

# ACCESS

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CENTER • COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO  
DISABLED STUDENTS PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Volume 4, Issue 2

May 2008

## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SCHOLARSHIPS

**Volunteer Opportunity**  
We need volunteers to scan textbooks for students who need their text-books in alternate formats, such as audio, Braille or large print.  
Contact  
Sue Roseberry  
at 574-6698

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On May 8, we celebrated our students' accomplishments at the annual CSM Scholarship Convocation. After a year of fund raising by the ATC Staff, we were excited to award five students assistive technology scholarships. The awards were: Kurzweil 3000 text-to-speech software, Dragon NaturallySpeaking voice recognition software, a Victor Reader Classic DAISY player, an Alpha Smart keyboard and a 4 gb USB drive. Congratulations to Javier Meneses, Kyle Day, Carolyn Kell, Ben Medlen and Andrew Collins!

Here are some of the reasons these students applied for the scholarships:  
☞ "The Kurzweil Reading Program has been paramount in helping me read to such an extreme degree. Never before have I ever been able to sit down and comprehend my books because I am an auditory learner. The Kurzweil has opened doors to abilities and passions that I have never been able to experience before. A good example is my discovered love of philosophy and learning the writings of authors such as Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, all possible through the Kurzweil. My life has been inspired by them and all because I was able to understand a philosophy class. Listening feeds my brain directly and reduces my distractions."

☞ "I have used Kurzweil 3000 for my school work and leisure reading since the sixth grade. While my verbal skills are strong, my disability limits my written expression. The Dragon system will allow me the freedom to do my work at home and around my own schedule.

My long term goal is to achieve my undergraduate degree in History with a concentration in Naval Science. Ultimately, I want to earn my PhD in History and either teach or work as a naval curator. I fully understand the value of a good education in our highly competitive society and have every plan to be a success."

☞ "I have been attending College of San Mateo for three years now. I have been

involved in Student Government for two years and have served this school and students by listening to concerns and fighting for student rights. I have learned a lot and have grown because of it. I have not seen myself as "disabled," but as someone who needs help, like most students at this school. I have learned that being involved in your school, not just your academics, is crucial to a person's growth as an individual. A person needs to be involved in the school's affairs to know what's going on. A sense of unity with one's school is important to being well-rounded."

☞ "I have found the AlphaSmart keyboard to be a tremendously useful device in the three semesters I have been loaned one. With it, I am able to quickly take legible notes in class or write drafts for papers, which I am then able to take off later and save to a computer. I am also able to download text from the computer and store it to the AlphaSmart for later review. With it, I no longer have to rely on my often faulty memory and atrocious handwriting. I never have to concern myself with a lack of paper and pencil with the AlphaSmart, as all its notes come in electronic form.

The AlphaSmart would be a deeply cherished possession of mine. It is one that I would use to write upon for years to come in my academic career and my life beyond. I wish to study to be a paleontologist at San Jose State."

☞ "My long term goal is essentially to gain an advanced degree so that I can teach psychology at a community college. I am very interested in the worth of the community college experience for students who intend to transfer to a four-year institution and I am determined to contribute back to the community college system in the future.

Because my reading ability is severely limited by my [visual] disability, I need auditory materials to support my learning experience. The Victor Reader will allow me to hear my textbooks."

**Congratulations! We are so proud of you!**

## ADVANCES IN ALT MEDIA TECHNOLOGY

We are working hard to keep up with advancing technology in the field of the alternate media. With the help of Jenn Paige, Joanna Dayton, Amanda Meeks, student assistants, and Russell Cunningham, volunteer, the alternate media staff at CSM is:

- Setting up our new high-speed scanner: We have been fortunate to receive funding for a Canon Color High Speed Scanner. This scanner should help us produce books more efficiently and in less time. Once we have the bindings cut off the books (thanks to the print shop services at Skyline College), we are able to scan books in house.
- Exploring options for producing DAISY Books in the ATC. We are an active member of Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D). RFB&D adds 6000 books to their DAISY library each year. The ATC has five DAISY desktop players as part of our loan program and two software programs to access DAISY books in the ATC lab. Great strides are being made to

establish the DAISY format as a national standard for accessible text.

- Making hardware improvements: The alternate media program has added dual monitors on two workstations for increased efficiency in production of electronic textbooks.
- **GOING GREEN:** A 300 GB hard drive has been purchased to archive electronic textbooks (e-text), replacing CDs. Students can borrow USB drives with their e-text saved on them and then upload the e-text onto their home computer instead of having them burned to a CD. This will save the environment of hundreds of the CDs discarded annually.
- Uploading audio books onto iPods for students who benefit from hearing their textbook's read aloud.

Sue Roseberry  
Alternate Media Service Provider

## FROM THE E-MAIL BOX

I would like to share my experiences about DSPS. It all began, when I decided to continue my education to reach my ultimate goal-- becoming a Registered Nurse. I was very afraid of failing, and I was not sure of what type of help I needed. I walked into the DSPS center and asked for all the help I could get to get into the Nursing program.

I was tested for my disability in the past but CSM needed to re-test me. First I was assigned to a most caring counselor, Maria Paparelli, who empathetically listened to all of my fears and needs. She encouraged me to reach my goal. Furthermore, she pointed out all the strengths and the potential that I had and helped me believe in myself. I will be forever grateful to her.

After I was assessed, I was immediately connected to

all the resources that I needed. I found the most kind, accommodating, flexible and knowledgeable people, who provided me with the tools I needed for success. I borrowed a digital recorder to tape my lectures and then the Assistive Technology Center staff would download them to a disk so that could take it home and listen at my own pace. I was able to borrow the Kurzweil program to use at home to read the textbooks that were provided by the ATC in electronic format. Also, I could take the exams on a computer that would read the questions out loud to me, helping me comprehend the questions better. I had extended time to take my exams. Thanks to all these lovely people and wonderful services, I proudly reached my dream, and I now am a Registered Nurse. Thanks a million again.

