

KATS Network Advisory Council Minutes

Date: September 9, 2021

Time: 9:32 AM, Eastern Time

Place: Zoom

Welcome & Introductions—Co-chair, Lisa McKeown

Advisory Council Members- Quorum in attendance

Andre Ryssemus, Lisa McKeown, Jessica Endler, Kevin McCormack, Mindy McGirt,
Nancy Perry, Nicole Maher, Gerry Gordon-Brown

Advisory Council Members- not in attendance

Chester Wilbert, Samantha Farthing, Suhas Kulkarni, William Titus, Winter Renfrow

KATS Network Coordinating Center and ATRC Staff

Mike Karman, Elizabeth Thompson, Christina Espinosa-Bard, Darrin Breeding, Joe McCombs, Jana Billingsley, Cindy Huston, Peggy Farmer, Lisa Staub, Jennifer Withrow, Allison Amshoff

Others in attendance –

OVR interns: Heidi Mollenkopf, Tammi Narehood, Paula Smith, Jessica Patterson, Nakylia Carter

Interpretation services provided by Chelsea Naugle and Sarah Grubb

CART services provided by Tracy Lundergan

Approval of Minutes from past meeting(s)

Lisa motioned for approval of the June 10, 2021 meeting minutes. Gerry moved to approve. Nicole provided a second.

Updates from ATRCs:

EnTECH- Alison Amshoff

The Center has had University of Louisville Speech and Occupational Therapist students working with them this semester.

There has been an increase in AT assessments, specifically AAC assessments.

The center CARAT Coordinator, Laura Starks retired and the center is looking for someone to fill that role.

In collaborating with the Engritch school district and working closely with year-end students.

The Center attained an "Eyegaze" for iPad making the iPad accessible to be used as an AAC, or for games and leisure. There is a 2 ½ year old utilizing this along with a few other students throughout the district.

A Milo robot has been used for those not able to come into the clinic. And using an avatar, on the iPad can help an individual receive services without using the robot.

Currently not able to have the open lab due to COVID protocol challenges.

The Center is not hosting large groups but have had individuals come by to try out AT.

HDI CATS- Christina Espinosa-Bard

In April and May, we were open by appointment only and moved to curbside drop-off and pickup in June. We made the first loans in April to First-Steps. We are continuing to make purchases of items for the lending library.

We are still providing the "Fourth-Thursday ADA Talks" trainings with about 100 in attendance.

There are two pediatric residence participating in the residence program. They come every month for an overview of HDI\CATS and participate in a tour. These were done live in April and May but cancelled in June.

We have provided information about communication apps and communication apps on iPads. We have given out some iPads and have one new app coming out today.

Provided some research and information on an adaptive bicycle. We did not have the particular one that the individual needed for their daughter.

Several amplified phones have been given out.

Some power chairs were given out.

Several switch adapted toys and tumble form seats were given to the parents of a 9 month old with spina-bifida. A couple of other parents came in, checked out several things, and gathered information about resources for their non-verbal children.

Utilized the network to transfer equipment to McDowell and Redwood.

Fifty items were loaned throughout the 3-month period from April thru June.

Redwood- Lisa Staub

In April, the ATR Staff celebrated AT Awareness Day by spending the day in program rooms working with clients and staff to get back into practice of using it. We also posted a video of the event to the Facebook page to build awareness in the community.

The Re-Use program accepted a large amount of items from six individuals. The facility was able to give out 24 items during the three-month period.

The main ATRC library area was re-organized to open up the room.

The facility started allowing more visitors into the building but have had to start screening again.

Because the First Steps providers are not able to come in person to look at the available items some equipment booklets were created and sent to them. These booklets contained pictures and information on items in the ATRC library related to seating, positioning, mobility, communication and play. We also provided training to one of the FirstSteps physical therapists who needed help with setup and accessories of a piece of equipment she was using with one of her clients.

There have been several ramps loaned out during the three-month period.

EnTech had items that they did not have space to keep. Our librarian was able to match several items with individuals in our area. Michael Karman delivered the items and took a tour of the facility while here.

Several ATRC staff participated in the CATS Summer Institute AT Conference sessions in June.

In July, the "Clean up and Clear out" event was hosted to recycle items no longer needed. All items available for re-use were displayed in the cafeteria. Twenty items were re-utilized that day. Elizabeth came up and was able to help take a number of items including six bedside commodes that were re-utilized by a local nursing home.

WKATC- Cindy Huston

On April 23, a Re-Use event was held and all of our items were taken to the commons area where COVID 19 protocols were followed. During the event, we were able to give out 72 items valued at \$61,000.00.

One item was an electric scooter for a daughter where the mother had multiple surgeries that prevented her from being able to push her daughter's manual wheelchair. The scooter allowed the daughter to navigate her environment without Mom's assistance. They were very excited to receive the scooter.

A Floor sitter was provided to a FirstSteps provider that works in the Pennyrile district with low income Amish families.

