

KATS Network Advisory Council Minutes

Date: March 6, 2023

Time: 9:44 AM, CST

Place: Wendell Foster and Zoom

Welcome & Introductions – Mindy McGirt

Advisory Council Members

In person: Mindy McGirt, Kevin McCormack, Nancy Perry, Jessica Endler Smith, Andre Ryssemus

Virtual: Bill Titus, Traci Burks, Nicole Maher, David Allgood (proxy for Lisa McKeown)

Absent: Samantha Farthing, Gerry Gordon Brown, Melanie Peskoe, Joe Cowan, Suhas Kulkarni

KATS Network Coordinating Center and ATRC/CARAT Staff

In person: Jocelyn Warren, Alison Amshoff (enTECH), Cindy Huston, Jana Billingsley, Sandy Hayden (Wendell Foster), Patrick Kitzman, Keisha Hudson, Crystal Hignite (ACAT), Carol Weber, Lisa Staub, Alex Ingram (KATS)

Virtual: Betsy Eiserman, Beth Martin (Easterseals Redwood), Darrin Breeding (Carl D. Perkins)

Absent: Christina Espinosa (HDI CATS)

Others in Attendance

In person: Tracy Lundergan (Captioning and CARAT Services), Lisa Amstutz, Tara Eversole (ASL Interpreters), Karissa Riter, Denise Parker (Wendell Foster)

Approval of Minutes from Past Meeting(s)

Bill Titus motioned for approval of the December 8th, 2022 meeting minutes.

David Allgood provided a second. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Nothing to report.

New Business:

Updates of KATS Network Coordinating Center Activities-Alex Ingram and Lisa Staub

- Alex reported on some of the ways she has engaged in marketing and public awareness. She presented at a transition fair for students with blindness and low vision and for staff at Jefferson Community and Technical College. She put together a 2022 Accomplishments Sheet which details some of the things KATS Network as a whole was able to do that we're very proud of. We are also keeping up our social media presence. We developed an Instagram profile which is KATSNetworkKY. I'm also posting original content once or twice a week and developed a new segment called "Is It AT?" where I'm highlighting items people might not necessarily know are AT. We also had National AT Awareness Day on March 1st and I was able to share 5 short video clips of AT throughout the day. She engaged in virtual hill day visits. She met with staff from Senator McConnell, Representative Hal Rogers, and then Representative James Comer and has a meeting set up the next week with Representative Brett Guthrie. A nice thing that came out of that was that many of the individuals reported that they would be happy to write a letter of support for any grants we are going out for especially Senator McConnell for federal grants. Alex reported that the ramp partnership with Holmes High school is moving forward. Also, we will have two new demonstration centers established soon, one will be at the McDowell Center in Louisville and the other at the Kentucky Career Center in Florence where the KATS Network Coordinating Center is.
- Lisa reported that she has been working with centers on data collection and guidelines for reporting in AT4All. Some devices in the system needed to be reclassified because there have been some updates regarding our reporting. Lisa informed that the AT Act was reauthorized by Congress and stated that most of the key provisions remain the same but one major change was related to claiming comparability for alternative financing. The plan now is to report on state financing activities that allow consumers to obtain AT at a reduced cost. We will ask that centers that have a

Makerspace add this information on AT4All so we can use that data on the federal report. Another change is that if we have an alternative financing program, we will need to have a representative from that agency on the advisory council. Also, related to the advisory council, it was stated that another agency representative needed to be added but we already have Nicole from the Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities at this time, so we are covered. But another AT user will need to be added to the advisory council if we do need to add a representative from the alternative financing agency. Lisa and Carol met with representatives from the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Program and discussed moving forward with mini loans from \$100 to \$7,000 and at this point it is really up to the executive director, Cora McNabb; we will let you know when there is more information on this. Lisa and Alex met with individuals from the Oklahoma AT Act Program to discuss how they manage their reuse and loan items and talked about their involvement with Medicaid which is something KATS Network is trying to explore. Lisa, Carol, and Dave a rehab tech with OVR completed an ADA assessment at the Northern Kentucky Area Developmental District office in Florence. The Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) had a meeting where Ryan Creech, who is on our public health grant, presented on his progress and plans with the grant to help other states that received funding get ideas on how to utilize this resource.

Updates from ATRCs:

ACAT-Patrick Kitzman

- We have been working a lot within our CARAT-TOP program with our high school students and were able to finally finish with our second group of students who were adapting toys for one of the local elementary schools. We just started working with both of the high schools, Perry County Central and Hazard Independent and once again we are going to work on programs to adapt our environment. We got to go to our first ATIA conference and are going to focus on purchasing equipment focused on adaptive recreation and especially recreation that can be done in the mountainous areas. Also, we will have our official ribbon cutting ceremony on April 10th.

enTECH – Alison Amshoff

- We have been able to assist an individual with an open loan that's in long-term care. This individual has ALS and we were able to assist them with having an AAC device because once an individual has to utilize services in LTC they are then unable to use any insurance to purchase any AT. So we were able to send a communication device, a mount, and then some parts for making some wheelchair modifications that we had through CARAT. We have been trying to get our social media going, we do have social media accounts, but due to changes at enTECH we no longer have access to them because we are locked out of the passwords due to facial recognition. We recently received our equipment through the WHAS grant and we are working on some signage for that. We received a very large swing that can accommodate adults. EnTECH is going to host an open house in order to raise awareness and bring the community in. We also have some surveys that we are working on with our GAs and some OT and speech students that we will send to various agencies in the community to see what individuals need help with or what they want to see so we can focus our trainings on their needs.

