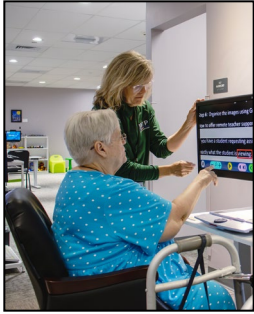


IATP
ILLINOIS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT
2023

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What We Do

Our mission is to provide Illinoisans of all ages with disabilities and health condition greater access to assistive technology (AT) devices and services so that they may enhance their independence and participation in all aspects of life. To achieve this,

numerous programs and services are offered to learn about and try AT devices. Individuals may obtain AT through our Makers (customized 3D printing and fabrication), Smart Home, Tech Kitchen, and AT Reuse programs. We provide AT demonstrations, device loans, training, technical assistance, and a variety of contracted services including professional AT/AAC evaluations. To assist in meeting the AT needs of the individuals they serve, we partner with state and local agencies.



Who We Serve

- Illinois residents of all ages with disabilities and/or health conditions including family members, friends, caregivers, and service providers
- Community, Social, and Youth Organizations
- Large and small businesses
- State Agencies and local governments

Our Values

We believe disability and aging are a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes a person's right to:

- enjoy full inclusion and integration in mainstream society
- benefit from education
- pursue meaningful careers
- enjoy self-determination
- make informed choices
- live in an environment of their choosing

Meet Our Board



Rita Howells
M.S. ED,
President

It has been a privilege to be associated with the Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) throughout my career in Rehabilitation Services.

After 32 years of service, I retired from the Illinois Bureau of Blind Services. My appreciation for the use of assistive technology (AT) has grown even more, as I continue to teach and utilize assistive technology. Many times, I have consulted with IATP for their expertise. I have been using and teaching on many assistive technology tools to assist blind persons in their desired goals in learning to use their iOS devices, in particular. The things that persons who are blind can now do with their iPhones, and other technology devices, are almost endless.

IATP remains viable because of the dedication and competency of the CEO and the qualified staff. An organization is only as good as the qualifications, commitment, and positive intentions of the entire staff. IATP employees are passionate about assistive technology and how it can enhance the quality of life for all persons with disabilities.

It has been a privilege to serve on the IATP Board of Directors.

Thoughtfully submitted by:

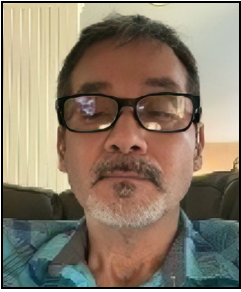
Rita Howells M.S. ED
IATP Board of Directors, President



Barbara Doyle, Vice President

My lifelong mission is to assist in creating an inclusive world for everyone by increasing understanding, sharing knowledge, and improving the service delivery systems for children and adults. I embrace assistive technology because it ENABLES people to participate, learn, grow, teach, communicate, contribute, work, live more independently, and show competence. I cherish being part of IATP and its mission, as I have since its inception in 1989.

Board Members



Dave Perez, Treasurer

I am a long-time Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society volunteer, talking to newly diagnosed people with MS and letting them know you can still live graciously with a diagnosis. Also, I participate in a friendly visitor program visiting area nursing home residents with MS. Very proud to be a member of this great group of people at IATP.



Brian Dowd, Secretary

First and foremost, I'm a husband to an amazing wife, dad to two amazing men and grandfather (papa) to 3 beautiful grandchildren. I'm retired after 11 classroom years and several years as an assistive technologist for multiple school districts in southwestern Illinois.



Horacio Esparza

Since 2008, I have been the Executive Director of Progress Center for Independent Living. I am the first executive director of a CIL in Illinois to be Latino and the first who is blind. I produce and host the first radio show in the country dedicated to disability rights, culture, and independent living philosophy. I received several awards recognizing my work, *Un Sueno y un Despertar*, the first book of poetry about disabilities.



Michael Knepler

I am currently working for the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology as a public service administrator. Prior to serving on IATP's Board, I served on the advisory council, as well as serving on the boards for the Springfield Center for Independent Living (SCIL), Sparc, and the Interagency Committee for Employees with Disabilities (ICED).



Sharon Ruda

Working as Associate Director of the Illinois State Library, in the capacity of managing the Talking Book and Braille Service, allowed me to interact with patrons on a state and federal level. Reorganizing the program into one that provided a high level of service for individuals who have a print impairment had a positive result for Illinois residents.



Colten Skinner

IATP has helped me become an award-winning author. Without my computer desk, computer, customized accessories, and Dragon Naturally Speaking, I would not have been able to write my book! I was asked if I would be interested in serving on the Board of Directors and could not refuse. I have been blessed by IATP and look forward to being a part in blessing others!



Sue Walter

In my professional life, I spent over 25 years providing training and technical assistance on secondary transition topics as I worked with ISBE, other state and local agencies, youth and families, and school districts across the state. Most importantly, I am the parent of a young adult who has a disability that requires significant support and services, and I add that perspective to enhance my work. I have supported my daughter, Jennifer, in navigating the transition to adult life, participating in a customized employment process, and moving toward a self-employment/entrepreneurial career as an artist. Many of Jennifer's abstract paintings grace the walls of IATP.

Advisory Council

IATP has an advisory council specifically for the State Assistive Technology Act Program funding it receives. It is a 60% consumer-majority advisory council that reflects the diversity of the state in terms of disability, age, ethnicity, and geographic location. The 23-member Advisory Council consists of 11 individuals representing state agencies or other disability related organizations, and 12 council members who are individuals with disabilities that use AT and/or are family members or guardians of those who do. The advisory council reviews performance measures and provides programmatic input.



Expansion

Fiscal Year 2023 brought many changes to IATP. In late 2022, new programs began to ramp up in anticipation of the move to a larger location. IATP officially moved to the Walnut Street location in November of 2022. The new facility allowed for the expansion of established programs and the introduction of new programs.