Training was provided to educate FirstSteps providers though out the state on the process of securing assistive technology. Janna was able to provide six of the events that reached 146 FirstSteps providers. These trainings will continue on a bi-monthly basis.

147 devices were loaned this period. One was a trial loan of a STACS (Standardized Tactile Augmentative Communication Symbols) device to a teacher in the Barren County. It was determined that a more aggressive type device was needed but they were very appreciative for the trial.

There was another loan for trial of a portal desktop magnifier for a Daviess County low vision person. This needed a three-prong outlet and was bulky making it not a good fit for this family.

A speech therapist from Wendell Foster borrowed a pediatric feeder seat to use for a swallow study. Swallow studies done in a hospital were designed for adults so the feeder seat is essential for children to have swallow studies performed.

A speech therapist in Dawson Springs School System in Hopkins County borrowed an iPad with the "LAMP Words for Life" program to trial with a student. After a two-month trial, it was found to be a good option and the therapist is now working with the school to purchase one for use in the school environment.

A local advertising agency borrowed a ramp to allow a person in a wheelchair to enter their building for a job interview.

An article in the local newspaper explained the story of a local physical therapist who was working with a family that had a T-pod positioning chair they no longer needed. In collaborating with Project CARAT, Jana was aware that there was a child in Northern Kentucky in need of such a positioning system. Arrangements for pickup and delivery were completed and the family and the girl in need after surgery were very happy to have received the chair.

Two or three device demos are completed each month. A lot of those are with speech therapists at Wendell Foster that complete AAC assessments. Typically, they come from all over Western Kentucky because we are one of the only facilities in this part of the state that has the expertise to provide them.

For AT Awareness Day we shared a video about the center on the social media page.

In June, one of the physical therapists working with an outpatient on using the Lucy mobility system arranged for a representative from National Seating and Mobility and Target Medical to demo the equipment. This system is sort of a censoring system where the person using the system can navigate their environment safer. It has only been a few weeks so we are waiting to see the results from this demo.

We were able to purchase several new pieces of AT equipment using KATS funds.

The facility purchased a Hub Scrub but is waiting on the plumbing to be finished before they can use it.

Staff participated in the summer AT Conference.

Elizabeth Thompson explained that a young student was in need of a communications device that they could not afford. Wendell Foster was able to purchase the AT device and help the individual.

Carl Perkins- Darrin Breeding

We have developed a wish list of items that we would like to purchase for the loan library. Since we are a state agency, we are waiting on some guidance before purchase.

Still providing services by appointment only with masks required.

There are several ramps out on loan and we have been getting several calls about ramps lately.

Project CARAT sites

Project CARAT Paducah Update-Mike Karman

This site was downsized to their new location and have become more stringent due to COVID.

Project CARAT Hazard Update-Mike Karman

Keisha sent a brief update that the center is transitioning into a new set of student coordinators and waiting to set a date to get them trained. A cleaning last week provided more items in inventory and multiple pieces went out last week.

The site is moving forward with the new Intergenerational Program where high school students will be involved more.

Work continues towards the toy lending library.

Project CARAT- EnTECH - Joe McCombs

EnTecn has gained a little momentum and volume thru Project CARAT. In April, 42 items were donated with a total value of about \$2400. Most of these were for activities of daily living, seating and mobility.

Some projects were coordinated with Just Serve and Class Overseas in Louisville.

Peter has been able to continually keep some bath chairs and shower benches in stock since they are available just down the street with this new partnership.

A therapist from the 40203 area came in needing bath or shower chairs for older clientele home health, so this works out nicely.

In May, 47 items were reutilized for a total value of about \$17,000. Two of the items that escalated the value were power chairs.

We had been averaging about 80-100 items pre-COVID. After COVID we are averaging around 45-50 items per month.

In June, 49 items related to activities of daily living were provided with a total value of around \$3300.

Shanay Davis was hired and comes with customer service experience. She will make it possible for the site to be open more hours during the week and this will help availability to provide services and get the numbers back to pre-COVID.

Still receiving donations and just received a chair lift that has already been utilized by a person in need of one.

Have a part time person doing some surveys and hope to get some data back to help with services.

Project CARAT- HDI-CATS –

All of the ramps are still out. This has been consistent since the “Ramp-Up” program started.

This site averages around 50 items per month thru Project CARAT. This quarter, April thru June we gave out 150 items valued at \$121,297. These include chairs, cushions, walkers, shower benches and toilet seats.

One stand assist patient transport that was donated had been loaned out and returned. An HDI staff member with cerebral palsy that was able to use this stand assist to help with his back and legs and to alternate his position.

The site has been receiving donations but transport and storage space continues to be a barrier. The new Baptist Church storage area has been helpful and this need re-evaluated at the end of the year.

Dave Fleckler does all the work on the power chairs to keep them in working order and making them work for individuals. Some funding has been used to purchase missing parts and supply straps and positioning parts.

Project CARAT- Paintsville – Darrin Breeding

In the last quarter there have been 118 items given out with a value of \$32,000. This value is low due to the large donation of depends undergarments being a large amount of the items given out.