Easterseals Redwood –Betsy Eiserman

- We have added a new therapy director, Beth Martin, at Easterseals Redwood. The new ATRC librarian/AT assistant should also be starting in the next week. There were some neat loans over the past quarter, one of which was the Obi robotic feeder that was loaned to an individual whose son had an accident and couldn't feed himself anymore. With the use of the Obi they were able to have a warm dinner together and have started the process to get it approved by insurance. We have continued to have our nuts-and-bolts clinic with Numotion of Lexington. We are seeing between 20 to 25 clients here but have not yet opened it to the public. The next move is to include the pediatric population at Easterseals Redwood. Our Hubscrub is up and running and has cleaned its first two items.

Wendell Foster – Cindy Huston

- Shared about Wendell Foster's history stating they have been in business for 75 years. Wendell Foster all started with Louise. She was the daughter of Wendell and Edith Foster and was diagnosed with CP shortly after birth. They lived on this property in a very small house and essentially went out

to their neighbors and the community and tried to find others going through a similar situation. It kept growing and growing and now there is an intermediate care facility that houses 63 individuals and SCL homes that surround the campus. There is also an outpatient building and our state-of-the-art PT facility as well as a transportation department. We have almost 40 therapists who are spoiled by the AT center right here, but it makes us a perfect fit and we are blessed to have the support of Wendell Foster. We also have our sensory park that is open to anybody; it was probably built 8 years ago and it is definitely accessible. We just received a large communication board for the playground through a grant too.

HDI-CATS – Christina Espinosa (absent)

- Representative absent, no report given.

Carl D Perkins – Darrin Breeding

- We have a new instructor within the job readiness training classroom, and they have been trained on how to use the Hubscrub. The numbers of calls has picked back up and we are hopeful that we will receive more donations for reuse.

Demonstration of Head Tracking (Karissa Riter and Denise Parker)

- Karissa provided background information on Denise stating she came to Wendell Foster from Texas approximately 15 years ago. At that time, she was in a modified wheelchair and was prone on her stomach. She had a communication book in writing, and they would ask her yes/no questions Denise would look up for yes and down for no or shake her head. That worked ok and is still her backup method for communication. She was working with OT and PT too and was able to be guided into sitting upright in her wheelchair and demonstrated good head movement, so they upgraded to head tracking. There is a silver dot on her forehead that the camera picks up and basically wherever she moves the mouse on screen moves and if she lingers for a certain amount of time it selects. On Mondays Denise and Karissa spend the whole session programming the communication device; adding and removing things. They can also change the tone of the voice so she can get staff's attention when needed.
- Denise demonstrated head tracking by telling the advisory council a little bit about herself including her name, birthdate, favorite shape, and more!

Denise also reported that she loves to read to schoolchildren and began reading “I ain’t going to pain no more” by Karen Beaumont.

KATS Advisory Board Committee Reports

- Strategic Planning/State Plan for Assistive Technology – Lisa Staub
 - This committee did not meet since last advisory council meeting and thus had nothing to report.
- Assistive Technology Conference Planning – Andre Ryssemus
 - We talked about topics for the conference; right now, we are planning to have topics related to funding for AT, toy adaptation, smart home items, ramp DYI, a presentation from a student advocate and college disability services, adaptive books, accessibility features in various operating systems, mental health and apps, low vision products and adaptive recreation and/or adaptive gaming and we are actively working on finding speakers for these topics. We also reached out to the AT branch techs to see if there are any other topics they would like to see covered. We are planning to have the conference at KSU’s research farm again and Alex has started the process of getting it booked. We are working to find vendors for the exhibitor’s hall as well as food and drinks. As of now, the conference is planned for June 14th through the 16th.
- Nominating Committee – Lisa Staub
 - There are some people who have terms expiring in March and their applications have all been submitted to the governor’s office and we are waiting to hear back on those. Mindy will not be coming back again so we are still looking for an individual who uses AT preferably from the Western side of the state. We have reached out to the Center for Accessible Living offices in Murray and Bowling Green but have not heard anything from them. Kevin was sending something to the Kentucky School for the Deaf too but has not heard back either.
- Program Marketing/ Public Awareness – Alex Ingram
 - The program marketing/public awareness committee was unable to meet this quarter because weather prevented even virtual experiences from happening; nothing to report.
- Socialization Committee-Alex Ingram
 - We are planning the first socialization event to coincide with the AT conference. It will be held the evening of the first day of the

conference and we are planning for a game night. We will have indoor games like cards and board games and outdoor games like corn hole and large Tic Tac Toe. We are also planning for some of the centers that do have the ability to 3D print to make some adaptations like card holders. If there are any suggestions for games or adaptations for games, as well as games you can bring please let us know. We are also planning for virtual events later in the year like virtual trivia nights but we will get to planning that after the first event.