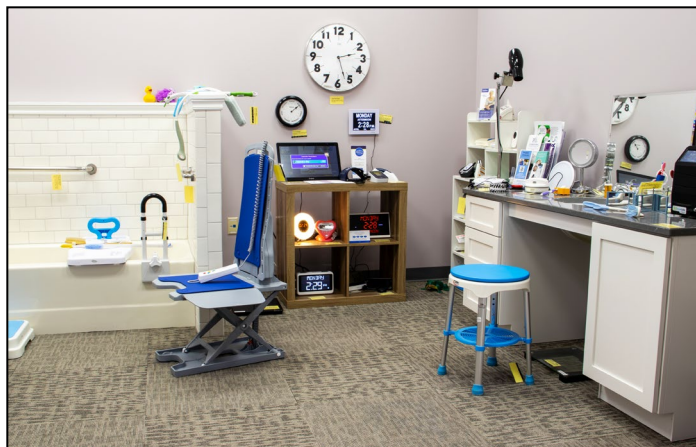
FY 23 Highlights

- **Groundwork** for the addition of new programs began with the turn of the FY in July of 2022. After months of planning, the creation of the new programs got underway.
- The commercial kitchen in the new location was a perfect fit for the new **IATP Tech Kitchen**. The on-site accessible kitchen classroom is adaptable to a wide range of accessibility needs and showcases simple to high-tech solutions for independence in the kitchen.
- **IATP Demonstration Center** expanded to include a fully-functioning, five-room **Smart Home** featuring home automation options in a living area, laundry room, kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom.
- A **Makers Lab** was established in which AT devices are designed and fabricated using 3D printing, pressure forming, and laser cutting.
- To provide a holistic approach to the needs of our customers, **Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy staff** joined the IATP team.

- With the addition of new programs and staff, **program cross-referrals** increased, promoting the provision of diverse services to explore solutions to overall customer needs.
- The **IATP Art Collection** promoting inclusivity added many pieces of various medias created exclusively by Illinois artists with disabilities. The Art Collection is displayed in the rooms and hallways of the IATP building and open for public viewing.

Events and Exhibitions

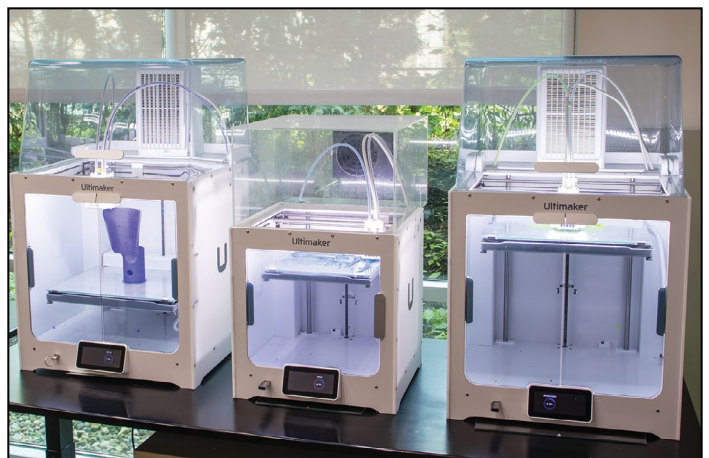
- In April of 2023, IATP welcomed over 300 visitors to the official unveiling of the new location at the **2023 Open House**. Tours of the facility were provided by the IATP staff.



- **Low Vision Technology Fair** was co-sponsored by IATP and the Mary Bryant Home for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- **Illinois State Fair**
- Chicago **Abilities Expo**
- **Senior Expo** hosted by Grundy County Health Department
- Senior Services of Central Illinois **Senior Celebration**
- Springfield **PrideFest**
- Tech Prairie **STEAM Expo**

Awards

- Illinois Council of the Blind (ICB) **Victor Buttram Award**



Our Funders



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living

The Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) is the nonprofit organization designated as the implementing entity for the federally funded State Grant for Assistive Technology Program authorized under the Assistive Technology Act. This federal formula grant funding is provided through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL) Center for Innovation and Partnership.



Illinois Department on Aging

Funded by the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA), the Illinois CARE Connections (ICC) program provides technology devices for socially isolated seniors and persons with disabilities who are participants of IDoA. IATP implements this program by processing referrals, purchasing, assembling, and shipping the technology bundle to eligible recipients.



Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services

Illinois's designated lead agency responsible for oversight of the Assistive Technology Act is the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). IDHS/DRS provides their eligible customers with assistive technology and home modification services through a contract with IATP to help them meet their vocational or independent living goals.



Illinois State Board of Education

IATP provides evaluations for academic access and communication needs through its grant with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The purpose of IATP's Assistive Technology Device Loan and AT Evaluation Program is to coordinate, plan, and conduct evaluations for school districts throughout the state of Illinois, free of charge. Along with evaluations, we provide free AT/AAC device loans and training to students, school personnel, and families.



Social Security Administration

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) is a federally funded program of the Social Security Administration (SSA) created to help individuals receiving SSI/SSDI make informed choices about employment. IATP provides WIPA services to 67 counties in Illinois through a cooperative agreement with the SSA.

Technical Assistance

In addition to providing technical assistance to providers in the state of Illinois, IATP was asked to provide technical assistance to colleagues in other State AT Programs. New Mexico, California, Hawaii, and Michigan had various needs, but all had an underlying theme of program expansion and improvement. Program focus areas included:

1. Program administration and contracting,
2. Device Loan,
3. AT Evaluations/Demonstrations for VR Customers with an Open-Ended Bulk Purchasing component, and
4. Comprehensive AT Demonstration, Device Loan, and Long-Term Loan for seniors to increase independence, safety and confidence to remain in the community.

Thank you!

Our team had an incredible trip visiting you and your team in Illinois! Thank you for your hospitality, warmth, enthusiasm, and encouragement! Thank you and your team for all of your time and energy sharing with us. Thank you for arranging time with Kathy Laurin. Thank you for answering so many questions and questions to come. Thank you for the amazing homemade cinnamon rolls and food you provided. We are overwhelmed with gratitude and energy as we look at how we can take what we learned and apply it in Michigan and are eager to get back down to visit with some of our VR folks and others for them to see what is possible too with expanded funding, partnership, and support.

We are so so lucky to be so close and to learn from you and your team. Please extend our heartfelt thanks to every one of them as well!

