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OPEN HOUSE INTRODUCES TECHNOLOGY TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

August 18, 2009 by heather

An open house will introduce people with disabilities to technology that would help them use a computer, communicate with loved ones and get where they need to go. It’s put on by CRaTE, a program dedicated to helping people access mobility devices, the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) and the Computer Center for Citizens with Disabilities (CCCD).

The open house will be September 10, 2009, 3-7 p.m. at the Judy Ann Buffmire Rehab Service Center, 1595 West 500 South, Salt Lake City.

UCAT and the CCCD will provide demonstrations of assistive technology devices including keyboard and mouse alternatives, voice activation equipment, software programs to assist children and adults with disabilities, augmentative communication devices, wheelchair demonstrations, electronic aids to daily living, information about funding for assistive technology devices and technology and van vendors.

CRaTE will offer a tour of their warehouse to see all of the newly refurbished wheelchairs and scooters as well as the ones waiting to be refurbished. And a drawing for a manual wheelchair give-away will be open to anyone.

CRaTE (Citizens Reutilizing Assistive Technology Equipment) refurbishes donated mobility devices for a small fee for those who cannot otherwise acquire new and expensive devices. It is an initiative of the Utah Assistive Technology Program housed at the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University.

Refurbishing mobility devices is such a big deal because price and availability are huge obstacles to people who need mobility devices, since manual wheelchairs can cost thousands of dollars, and motorized wheelchairs can run into tens of thousands, depending on the features needed.

In the past six months CRaTE has saved individuals and organizations that have obtained devices over $92,000.

Flora Heap is in the process of acquiring a power wheelchair through CRaTE. Heap has been walking with a cane for about three years to help alleviate severe back pain, but she still has not been able to enjoy the activities she used to do with her family, and often relies on their help.

"I thought a scooter would be best," Heap said, "but the CRaTE staff showed me that a power wheelchair would be better. After trying a power wheelchair, I agree with them."
“The CReATE Program helps people help themselves,” Heap said. She is excited to become more independent and enjoy life the way she used to.

CReATE’s mission is not only to provide mobility equipment to individuals with disabilities but to also keep these expensive and complex devices from filling landfills. If a donated device is no longer useful, CReATE recycles as many parts as possible. Devices can be donated by anyone, including organizations, as well as individuals looking for a home for an unwanted device.

For more information about CReATE, visit www.uatpat.org or call 800-524-5152.