State Agency Representatives

- Kentucky OVR-Andre Ryssemus
 - We have been approved for an assistant position in the West Kentucky area as well as a position for someone to help Clinton. Also, we have had four applications for the position that is posted in Louisville and should be interviewing those candidates soon. The opening of the McDowell Center was supposed to be March 20th but that had to be postponed and thus the April 11th open house has also been pushed back; the rescheduled dates for those should be coming in soon.
- State Independent Living-David Allgood
 - We have spent a lot of time on the general assembly bill about people with disabilities. We are also working on a bill that would require in 2025 that all venues in Kentucky with a capacity of 1,500 or more to have an adult changing table for those that need it. We have also been building, we continue to build ramps mostly in Louisville through the community block grant money we receive.
- KCDHH-Jessica Endler
 - We are partnering with Heuser Hearing Institute to go to Elkton and Louisa, KY because they have a mobile clinic and do hearing screenings from that mobile clinic. I will also be bringing them phones. We are looking for other parts of the state that we can do audiology assessments and further screenings because in rural areas it might be 75 miles to a bigger city where these services are available. We got some new equipment for the TAP cabinets and will be distributing that next week. We are also partnering with Kentucky's Hands and Voices organizations to host a superhero

walk/marathon in Richmond, KY on May 20th. We have also partnered with Kentucky emergency management services to improve the alert system for bad weather in conjunction with Hands and Voices, the National Guard, and FEMA.

- CCDD Council-Nicole Maher
 - We hired Johnny Kaelin as our new Executive Director; he has been in the field for a while, and we believe it will be a great fit. Last week the council went to the capital and had an advocacy day where the Governor signed proclamation that established Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. We continue to support our self-advocacy group, DiscoverU which is through Zoom Group in Louisville. They hold meetings all around the state as well as virtually so people can participate no matter where they are. The transportation initiative is doing well through HDI. We are working with different state entities trying to get transportation options open and advising people. We even work with individuals trying to help them figure out transportation arrangements when they need it. KARRN/CARAT-TOP through the Rural Rehabilitation Network had a really successful first cohort and will be expanding services. They got small grants to work with high school students with and without disabilities to find areas in their community to make more accessible. The first project was making a local park more accessible.
- Education Cabinet-Kevin McCormack
 - Informed that there is a federal definition for K through 12 as far as children's training with assistive technology. Kentucky has traditionally had their own definition of this, and we are transitioning to a more educational impact definition. I have been running the lending library which is going well and we have enjoyed hearing success stories. Some kids that have been able to use our devices successfully have provided their teacher with evidence to ask for the money to purchase the device. Kevin brought a few devices to demonstrate for the group, one was a refreshable braille display called the braille note touch and the other was a MagniLink video magnifier. Kevin educated the group after a question on the subject, that their lending library is open to any student in the public school system and that he can take devices anywhere.

Open Discussion from Advisory Council

- Discussion on the KATS Network mission and vision.
 - Alex brought up that only one vision has been proposed by the advisory council which was “Making assistive technology a forethought, not a second thought.” Discussion amongst the council ensued about what exactly a mission and vision were. Carol informed that a mission is what we do and why we exist whereas a vision is what the world looks like if we achieve our mission. Andre added that a mission is a statement of the business objectives and the vision is where the organization aspires to go. Jocelyn stated she thought a vision could be that individuals can fully participate and have a meaningful life. David agreed with Jocelyn and added that it a vision could be that everyone’s community is fully inclusive. Cindy shared Wendell Foster’s mission and Keisha added that the vision should be a very quick tag line and shared KARRN’s vision. A decision was made to brainstorm the mission and vision further in the strategic planning comity as well as review what is important to us in order to get to a solid mission and vision.
 - Mindy shared that her term is expiring on the advisory council and she will not be returning because she will begin teaching soon. Therefore, a new co-chair needed to be elected and Kevin reported that as co-chair he would likely not be able to attend the next advisory council meeting so the newly elected co-chair would need to lead it. Alex discussed that the term could be as short as until September 2023 or they could extend it until September 2024 depending on preference. The floor was opened for nominations. Bill nominated Nancy, but Nancy declined the nomination. No other nominations were put forth. Alex, Lisa, and Carol reviewed bylaws and decided to conduct a special virtual meeting for nominations and election of a new co-chair as some members were unable to attend today’s meeting.
 - Nancy brought up the fact that in previous meetings she had inquired about starting a camp or hosting an event for people with disabilities to relax and have a good time together, possibly a retreat. Alex informed that the socialization committee is going to try and create these types of opportunities and discussed the game night that is

planned to coincide with the AT conference as well as the virtual trivia nights that are planned for the future.

Announcements

- Next council meeting dates:
 - Wednesday June 14, 2023
Time: 9:30 am-11:30 pm ET
Location: Kentucky State University Farm in Frankfort. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the AT Conference.
 - Friday, September 8th 10-12 ET
 - Monday, December 4th 10-12 ET

Adjournment: 11:38 AM

Motion called by David and Kevin provided the second for the motion.