Aimee

Aimee Sterk (she/her), LMSW

Program Director

Michigan Assistive Technology Program

Michigan Disability Rights Coalition

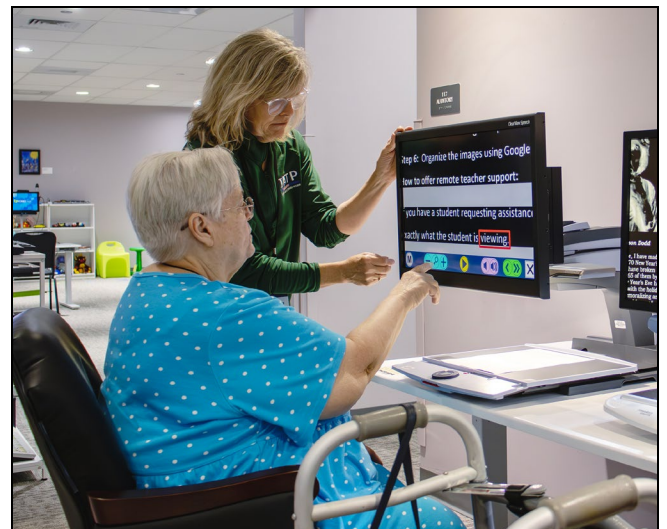


Demonstrations

Device demonstrations are personal appointments with an assistive technology specialist that provide an opportunity to discuss your needs, learn about possible AT solutions, and compare and contrast different AT devices, their features, and possible benefits for the user. The AT Demonstration Center aims to provide the potential user with the information they need to make informed choices regarding what will best suit their needs. In addition to device demonstrations, the AT Demonstration Center offers tours for individuals, families, service providers, students, businesses, civic groups, and anyone interested in learning more about the uses and benefits of assistive technology.

Highlights

- **866** Demonstrations were provided
- **1,720** Participants
- Approximately **1,150** devices are included in AT Demonstration Center



Unexpected AT Solutions Found During Tour of the Demonstration Center

Arlys learned about the Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) when a representative from IATP presented to the assisted living facility where she resides. During the presentation, Arlys became aware of the programs and services provided by IATP at no cost to individuals with disabilities and health conditions in Illinois. Arlys later arranged a tour of the IATP Demonstration Center for herself, her granddaughter, Madison, and Madison's friend, Jess, an Occupational Therapy student. Arlys thought it would be beneficial for the younger generation to learn about the assistive technology devices that are available and increase their awareness and understanding of how devices can help individuals with disabilities.

The IATP Demonstration Center allows people to see what assistive technology is available, from simple do-it-yourself devices to



high-tech communication devices, computer software programs, and devices that utilize artificial intelligence to improve a person's independence, access, and engagement. The Demonstration Center provides visitors with the opportunity to experience hands-on exploration of many different devices to make an informed choice as to which device would best serve the user's needs.

In the Demonstration Center's Smart Home

kitchen, Arlys discovered tools that would increase her access to items in the cupboards, including adapted shelving options, and improve her ability to open bottles and jars unassisted. IATP staff were happy they were able to acquaint Madison and Jess with the different types of assistive technology that are available, and that Arlys was able to find something that would help her continue to be as independent as possible in her home.

Device Loan

IATP's Device Loan Program provides 6-week loans of assistive technology devices to consumers, family members and professionals for use at home, school, work and in the community. Loans are used to assist in decision making, evaluations, as backups when equipment is being repaired and other short-term needs. Device inventory is updated regularly to ensure that consumers have access to the most current technology.

Targeted Device Loan for Education

IATP has a targeted device loan program funded through a grant with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Grant funding for devices allow students ages 3-22 access to devices after evaluations to determine if they meet the student's educational needs.

Highlights

- **2,293** Devices were loaned to **1,474** borrowers
- **1,812** of these devices were loaned to **305** school districts in **70** Illinois counties



Borrowing Devices to Ensure Best Solutions for Needs

Larry is a retired gentleman with Parkinson's disease and blindness. These conditions were affecting his quality of life, which, in turn, led to depression. Larry began working with Eve, an Occupational Therapist. Eve came into IATP searching for items that Larry could borrow to try for his daily living needs. After viewing available choices in the Demonstration Center, they were referred to IATP Device Loan. They borrowed a tilt switch and Powerlink from the Device Loan program to try in Larry's home setting. They discovered Larry could use the tilt switch to play his favorite CDs by tilting his head. Being able to turn on his music independently has positively impacted Larry's overall well-being.

Trainings

IATP offers a wide range of training opportunities for individuals with disabilities, community members, organizations, and professionals. The goal of our trainings is to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and competencies related to assistive technology. Trainings can be provided in-person or through video conferencing and can be customized based on the needs of the requesting group.

Highlights

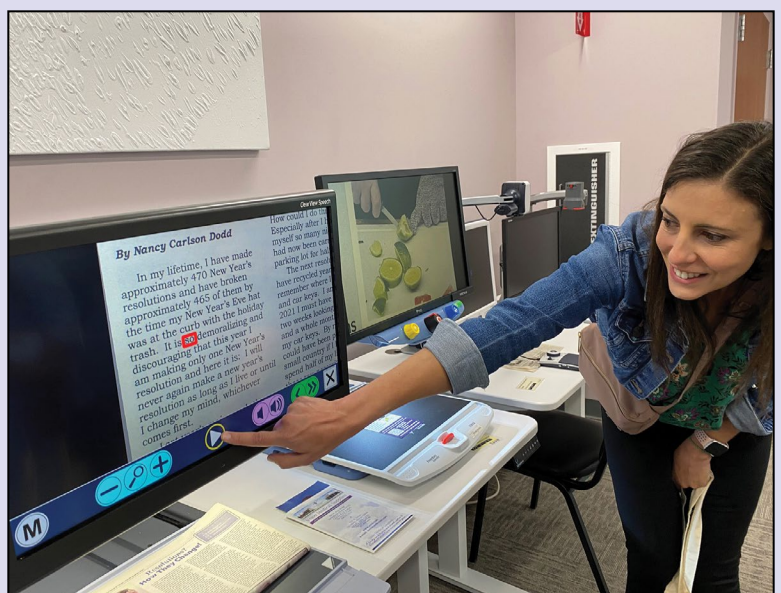
- **218** Trainings provided to **858** participants

Other Outreach Activities

- **131,598** Individuals reached through Public Awareness activities (conferences, expos, presentations, printed materials, social media)
- **2,954** Individuals received Information and Assistance services

JCFS Chicago

Jewish Child and Family Services (JCFS) Chicago began assistive technology training with a visit to the IATP Demonstration Center, Makers Lab, Smart Home, and Tech Kitchen. Staff from JCFS's residential, vocational, and occupational therapy programs made the trip downstate to learn more about IATP programs and assistive technology (AT) in general as they tapped into IATP for assistance in building their AT services. IATP will continue to work with JCFS to provide more focused training on various AT devices and evaluation techniques.