Sincerely, Diana Pena

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q. I've never used audio books. How do I find out about them?

A. The Assistive Technology Centers holds orientations throughout the semester. Check with the staff in Building 16 Room 151 and reserve your spot. You can also schedule an appointment with Carolyn Fiori to discuss your specific needs.

### Q. What do I need to listen to audio books?

A. You can listen to electronic text in a variety of ways: on your computer using free software, on a CD/MP3 player, with a DAISY player, on the computer using Kurzweil or TextAloud software. The ATC has a loan program for qualified students. Come to an orientation for more information.

### Q. I've heard that I can talk to the computers to write my papers.

A. Dragon NaturallySpeaking is voice recognition software that will transcribe your speech. Classes are available in the ATC. Ask your counselor for a referral if you need this accommodation.



## STUDENT PROFILE - JOE SIGMAN

Student life is always challenging, trying to keep abreast of studies and exams, not to mention the day-to-day challenges of life. As a student facing learning challenges, I have found my experience at CSM very rewarding. I was diagnosed a little over two years ago with what I call a “learning opportunity.” As a result I have garnered a whole new way of learning, thanks to the College of San Mateo DSPS staff. They discovered my learning challenges through an extensive battery of tests, provided support during the acknowledgement and acclimation period, and provided a wonderful myriad of assistive technologies that have provided me with new opportunities to learn in ways I had not previously realized.

I personally have a language processing difficulty when reading. My eyes read the text, but I really have trouble with comprehension unless I read very slowly. With assistive technologies like Kurzweil 3000 and Dragon NaturallySpeaking, I can hear what I am reading or play back the audio script of what I have written. I use everyday tools such as an MP3 player to record my thoughts as they are generated so I do not lose them. I then transcribe the recorded notes to Dragon and have a document that I can use as a basis for formal paper writing. This simultaneous audio/visual stimulus seems to allow my neural pathways to connect the dots in ways previously unimaginable. By using the electronic textbooks provided by the ATC, my reading fluency is enhanced dramatically, and I can read and comprehend text at a much faster rate with these applications. I have gone from a struggling student to a successful, confident student. While the challenges are significant and the assistive technology requires time to learn, they are invaluable tools!!!

Over the last year I have completed some prerequisites for graduate school and attained an Accounting Certificate simultaneously at CSM. I am ready to begin my Graduate School experience where I will potentially focus on business ventures in the fascinating area of assistive learning technologies. I'm excited and very appreciative to Marie Paperelli, Laura Skaff, and Carolyn Fiori for augmenting my personal growth and acceptance of my learning challenges and providing me with a framework for a successful education and a fruitful life journey. Thanks to these positive, progressive women who have changed my life in dramatic ways. Thank you all!!!

[Joe is finishing his third quarter in graduate school at the University of California, San Diego, Rady School of Management.]



Come and join DSPS and the Assistive Technology Center for

### “FUN IN A BUN!”

Enjoy a hamburger at Taxi's Hamburgers (27<sup>th</sup> and El Camino) on Thursday, **May 22 from 4:00 – 8:00 pm** and help raise money for the Assistive Technology Equipment Scholarship Fund. Taxi's will generously donate 15% of the proceeds of the sales for the evening from CSM guests who mention the Assistive Technology Event. You can also enter to win a prize. The drawing will be at the end of the evening!  
(Need not be present to win.)



## DSP&S NOTES

**Have you met with DSP&S staff to fill out the appropriate accommodations forms?** Call for an appointment: Disability Resource Center at 574-6438 or Learning Disabilities Assessment Center at 574-6433. Ask to speak to Audra or Laura.

**Have you talked with your instructor about your test accommodations?** Pick up test accommodations forms in the Disability Resource Center 16-150.

**Have you ordered your e-text?** Contact the Assistive Technology Center at 574-6698 or stop by and see Sue, 16-151.



## WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

College of San Mateo  
 Assistive Technology Center (ATC)  
 Building 16, Room 151  
 650.574.6432  
 650.358.6806 (fax)

**E-mail:**  
 fiori@smccd.edu

**Website:**  
 collegeofsanmateo.edu/ATC

Grants and gifts fund the Assistive Technology Equipment Scholarship Fund. Contribute today by sending a check to:

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND**  
 Scholarship Office  
 College of San Mateo  
 1700 W. Hillsdale Blvd.  
 San Mateo, CA 94402-3784

Sign me up to receive the next issues of ACCESS.

Send me more information about the ATC and DSP&S programs.

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to Carolyn Fiori at the CSM address above or via e-mail - fiori@smccd.edu. Thank you!

Michael Claire, President, College of San Mateo

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## WEBSITES WORTH A CLICK

**Spell Catcher** us the ultimate spell checking and writing tool. Use it as a spell checker in e-mails, letters or documents, instant messages, and more! Perform a spelling check whenever and wherever you want! [<http://www.rainmakerinc.com/>]

**WebAim** - Expanding the web's potential for people with disabilities [<http://www.webaim.org>]

**Web accessibility** information and tutorials. [<http://jimthatcher.com>]



## ABOUT THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CENTER

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The Assistive Technology Center, part of Disabled Students Programs and Services, is a resource to the campus community for assistive technology training, accessible web design and alternate media services. Students interested in enrolling in DSKL 817 (Assistive Computer Access) or using the lab should contact Carolyn Fiori, 574-6432.

This publication is available upon request in alternate formats by calling the Disability Resource Center at 650.574.6438.