

WVATS

West Virginia Assistive Technology System Newsletter

AT in Emergency Situations

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AT in Emergency Situations

Many people use assistive technology (AT) in their daily routine. What happens though when that routine is interrupted by an emergency? Planning ahead can help you be prepared if you need to evacuate quickly.

Make a list of the AT devices you must have. To do this, think about items you need from when you wake up to when you go to sleep. AT can be any device used to perform tasks that would otherwise be impossible, e.g., glasses or a cane. That means AT devices can also be those gadgets and gizmos you have around the house to make life run more smoothly. List the items that help you with things like communication, mobility, transfers, transportation, hygiene, grooming or eating.

Make a plan for taking essential AT with you. Put a label with your contact information on the devices. You can laminate and attach basic instructions on how to use the item. People sometimes take a picture of their main AT devices, so an item can be returned if lost. You can put this information in a plastic bag — along with copies of documents like emergency contacts, medication list, medical card and identification.

Some people store needed medical information on a USB jump drive so they can carry or wear it, e.g., on a keychain or bracelet.

If it would be hard to bring certain devices—because they are too heavy, big or dependent on electricity—maybe you can bring a simpler portable item instead. Examples include hand magnifiers, personal assistive listening devices, battery operated communication devices and manual wheelchairs.

Check important AT regularly to make sure it is charged. Do you use AT that needs a back-up power supply? Remember to pack device chargers and extra batteries.

If you need to find AT for short term use, remember that WVATS has a library with thousands of devices for loan. Devices can be borrowed for 30 days. Visit the loan library online at vll.cedwvu.org.

If you or your organization is interested in having WVATS staff provide training about assistive technology, emergency preparedness and evacuation issues, call **800-841-8436**.



Call WVATS Toll Free 800-841-8436

HUD Fair Housing Grant

The Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living (NWVCIL) received a new HUD Fair Housing grant. WVATS will be working with the NWVCIL for the next three years on this grant to create awareness about housing discrimination in West Virginia.

The grant will help the NWVCIL enforce fair housing by investigating and testing for incidents of discrimination. It will also educate housing providers, governments and members of protected classes about fair housing rights and responsibilities.

The NWVCIL will continue to focus on known housing discrimination in West Virginia including:

- Denying rental housing to families with children
- Sexual harassment in rental housing
- Denying assistance animals in rental housing
- Designing and constructing new multi-family housing that is not accessible

The grant will address the fair housing needs of all protected classes including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status and disability.

If you think you may have faced housing discrimination or if you need more information about fair housing rights, call the Fair Housing Hotline at **844-212-3464** or visit www.wvfairhousing.org.

Red Cross Shelter Kits

It is important for Red Cross shelters to meet the needs of people in a community during an emergency. This is especially true for people with disabilities. The Red Cross has a checklist of features and services that are required of each shelter. Part of this is based on the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG).

WVATS put together a kit of assistive devices to help shelters meet these requirements. The goal is to help shelters increase their accessibility but keep their budgets for this under \$400.

For instance, many times shelters are located in older buildings. Doorways may not be wide enough or there may be a step to get into the shelter area. The WVATS kit includes offset hinges (\$15) to provide an additional 2-2 ½ inches of clear passage in a doorway. It also includes ramps (\$20) to make thresholds easier to navigate for people with wheelchairs or mobility issues.

Among other items included in the kit are signage (\$20), toilet seat risers (\$40), door knob adapters (\$15) and tablets for communication (\$50). The WVATS kit is available from the Virtual Loan Library but the long term goal is to have a kit in each of the Red Cross state offices for local communities to borrow during an emergency.

For more information call WVATS at **800-841-8436**.

Disability Caucus

June 22-26
Charleston, WV

Contact the Statewide Independent Living Council at **855-855-4624** or visit www.wvsilc.org for more information.



Scorpion Weather Radio

The Scorpion is a weather radio, LED flashlight, cell phone charger and bottle opener in one. You can get weather updates and alerts with this AM/FM/NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) weather band digital radio. You can charge the Scorpion using solar power, batteries, hand crank power or a DC power adapter (sold separately). You can plug a smartphone into the USB port and charge it by turning the hand crank. The radio has a headphone jack and hookup for MP3 devices.

For more information, visit www.cabelas.com or call 800-237-4444.



CARE Medical History Bracelet

The CARE Medical History Bracelet has a 2GB USB flash drive that you can enter and download medical information to. The band allows you to carry information with you — like a list of medications, medical history, insurance info and emergency contacts. You can transfer data to someone's computer if needed, e.g., a doctor or emergency responder. The bracelet has an interlocking band, and is waterproof and latex free.

For more information, call or visit <http://medicalhistorybracelet.com> or call 210-681-3840.



Blackout Buddy H2O

The Blackout Buddy H2O is an emergency light that is water activated. The package is made so you can store the device for up to 10 years. To trigger the battery that runs the light, dip the Blackout Buddy H2O in a small cup of water. Dip it in water once a day to keep the light shining for up to 72 hours.



For more information, visit www.etoncorp.com/en or call 800-872-2228.

Call WVATS Toll Free 800-841-8436

Land Shark Instant Survival Shelter

The Land Shark Instant Survival Shelter is a lightweight bivvy sack that you can slip over your sleeping bag or use alone, if needed. It is windproof, waterproof and acts as a vapor barrier. It has an aluminized coating that reflects body heat to help you keep warm. The Land Shark has a drawstring to make a hood or close the shelter. One side of the bag has a camo pattern to stay hidden and the other side is orange to attract attention. The shelter has a survival whistle attached to signal for help.