Reuse

IATP's Reuse Program provides new and gently used assistive technology (AT) and durable medical equipment (DME) to people in Illinois of all ages with disabilities who cannot afford to purchase new. The recipient may keep the equipment for as long as needed.

Types of Equipment Available:

- Mobility, seating, and positioning (i.e. wheelchairs, walkers, scooters, etc.)
- Daily living devices including personal care
- Vision
- Hearing
- Communication devices
- Computer and related hardware and software
- Home adaptations
- Vehicle modifications and accessories
- Recreation, sports, and leisure

Highlights

- **1,399** Illinois consumers received **1,961** reuse devices
- Resulting in a **savings of \$758,345**



Pottery by Marla Winkleblack





Getting Organized with a Braille Label Maker

Marla is a talented and dedicated artist. Born prematurely, Marla has been visually impaired since birth. She gradually lost all sight, including color and movement. Despite her sight loss, her remarkable tenacity and talent have allowed her to continue to create unique and beautiful works of art.

Marla's favorite medium is pottery making. She is a member of Barn Colony Artists in Decatur and has a successful pottery business. Staying organized is vital in her professional career as well as in her home.

It took Marla 2 ½ years to become proficient in braille and uses it daily. She has tried various methods of labeling including using orange transwrap and voice labelers, but nothing seemed to offer her the organization that she needed.

A Braille label maker became available through the IATP Reuse Program and was

provided to Marla for as long as it is useful to her. Marla said it was a life changer both for work and home. She uses the labels for all canned goods and spices in the kitchen. All shoes are labeled on the box and the 100 glazes that she uses for pottery are all neatly labeled.

Marla said that she keeps the label maker on her desk at all times as she continues to find new items that need a label. The product has been a great asset and a safe and effective way to complete a task.

IATP is honored to have multiple pieces of Marla's pottery on display as part of the IATP Art Collection. Included are cups, bowls, and various tactile pieces with nature inspired shapes. Every piece is as unique as the artist who creates them. The label maker enables her to label and easily locate her art materials and household items.

State Financing Numbers

Includes activities such as IATP's Tech Kitchen, Smart Home, Illinois Care Connections (ICC), and Fast Track (Open-Ended Loan) programs which, through targeted grants and contracts, directly provide consumers with assistive technology devices at no cost or reduced cost.

Highlights

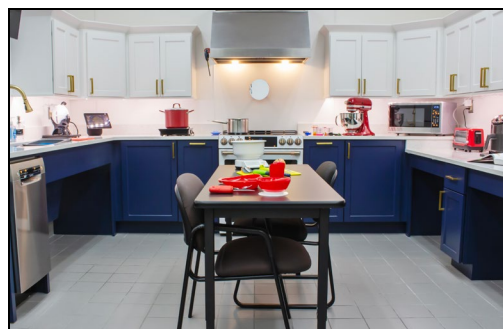
- **1,127** Total individuals served by State Financing Programs

Tech Kitchen

The Tech Kitchen program offers trainings designed to increase independence and help identify kitchen tools, cooking skills, and strategies that can make cooking at home safer, easier, and less overwhelming. Our fully accessible kitchen classroom can be adapted to a wide range of accessibility needs and showcases a range from simple to high-tech solutions for kitchen tools. Customized cooking classes focus on increasing independence and confidence in the kitchen. Trainings are based on the participant's goals and includes cooking, baking, nutrition, menu planning, and more. During the application and planning process, staff work with participants to set specific goals and create a plan for choosing and using assistive technology tools in the kitchen. Participants can try different tools and ideas to decide what works best for them. The program has a full-time professional chef who teaches planning, cooking techniques, and preparation of food. Licensed Occupational Therapy staff trained to use assistive technology and techniques to address the specific needs and abilities.

Highlights

- Designed a **fully accessible kitchen** for instructional classes
- Developed **curriculum for teaching** planning, prepping and cooking to individuals with disabilities
- **Collaborated with a registered dietitian** to create menus and instructions to promote healthy eating
- Established inventory of AT devices to **promote independence** in the kitchen



Adapted Tools and Techniques Promote Safety and Independence in Kitchen

Myshaun was born with a rare condition called Thrombocytopenia-absent radius (TAR) Syndrome. The absence of radial bones impacts his ability to use his hands safely and efficiently for activities of daily living. Myshaun was referred to the IATP Tech Kitchen program after visiting the IATP Demonstration Center and expressing his desire to become more independent in the kitchen as he starts college and looks forward to eventually living independently.

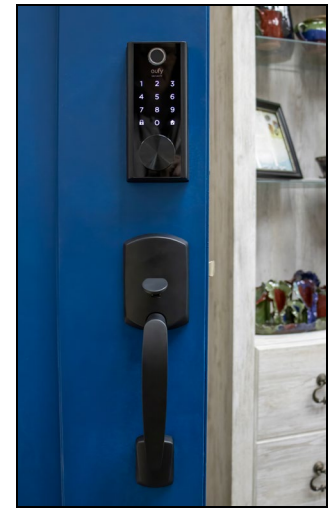
The shortened length of Myshaun's arms results in items held in his hands being close to his face. This proximity creates a dangerous situation in the kitchen, where sharp and hot tools are often used. Few adapted kitchen utensils are on the market to address this need. Unfortunately, extended kitchen tools are typically no longer than 16 inches, 6-12 inches short of what would allow safe access to a standard-height stove for Myshaun. Myshaun was also interested in learning about other tools that would make some tasks more accessible and developing alternative cooking techniques that would allow him to prepare his favorite foods.

The Tech Kitchen worked with IATP Makers to design an adapted handle for a 16" spatula. With feedback from an IATP Occupational Therapist, Makers developed an angled loop handle that added about 14 inches of length and clipped directly onto the original utensil. Myshaun was successful in using the prototype handle at his first training. He was very excited to have a tool that allowed him to access the stove top safely and flip foods



such as quesadillas, pancakes, and eggs. During this first training, Myshaun also found existing tools like the automatic jar opener, an adjustable height table, and a one-handed cutting board to be effective.

Myshaun will continue training with the Tech Kitchen, focusing on using adaptive kitchen tools, techniques, and safety practices. Makers continues to work closely with Myshaun and Tech Kitchen as they develop additional customized tools for Myshaun. Once the designs for these tools are complete, they will also be available in the free IATP Makers Program file library, available to anyone to download and print. Person-centered and thoughtfully produced designs like these expand the options available for individuals like Myshaun, who may struggle to find tools that work for them.



