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**ATAP Celebrates National Assistive Technology Awareness Day**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Congress designated March 1, 2023 as National Assistive Technology Awareness Day! The day is designed to bring awareness to the important role assistive technology (AT) plays in the lives of people with disabilities and the aging across the country and to highlight the federal funding streams that support accessing and acquiring assistive technology. To highlight Congress’ actions, Audrey Busch-Treussard, Executive Director of the Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) shared the following:

“It’s a great honor to celebrate AT Awareness Day and recognize that due to the Assistive Technology Act and the 56 programs funded in each state and territory, hundreds of thousands of individuals with disabilities acquire the assistive technology they need each year to access their education, workplace and live independently. In fact, through AT Act Programs in Fiscal Year 2022 alone, nearly 45,000 individuals interacted with an AT device through a demonstration; more than 43,000 AT devices were loaned so individuals could “try-before-they-buy”; 88,000 AT devices were reutilized and then sent back into the community to consumers in need; and, \$7.4 million was loaned to consumers to finance AT devices. Together, these activities saved the consumer more than \$38 million due to having direct access to an AT Act program, trained experts and affordable AT options.

Let me share one example. During the height of COVID, one mother was managing virtual schooling for her four children. One son used a wheelchair and was without the stander -which suspends the student from sitting and into a semi-standing position. The stander was only provided at school because insurance denied this equipment for home use. This mom needed a way to help move her son during his school day while at home. She reached out to the Children’s Assistive Technology Service through the Virginia Assistive Technology Act Program, and they provided her with a gently used device called the Easy Stand Evolve. Problem solved. Having access to the AT program helped her ensure her son could participate fully in his school day. This is just one example of how access to assistive technology makes a critical difference and why we should celebrate #ATAwarenessDay!”

**About AT Programs**

AT Act programs operate in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and four territories. The AT Act Programs are available for persons with all types of disabilities, all ages, in all environments (education, employment, community living and information technology). AT Act programs provide a continuum of services that increase the access to, and acquisition of assistive technology through state financing activities (such as financial loans, cooperative buy, funds of last resort, etc.), device reutilization (including recycling, repair, refurbishment and device exchange), device loan/borrowing and device demonstration services.

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ATAP facilitates the coordination of state AT Programs nationally and provides technical assistance and support to its members. Established in 1997, the organization strives to enhance the effectiveness of AT Programs on the national, state, and local level.

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