



Spring News 2024

Technology Solutions for Life's Limitations

Greetings!

Greetings, Spring 2024!

As we embrace the season's renewal, DakotaLink launches into a bustling period of activity. It is with great pleasure that we introduce our newest addition to the team in Sioux Falls. Many of you may already be acquainted, but we extend a warm welcome to Alex (Alejandro) Ramirez.

Bringing with him a wealth of experience, Alex has been deeply engaged in community endeavors, notably serving on multiple boards within the Sioux Falls area. His extensive background in media is equally impressive, highlighted by his ownership of the esteemed television program, US Media TV.

With his multifaceted skills and dedication to community engagement, we are confident that Alex will seamlessly integrate into our organization, further enriching our collective efforts.

With this latest addition, we are delighted to announce that all our offices are now operating at full capacity.

Federal Update

April 17, 2024 is National Assistive Technology Awareness Day! We celebrate and bring attention to the critical role that assistive technology plays in the lives of people with disabilities. <https://ataporg.org/national-at-awareness-day/> #ATAwarenessDay #disability #disabilityinclusion

Access to assistive technology is essential for millions of people with disabilities so they can live independently in their home/community, learn in school, take public transportation, and enjoy the outdoors.

#ATAwarenessDay #disability #disabilityinclusion

On #ATAwarenessDay we recognize AT specialists & program coordinators for their hard work and dedication to serving individuals w/disabilities seeking proper AT so they can live, learn, and work. Learn about your state AT program. <https://ataporg.org/> #disability #disabilityinclusion

National Assistive Technology (AT) Awareness Day sheds light on the ways AT provides people w/disabilities ways to access education, work, enjoy recreation and live in their community. <https://ataporg.org/national-at-awareness-day/> #ATAwarenessDay #disability #disabilityinclusion

Leadership Symposium

ATAP and the AT3 Center are pleased to announce our forthcoming inaugural Leadership Symposium, marking the return to in-person gatherings after a hiatus of four years. Scheduled for the week of April 22nd, 2024, this event serves as a platform for collaborative engagement with our esteemed colleagues from state AT programs nationwide. Set in the vibrant backdrop of Washington D.C., participants can anticipate dynamic discussions, idea exchanges, and immersive leadership exercises aimed at fostering innovation and synergy within our community.

DakotaLink Advisory Council

The council is currently seeking a qualified individual with a disability to join our esteemed Advisory Council. If you or anyone you know with a disability are aware of someone who possesses the necessary qualifications and would be a suitable candidate, we kindly request that you direct them to

complete the application form available at the following link to the application:

<https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/DakotaLink-Advisory-Council-Application.pdf>

The agenda and notes are also posted on our website at:

<https://www.dakotalink.net/meetings/>

Success Story from a Special Education Teacher



After trying out the CloverBook, recommended by DakotaLink, my student finally received his own CloverBook. I cannot explain to you in words the huge impact this assistive device has had, not only on my student, but for his teachers in the district.

Before, STUDENT, had different vision board that was bulky, heavy, stiff, and outdated. Everyone who helped with this device hated to move it from class to class, especially the student whom it was necessary for. The old device had limited features, which helped STUDENT, but as a growing teen and with more demands and academic expectations, the old device was almost more limiting than helpful.

Late 2023, STUDENT had assessment from DakotaLink. The school then asked if DakotaLink had a CloverBook for the student to try out at school to make sure the device would be a good fit. Within a matter of a week or so, the device was delivered. DakotaLink helped STUDENT and staff with the features of the device, and it was a wonderful moment. I personally knew at that time how the CloverBook would change my students school experience. From that day one, my student is so much more engaged in the classroom and the on-task behaviors have drastically increased. The students independence has increased along with his confidence. The student can simultaneously look at the front of the classroom and work on a paper assignment, which they could not do before. STUDENT can work with two different paper medias at a time, and the STUDENT can track a teacher walking around the room. I don't know if you have ever had low vision difficulties, as I have not, but I have seen first hand the limitations faced with low vision in the classroom and I have seen how those limitations can be defeating. And now I am ecstatic to say how this one device, this awesome device, has changed things so much for STUDENT. This device has given one student the power to be independent and a conduit for STUDENT to be the academic scholar he always knew he could be.

Thank you so much to DakotaLink for doing the things you do for our students and being an advocate for those who didn't even know we needed you.

Sincerely.

Sonja Johnson

Special Education Teacher

Social Networking

We continue our efforts in social networking getting a great deal of traffic on Facebook and share posts with ATAP, AT3, ILC, DHS, and DSS. More resource information on our website: <https://www.dakotalink.net/at-partners/>

Low-Interest Loans

We also want to remind everyone of our low-interest loan program. The loans are designed to fit your budget and we will work with you to create affordable payback payments. We will also help you fill out the application if you have any concerns with that process. The application is on our website, but here is the direct link:

<https://www.dakotalink.net/dakotalink-at-fund/>

DakotaLink strives to maintain its professionalism by earning a RESNA ATP certification. (ATP – Assistive Technology Professional). We currently have 3 staff with their ATP certification and will continue to help the newer employees gain that status. To maintain these credentials, we must complete a specific amount of CEU's (Continuing Education Credits) on a biennial basis. We have been doing that mostly through webinars that ATAP provides through an agreement with ATIA.



Remember, we are on Facebook! So, be sure to “like” us to see what we are up to daily:

<https://www.facebook.com/DakotaLinkAT/>

Be safe and healthy!

Best,

Page K Hudson

DakotaLink

Program Manager

phudson@dakotalink.net

605-977-1779

DakotaLink

1161 Deadwood Ave, Suite #5

Rapid City, South Dakota 57702

Phone: 605-394-6742

Toll Free: 1-800-645-0673

Fax: 605-394-6744

Email: atinfo@dakotalink.net

Web: www.dakotalink.net

DakotaLink is the South Dakota Assistive Technology Program

Our mission is to assist individuals with functional limitations; due to a disability, illness, injury, or the effects of aging; maximize their potential whether at home or in the community, at school, at work, or at play through the use of Assistive Technology.

An assistive technology device is any equipment or tool that helps individuals overcome limitations in daily activities.

Assistive technology services assist individuals to acquire, use, modify or maintain an assistive technology device.