Smart Home Technology

The IATP Smart Home Program offers personal, interactive, in-home evaluations and demonstrations of a variety of devices that promote safety and independence in the home. Home automation smart technology allows a user to monitor and control numerous items throughout the home, including security, climate, lighting, appliances, entertainment systems, and self-care options. The Smart Home Demonstration Center features home automation options in fully functioning rooms including a kitchen, living space, bedroom, bathroom, and laundry room.

Highlights

- **Designed and implemented** Smart Home Program
- Created a **portable Smart Home display** for educational opportunities in the communities statewide
- **Established the five-room smart home display** as part of IATP's Demonstration Center

Maximizing Independence with Multi-Program Services

Rosie has inoperable optic nerve tumors resulting in low vision. She is a current assistive technology user and has utilized several IATP programs.

Rosie was introduced to IATP via IDHS/DRS. An IATP Assistive Technology Specialist (ATS) received a referral from Rosie's Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and conducted an evaluation to determine the most appropriate assistive technology to meet Rosie's needs. While evaluating, the ATS observed areas in which Rosie might benefit from smart home technology. Rosie was referred to the IATP Smart Home Program for suggestions on making her living environment more accessible. An IATP Smart Home ATS reached out to Rosie and was able to

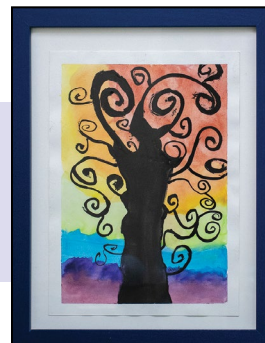
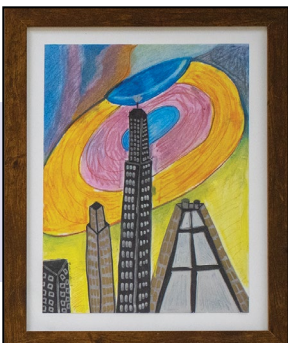


travel to Rosie's home with a Smart Home Coordinator to determine if smart home technology would help enhance Rosie's independence in her living environment.

Some of Rosie's hopes for smart home technology were to allow safe and independent use of her front door lock and lighting and to continue her baking hobby using a smart speaker to search for and read her recipes out loud. IATP Smart Home staff determined Rosie would benefit from a smart lock, smart light bulbs, and a home assistant. Rosie is looking forward to more easily interacting with her home environment.

Because Rosie is an avid baker, the Smart Home ATS referred her to the IATP Tech Kitchen Program. The Tech Kitchen Chef Instructor demonstrated various low-vision kitchen tools. Rosie took several kitchen tools home on a long-term loan to use in her home kitchen.

While visiting Rosie at her home, the Smart Home staff observed Rosie's artwork. IATP acquired several pieces of her work, which are displayed in the IATP office as part of the IATP Art Collection featuring Illinois artists with disabilities.



Illinois Care Connections

In Fiscal Year 2023, IATP continued the Illinois CARE Connections (ICC) Program with funding from the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA). This program provides technology devices for socially



isolated seniors and persons with disabilities who are participants of the IDoA's Community Care Programs. IATP implements the program by processing referrals through the IATP developed, accessible, online referral system,



purchasing and assembling the technology bundle for each participant, and shipping the bundle to the recipient. Each bundle included a tablet (iPad or Samsung Galaxy), keyboard, headphones, tablet case, and an instruction manual created by IATP in the language requested for the participant.



Highlights

- **560 referrals** were approved to receive a technology bundle
- **48%** of recipients reported using the tablet **five or more times per week**
- **83%** of recipients reported they **would not have been able to obtain** the technology bundle without ICC
- **82%** of the recipients were **age 61-80**
- In total, **369 iPads, 191 Android tablets, and 179 hotspots** were provided
- **67%** rated loneliness as decreased after obtaining the technology bundle
- In fiscal year 2024, ICC will expand to include access to **assistive technology devices and durable medical equipment**

ICC Raises the Bar for Quality Connections

Patricia Donoho says receiving an Illinois Care Connections (ICC) technology bundle has been life changing! Using the iPad keeps her connected to her family and simplifies her shopping needs.

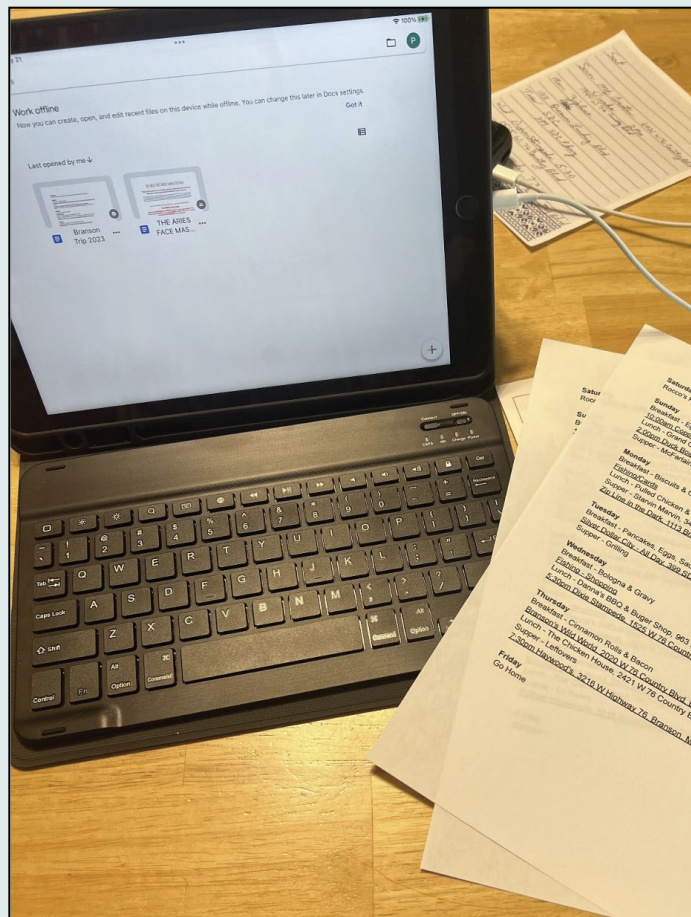
Through a connection with a Senior Resource Center, Patricia was referred to IATP to receive a technology bundle through ICC. She received an iPad, case, stand, and headphones.

