with the changing face of America.”

Signature Employment Grants are Kessler Foundation’s largest grants. Awarded for a period of two years, Signature Grants range from \$250,000 to \$500,000. The Foundation, therefore, is funding the first two years of Pepsi ACT, along with the Poses Family Foundation, Autism Speaks and New York Collaborates for Autism. The initiative is expected to continue for four years.

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Ability Beyond is now on AmazonSmile! If you are someone who likes to shop online using Amazon, you can simply shop at **smile.amazon.com** (instead of just amazon.com) with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to Ability Beyond. You can visit Ability Beyond’s page at <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/06-0776594> and select us to be your charitable organization.

Family & Friends Giving Drive

June 10 – June 30th

The family outreach committee is excited to announce they will kick-off their **first online FAMILY GIVING DRIVE on JUNE 10th!**

In an effort to raise additional end of fiscal year support, the drive will run through June 30th.

All Families of those served at Ability Beyond will be encouraged to participate by raising \$500, achieved through family and friend support.

More details will be announced soon in family outreach emails and on Facebook.

For more information or to make a contribution via mail, please contact Alice Meenan, Family Outreach Manager at (203) 826-3182.



American Express & EY Volunteer at Ability Beyond



On Wednesday April 9th, over 50 volunteers from American Express and Ernst & Young (EY) came to Ability Beyond to lend their time and talents to help us complete a few major projects! Volunteers jumped right in and painted hallways and day program areas, painted birdhouses for a future bird viewing garden at Howland, assembled new IKEA kitchen cabinets for a home in New York, and they helped us to clean inside of our fleet of vehicles! We were excited to have them here for the day and for bringing some joy to our organization.



“Giving back to the community is a commitment I take very personally, and those sentiments are also a pillar to the culture of our company. Ability Beyond empowers those with disabilities through the services they provide. I am grateful to be able to partner with an organization that gives members of their community meaningful opportunities”.

- David Kasiaz, Senior Vice President, Global Compensation and Benefits, American Express.

“Thanks to our long-standing relationship with American Express, my EY colleagues and I learned about the impressive services that Ability Beyond provides to people with disabilities, and we pulled together as a team to lend a hand. Like American Express, EY believes in giving back to the communities in which we live and work. It was a privilege to work with both the clients of Ability Beyond and our co-workers. We hope our collective contributions made a difference.” - Joe Clouse, Business Development Leader, EY



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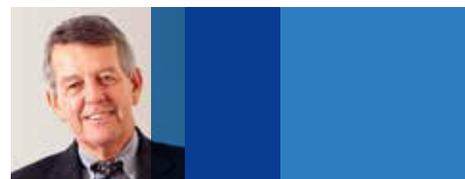
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Dear Friends,

In today's fast paced world, standing still is not an option. That is particularly true when the needs of people with disabilities are increasing and governmental support is decreasing. Change and innovation will be the hallmarks of any successful organization and new approaches will be essential to the individual growth and success of people with disabilities.

The explosion of technology creates tremendous opportunities for us to develop and implement new strategies that increase personal autonomy, independence and dignity . Thanks to donor support, we have established Ability Beyond as a national leader in the use of technological tools in practical ways that enable people to achieve their goals. I am proud of the creativity and resourcefulness of our staff in researching and applying the ever changing tools that are available to improve lives.



In this issue, we highlight a few examples of how we are using technology. None of this would be possible without the generosity of our friends and supporters. Thank you!

Warm regards,

Tom

Ability Beyond Board of Directors and Board of Trustees, 2013–2014

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