A large donation was picked up from SOS in Louisville and the site was able to assist putting a carrier in the back of a Tahoe.

Continue to move hospital beds and power chairs at a large rate. I would like to somehow all work together to get a covered utility trailer for transport of these items. We currently have an uncovered trailer making it a wet experience should it be raining.

In January, Dalton was hired thru Adecco. He works to keep the KATS Network equipment list current. He is also doing minor repairs on power chairs and doing a wonderful job.

Statewide Project CARAT Program Update – Mike Karman

CARAT sites across the Commonwealth managed 985 items valued at over \$340,820.62. That is way up from April through June of 2020 where our numbers were 260 items at a value of \$67,191.70.

We are more and more finding ways to partner in the community. SOS continues to be a major partner. Darrin, from Perkins Center was able to pick up 10 used power chairs there a few weeks back.

New partnerships include:

Extreme Mobility Lexington: Gifted new and lightly used items valued at over \$19,000.

Kentucky/Indiana Paralyzed Veterans of America donated several power chairs and will be funneling used equipment going forward.

Our sites are continuing to do follow up with end-users to look at both satisfaction and demographic information. Close to 100 surveyed so far.

Coordinating Center Updates- KATS – Mike Karman

Overview of KATS data covering April-June, 2021

There have been 308 Short-Term Device Loans during this period with twelve (12) device demonstrations. Over 30,000 people reached through public awareness activities primarily through social media and other electronic media and over 9000 consumers served with information and assistance.

The Annual AT Conference had between 40-50 participants in each session. Sessions included Inclusive Higher Education, Student Empowerment, Farming Panel, Accessible Word Docs, AAC devices and Assessments, DIY Home Ergonomics and Wheelchair Repair. There were nine attendees registered for RESNA Credits, and 40 registered for CRC credits. The total 120 overall registrants registered for one or more sessions.

The vision was, at least while we remain virtual, to offer quarterly virtual training opportunities statewide as ongoing AT Conference Events. Once a Program Coordinator is hired there can be discussion for implementation.

The new OVR Accessibility Coordinator has been hired. Jimmy Brown started his new position August 1, 2021.

Reeves Grant is going live after much delay due to COVID. Items are available out of Redwood and CDPRC.

The At4All version II software demo link was sent out to all the CARAT sites to test. The system is very similar as the old system and has a more appealing look. The old site will no longer be supported and there is a strong push for everyone to switch to the new version.

Moving forward OVR will be changing the way contracts are awarded. Now an open meeting must be scheduled for all interested in applying for KATS funding to attend. This is to align better with Federal Government expectations and the intended purpose of grants in general.

ATRC Spotlight

HDI CATS - Christina Espinosa-Bard

Christina explained the history, structure, funding and offerings of the Human Development Institute Center for Assistive Technology Services along with the Mission, Vision and Values.

Open Discussion

There was some discussions about new committees and/or workgroups within the council. Some of these were groups include AT Conference, Apprenticeship, Advertising on Social Media, etc. The goal for these is for the council to coordinate and run these meetings with the support of the KATS Network staff.

Announcements / New Business

It was announced that the Center for Accessible Living had reopened but has closed back down due to the COVID numbers rising. Remote and virtual services for consumers are being conducted. The Center will hire a housing coordinator due to a retirement and for an Assistant Director position. Independence Place in Lexington is looking for an Employment Specialist.

As announced earlier the KATS Coordinator position posted on the personnel.ky.gov website on the jobs listing page in case anyone is interested in applying for the position.

The nominees for New Co-Chair introduced themselves:

1. Mindy McGirts is a deaf person that uses a coclear implant. She will be representing consumers. She is a grad student working towards a degree in special education and works with students that have needs for special technology in school and their home life. Her Dad has hearing loss and loss of vision along with some friends and neighbors with physical and other disabilities. Her Dad used to be very involved with Assistive Technology and she used to help tryout different devices with him.
2. Kevin McCormack is the Assistive Technology consultant related to vision impairments and would represent the Education Department. This is his first year on the Advisory Council.
3. Lisa McKeown is a visually impaired person that has worked for 3 ½ years at the Center of Accessible Living where she started as a volunteer thru the Office of the Blind's "Work Expanse" program. She works with the Personal Care Incentive program doing clerical functions. She personally uses assistive software, a large CC TV and handheld video magnifiers. She also advocates about AT for all disabilities with legislation and dissertation.

The results of the voting are as follows: Kevin McCormack elected as the agency representative. Mindy McGirts elected as the consumer representative.

There was discussions about meetings returning to in person or hybrid platforms and where the meetings would be conducted if they returned to in person. It was clarified quarterly meetings are scheduled on the second Thursday of the corresponding month and rotate thru coordinating centers' sites.

Next council meeting date:

- December 9, 2021 – Redwood Center Spotlight

Meetings will remain virtual until further notice. Zoom Link will be provided.

Adjournment:

Lisa McKeown motioned to close the meeting at 11:29am. Andre Ryssemus moved to approve. Mindy McGirt provided a second.