Recently, Patricia went on a vacation with her family. With the help of one of her grandchildren, she was able to use her iPad to create a plan for sightseeing, meals, and meeting points. Not only did it make the trip more organized, but the iPad also allowed Patricia to be a part of the planning process.

Connection to others is a vital part of good mental health. With the ICC tech bundle, Patricia can stay connected to her family, especially her grandchildren. She can video chat, receive and save photos, and keep up with all the latest happenings in the lives of her grandchildren.

The GameChanger app Patricia installed onto her iPad allows her to watch her grandson's participation in sports. She says, "It is like we are at the games with him!"

Since COVID, Patricia still prefers to order online instead of going into stores. She



is able to order household and pet needs easily. The larger screen provided by the iPad makes shopping much easier than on a smart phone.

Patricia uses the iPad up to five times a week. Staying in touch with her grandkids as they are growing and changing enriches her life and the lives of her grandchildren as well.

According to Patricia, the ICC tech bundle has, "Raised the bar so high to share family's lives and shopping. Thank you!"

Makers

IATP has been working to increase access to and acquisition of assistive technologies (AT) for Illinois residents since 1989. IATP created the Makers Program to expand available options for individuals to acquire the assistive technology they need. Assistive technology devices are designed, prototyped, and fabricated using 3D printing, pressure forming, laser cutting, and a variety of other readily available materials and hardware. Customized solutions are designed by the Makers team for specific AT needs. We continually work to expand an AT Maker network that serves Illinois residents.

Highlights

- **Developed and fabricated 30 devices** to meet the unique needs of Illinois customers
- **Disseminated 75** 3D-printed devices to individuals in need across Illinois
- **Built thirteen expandable kits** of 3D printed items for all Illinois Area Agencies on Aging

Adapted Switch Mount for Noah Fosters Independent Play

Noah is learning play skills using an adaptive switch to power toys on and off. His therapist reached out to



the IATP Makers program to assist with designing and fabricating a switch mount that will help him be more independent. Noah could only activate the switch with the help of someone holding it up in front of him due to the limited range of motion in his arms. Other alternatives were considered, but the degree of angle required for Noah would not work with the available switch mounts.

IATP Makers designed a switch mount that will accommodate his range of motion and degree of angle without the help of another

person. The switch mount can be repositioned to other tray surfaces Noah uses. With the help of Makers and 3D printing, Noah can activate his preferred toys independently from his Rifton chair or adapted stroller.

Play is an essential part of a child's brain development. Childhood play is vital in developing intellect, creative thinking, and a general understanding of our world. Noah's adapted switch allows him to play independently, encouraging self-confidence, physical skills development, and cognitive growth.

Riding Tandem with ECVI

The Education Center for the Visually Impaired (ECVI) recently partnered with the Springfield, Illinois YMCA to build a shed on their land to store Tandem and Rover Tandem bicycles. The purpose of this project is to allow visually impaired individuals to reserve and borrow Tandem bicycles at no cost to experience Springfield's Bicycle Trail with the assistance of a family member or friend.

ECVI contacted the IATP Makers program requesting a 3D-printed tactile map of the bicycle trails. The map will be available to use while the individuals ride the bicycle trail. The map will allow visually impaired



individuals to feel and understand which trail they are on, the location of intersecting roads, and certain pit stops and bathrooms nearby.

Customized Solutions for Independent Self-Care

Ken visited IATP for a Demonstration Center tour where he learned about the IATP Makers program and quickly concluded that assistive technology devices created through design and fabrication could help him with daily self-care tasks. Ken has a background in engineering, providing him with experience in design and fabrication. Therefore, he works closely with the Makers team on decision-making and finding solutions. The Makers program has created a set of devices to assist Ken in self-care tasks, helping him be more independent. Some of these devices include built-up and angled silverware, built-up and angled handles that fit over a shower brush, and a variety of extended levers that attach to buttons and doors as needed.



Vocational Rehabilitation Evaluations/ Fast Track (Open-Ended Loans)

Assistive Technology Specialists (ATS) provide assistive technology (AT) assessments, training and technical support in the home, school, or workplace. After a vocational counselor makes a customer referral, ATS staff identify assistive technology (AT) needs and provide recommendations for home modifications or training on adaptive technology and software.

Fast Track is an open-ended loan program for IDHS/DRS customers. The ATS will trial assistive technology, software, and other devices with the customer during an evaluation. If the technology is appropriate, the customer may keep it on evaluation day, eliminating delays waiting for equipment.

Highlights

VR Evaluations

- **265** Assessments
- **272** Technical Assistance sessions

Fast Track

- **2,482** Devices to **497** customers
- Cost savings of **\$125,874** through bulk purchasing

Adapting AT to Changing Needs

Jay was a high school student when he first started to experience the onset of his visual disability. He met for the first time with an IATP Assistive Technology Specialist (ATS) in 2018. As



he adapted to his progressive vision loss, he worked on learning how to use his computer with magnification and screen reader software.

An ATS met with Jay again when he was enrolled in his first semester at a university. He was assisted with updating some of his assistive technology and configuring his devices and software applications to better meet his needs. He received training on devices and specialized instruction on accessing his electronic

textbooks. He learned how to utilize optical character recognition features built into the screen reading software he uses to access his laptop computer. Jay has worked hard to become proficient with his keyboarding skills and screen reading technology. As a result, Jay is ready for college-level courses in business and finance.

Jay has utilized AT evaluation services, AT training, and received equipment through the Fast Track program.

DHS, DRS Customer Served by IATP ATS, COTA, and SLP for Daily Living and Communication Needs

Alyssa was referred to IATP through her IDHS/DRS, Home Services Program counselor for a home modification evaluation. Alyssa wears lower leg braces and can walk unassisted. However, she needs someone beside her if she experiences any trouble with her balance. She requires help standing up from a seated position.

The main goal of Alyssa's evaluation was for a bathroom seating system. She currently has a bath seat with an attached sliding transfer board. An IATP Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) accompanied the Assistive Technology Specialist (ATS) to collaborate on a solution. Alyssa's mother said they had recently tried a roll-in shower, but it had not produced the desired results. An updated version of the current bath seat was the preferred solution.

The living room floor was an additional area where Alyssa would benefit from improved accessibility. Alyssa likes to spend time on the floor playing and watching television. However, getting her back up has been proving more difficult as Alyssa ages. The ATS suggested they try a lift. A portable AT device designed to help people move from the floor to a standing position was borrowed from the IATP Demonstration Center to take on the evaluation. Along with the lift, they borrowed a lift vest to help position her in the lift and to lift her



to a standing position. Both devices proved extremely helpful in assisting Alyssa to stand.

Alyssa's mother expressed concerns regarding her communication, as Alyssa had started showing less interest in using her modified Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). Alyssa was referred to an IATP Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP), who conducted an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) evaluation. The SLP demonstrated AAC options to determine what would best meet her needs. It was determined that an iPad with a low-cost communication application was appropriate as it is portable and allows the use of real-life pictures and large icon sizes.

ISBE Evaluations

As part of its Assistive Technology Services, IATP provides comprehensive Assistive Technology (AT) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) evaluations to children and young adults (ages 3 to 22). Since 2011, IATP has provided evaluations for academic access and communication needs through its grant with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The purpose of IATP's AT/AAC Evaluation Program is to coordinate, plan, and conduct evaluations for school districts throughout the state of Illinois, free of charge. Along with evaluations, we provide free AT/AAC training to students, school personnel, and families.

Highlights

- **305** schools were served by program
- **70** counties received services
- **33** AT Evaluations were provided
- **267** AAC Evaluations were provided

Using Intentional and Independent Eye Movement to Enhance Communication

Parker was referred to IATP for an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) evaluation by her school speech-language pathologist (SLP). After receiving the referral, an evaluation was scheduled by an IATP SLP.

The IATP SLP traveled to Parker's school to conduct the evaluation. This evaluation allowed Parker to experience and interact with various lite-tech, mid-tech, and high-tech systems. Parker communicates using body language,

facial expressions, vocalizations, and eye-gaze. With this evaluation, the SLP established the most appropriate and least restricting access method, and a communication device with an eye-tracking system was recommended for trial. Parker demonstrated good eye-tracking skills; she could locate and select targets with intentional and independent eye movement. With the right tool(s) in place, Parker will be able to communicate more efficiently and effectively across various settings with various communication partners.

The IATP SLP recommended that devices be borrowed from IATP's Device Loan Program for Parker to trial. These trial periods will help ensure the device that best fits Parker's needs can be identified. Parker's school team and family are excited and eager to begin a device trial and watch Parker communicate and flourish in ways she has not been able to before!



Education Advocacy

IATP's Education Liaison works with families, students, and schools to provide information, advocacy, and support for all students entitled to special education services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This free service is available to school districts and families who have a student with any disability in early intervention through college within the state of Illinois.

Advocating for Educational Success

Twins Madison and Morgan were introduced to IATP Educational Advocacy services when they were seven. Even at this age, they had overcome many obstacles. They were consistently diagnosed with severe expressive and receptive delays. When they started school, educators were convinced the girls had an intellectual disability and could not be educated. At this time, they didn't speak much to others, but they talked to each other a lot! When Madison and Morgan changed school districts, they were introduced to assistive technology (AT) to enhance independent reading.

IATP's Educational Advocacy Liaison advocated for Madison and Morgan alongside the family from grade school to high school. As their skills developed over the years, the IATP Liaison mediated for more challenging schoolwork supported by robust accommodations, including AT.

Madison and Morgan recently graduated from high school as members of the National Honor Society with 3.0 grade point averages. Both are now attending

Highlights

- **848** Individualized student meetings attended in person, by phone, and on Zoom



university. Madison is a musician majoring in Communications Media with an emphasis in Vocal Musical Performance and Music Theater. Morgan is an artist majoring in Animation and Cinema Studies.

Madison and Morgan love school, enjoy the learning experience, and look forward to their future adventures.

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)

IATP is one of three agencies that administer the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA) grant in Illinois. The grant is funded through the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA). The program helps individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) make informed choices about employment.

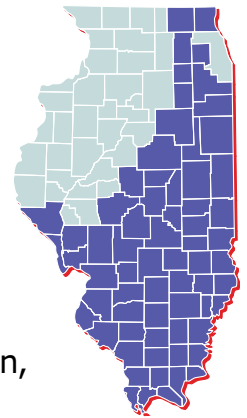
Highlights

- **584** Referrals
- **181** Benefit analysis
- **120** Information packages

WIPA Services Territory

IATP provides WIPA Services to the following counties in Illinois:

Alexander, Bond, Calhoun, Champaign, Christian, Clark, Clay, Clinton, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, De Witt, Douglas, DuPage, Edgar, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Ford, Franklin, Gallatin, Greene, Grundy, Hamilton, Hardin, Iroquois, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jersey, Johnson, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, Lawrence, Livingston, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Madison, Marion, Massac, McHenry, McLean, Monroe, Montgomery, Moultrie, Perry, Piatt, Pike, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, Saline, Sangamon, Shelby, St. Clair, Union, Vermilion, Wabash, Washington, Wayne, White, Will, Williamson.



WIPA Aids in Navigation of Benefits and Employment

A customer who had received Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) services in February of 2022 reconnected with WIPA for ongoing services. The customer expressed that Medicaid coverage was a major concern for her as she had high monthly medication costs. In addition, her new employer offered a 401K, and she was excited about finally being able to start retirement savings. The WIPA program Community Work Incentive Coordinator

(CWIC) explained that her current Medicaid coverage had a \$2,000 asset limit and that any savings (including her future 401K) above that amount would affect her Medicaid coverage. Through ongoing WIPA counseling, the CWIC was able to introduce the customer to an alternative healthcare program, Health Benefits for Workers with Disability (HBWD), which promotes higher resource limits and allowed her to take

advantage of her employer's 401K retirement plan. As a result of receiving WIPA services, this customer was empowered with the knowledge of how to track and utilize Social Security work incentives to prevent an overpayment, she was able to retain healthcare coverage to maintain her costly medication regimen, and lastly, she was able to save money for her future to become financially self-sufficient.

Public Policy

IATP Public Policy Liaisons worked on the following initiatives with other disability organizations in FY 2023, that resulted in significant improvements for individuals with disabilities in Illinois:

1. **House Bill 3224** provides that, as part of the transition planning process for a student with a disability, a school district must provide the student and the student's parent or guardian with information about dual credit courses offered by the school district. The bill further provides that, if a student is enrolled in a dual credit course, it shall be included in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) as part of the student's transition activities. We collaborated with Access Living and Legal Council for Health Justice on this legislation.
2. **House Bill 3680** Bill ensures that students with disabilities who have IEP or 504 Plans will have extra accommodations during emergencies such as natural disasters or active shooter incidents as determined necessary by the student's IEP team or 504 plan team.
3. **Senate Bill 99** creates the Removing Barriers to Higher Education Success Act. The bill requires Illinois public universities and community colleges to each adopt a policy consistent with the legislation governing the documentation required to establish that a student seeking section 504 accommodations has a disability. The bill further provides that the determination of whether the student will receive 504 accommodations, and what those



accommodations should be, must be made using an interactive process with the student and the student's representative, if any.

4. **State Board of Education Position Statement on Informal Removals/ Exclusions** For almost two years we worked collaboratively with Access Living and Legal Council for Health Justice on legislation that sought to govern the common practice of sending students home during the school day or telling parents not to send their child to school without documenting each incident or providing notification to the parents of the detailed reasons why their child was being sent home. Students with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted by informal removals. While we were trying to pass the legislation and meeting regularly with school management lobbyists, we were also meeting separately with ISBE and negotiating language for a Policy Statement to be issued by ISBE. ISBE issued the Policy Statement in June 2023, and it is available on ISBE's public website.

Meet the Staff

Administration

Wilhelmina Gunther

Chief Executive Officer

Jess Benedict

Administrative Assistant

Jeannine Zinck

Data Manager

AT Educational Services

Kathy Abraham

Director of ISBE and Occupational Therapy Services, Speech-Language Pathologist

Alison Witt

AAC Services Manager, Speech-Language Pathologist

Shealyn Ashby

Speech-Language Pathologist

Sydney Colvis

Speech-Language Pathologist

Jacqueline Gunther

Doctor of Occupational Therapy

Ashley Keehner

Speech-Language Pathologist

Leslie Ladage

Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant

Anna Miller

Occupational Therapist

Katrina Mueller

Speech-Language Pathologist

Lindsey Stieren

Speech-Language Pathologist

Assistive Technology Services

Mark McCabe

Director of Assistive Technology Services, Assistive Technology Specialist

Crystal Bauer

Equipment Distribution Program Manager

Courtney Paarlberg

Assistive Technology Specialist

Mindy Milner

Assistive Technology Specialist

Rachel Schroeder

Assistive Technology Specialist

Craig Wadsworth

Rehabilitation Engineering Technologist, Assistive Technology Specialist

Zack Wright

Assistive Technology Specialist

Communications

Jacqueline Pitchford

Chief Communications Officer

Karen Birky

Marketing Designer, Information and Communications Technology Specialist

Quinten Smith

Marketing Specialist

Demonstration Center

Lynette Strode

Program Manager

Robin Richard

Demonstration Center Coordinator

Angie Schneider

Demonstration Center Coordinator, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant, Assistive Technology Specialist

Device Loans

Lynette Strode

Program Manager

Nikki Schultz

Device Loan Coordinator

Bryanna Geary

Device Loan Program Assistant

Finance

Shelly Lowe

Chief Finance Officer

Saleana Giboney

Accountant

Illinois Care Connections (ICC)

Lynette Strode

Program Manager

Caelen Austin

Program Coordinator

Christina Hardin-Weiss

Speech-Language Pathologist

Cindy Hardin-Weiss

Physical Therapist

Information Technology

William Richard

Chief Information Officer

Vance Dhooge

Senior Applications
Programmer

Will Bates

Applications Programmer

Jessica Butler

Applications Developer

Jesus Sanchez

Application Developer

Austin Bridges

PC Technician

Christian Perez

PC Technician

Makers

Kathy Laurin, Ph.D.

Director of Program
Development

Ashton Baskett

Product Specialist

Nicholas Birky

Product Engineer

Courtney Knoles

Certified Occupational
Therapist Assistant

National Projects

Diane Golden, Ph.D.

Director of National Projects

Public Policy and Education Services

Phil Milsk, J.D.

Public Policy and Education
Liaison

Suzanne Woods

Public Policy and Education
Liaison

Reuse

Jane Teeter

Director of Reuse

Elizabeth Hall

Assistant Director of Reuse,
Occupational Therapist

Gianni Antonacci

Reuse Coordinator

Billy Bucci

Reuse Coordinator

Cameron Ledferd

Reuse Coordinator

Shea Reed

Reuse Coordinator

Smart Home

Shannon Nicholson

Smart Home Manager,
Assistive Technology Specialist

Steve Daniels

Smart Home Coordinator

James Deweese

Smart Home Coordinator

Tech Kitchen

Elizabeth Wright

Chef Instructor

Training

Jessica Schuyler-Weir

Training Manager, Assistive
Technology Specialist

Work Incentives

Planning and Assistance (WIPA)

Britney Godwin

Director of WIPA

Abby Gunther

Community Work Incentives
Coordinator (CWIC)

Krista Weller

Community Work Incentives
Coordinator (CWIC)

Janice Williams

Community Work Incentives
Coordinator (CWIC)

Celebrating Inclusion and Diversity Through Art

The IATP Art Collection exclusively features art created by Illinois artists with disabilities. The pieces were acquired from various studios devoted to supporting artists with disabilities around the state as well as from individual artists. The Art Collection is on exhibit in the IATP office building and available for public viewing.

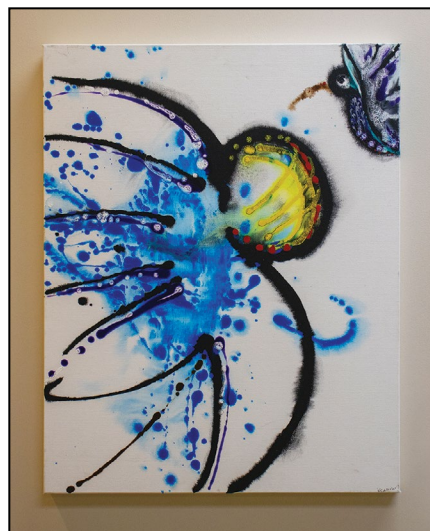
Pictured is a small sampling of artwork on display.



Jennifer Walter – *Sea Anemones*



Danielle Dado – *Purple Clouds Over Water;*
Painted Turtle



Kevin – *Flower Bird;*
Aspire art360



Nithilan Thirumurugan – *Be Kind, Be Proud*



Bailey Beckius – *Magnificent Butterfly;*
The Arc of Winnegbago, Boone, & Ogle Counties





Kierstynn Decker – *Summertime Focus*



Cherylle Booker – *Untitled;*
Project Onward

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IATP

ILLINOIS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

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