For more information, visit <https://www.land-shark.com> or call 818-997-0512



American Red Cross Resources

Safe and Well

Safe and Well is a website from the American Red Cross. This tool is designed to let your family and friends know you are safe and well after a disaster. You can register on the website, make a confirmation code and share your status. You can choose standard messages, like "I am evacuating to a shelter" or "Family and I are safe and well",

or you can write your own message. You can also search for others who have registered there to find out whether they have left a message. You and your loved ones can plan ahead by making Safe and Well a part of your emergency evacuation plan. The website is available in English and Spanish.



Safe and Well

▶ Register yourself or search for a loved one.



American Red Cross Mobile Apps

The American Red Cross has developed several mobile apps to help with emergency situations: Blood App, Flood App, Tornado App, Earthquake App, Wildfire App, Hurricane App, Red Cross Volunteer App, Shelter Finder App, Swim App and Pet First Aid App.

For more information, visit <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms> or call the Red Cross at 800-RED CROSS (800-733-2767).

Women in Agriculture

WVU Extension Service sponsored its first conference on Women in Agriculture in West Virginia. The event was held at Stonewall Jackson Resort in Roanoke, WV. The focus of the conference was to “provide networking opportunities, promote leadership development, provide tours of diverse operations, support positive agriculture and natural resources policy development, and provide production and marketing education for any agricultural service providers and female agriculture producers and agribusiness women across West Virginia.”



Gronomics Wedge Raised Garden Box

The Gronomics Wedge Raised Garden Box is a raised garden bed made of red cedar. The box is wedge shaped, so that it is wide at the top and tapers together at the bottom into a “V” shape. The planting depth is 18 inches deep in the center. The height and shape of the product make it easier for a person using a stool or a wheelchair to access the box and reach plants. The box can be used on patios and decks, and can hold 6.5 cubic feet of soil. It has a dovetail design so you can assemble it by sliding the pieces together without using tools.

For more information, visit www.gronomics.com or call 855-299-6727.

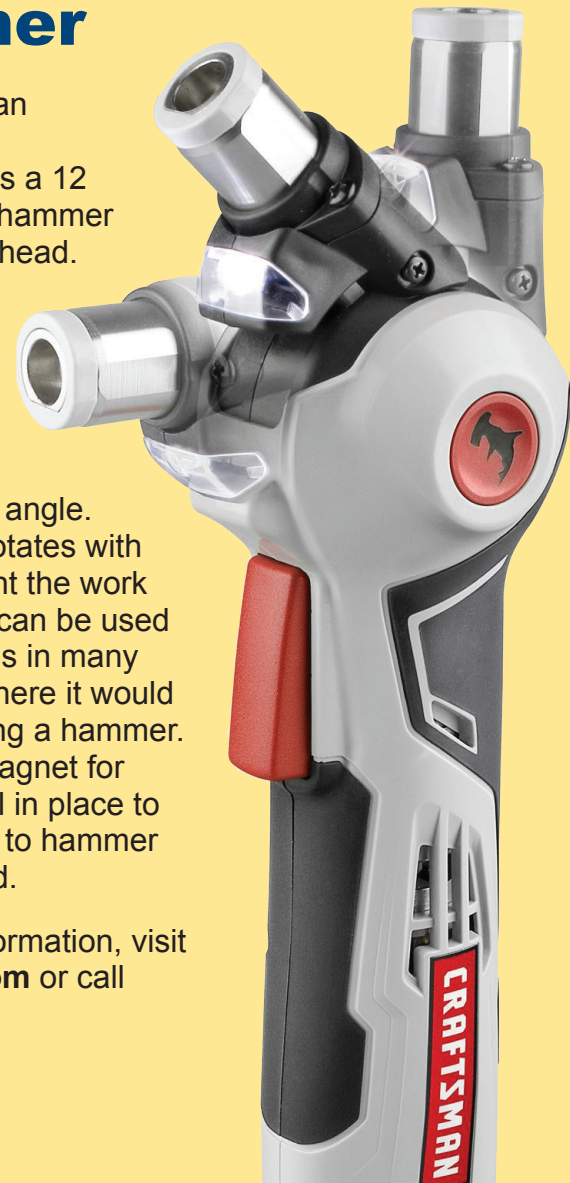
Staff from WV AgrAbility shared information and participated in the two day event. On the first day, participants visited local farms, high tunnels and a winery near Weston, WV. The second day included information booths and agricultural presentations in four tracks: Livestock, Horticulture, Financial, and Niche topics like agritourism. Dr. E. Gordon Gee, President of West Virginia University, served as a keynote speaker at the conference. For more information, visit

<http://anr.ext.wvu.edu/ag-women/wia-conference>.

Craftsman NEXTEC Hammerhead Auto Hammer

The Craftsman NEXTEC Hammerhead is a 12 volt automatic hammer with a rotating head. The hammer rotates to three angles — 0 degree angle, 45 degree angle and 90 degree angle. An LED bulb rotates with the head to light the work area. The tool can be used to hammer nails in many tight spaces where it would be hard to swing a hammer. It also has a magnet for holding the nail in place to allow a person to hammer using one hand.

For more information, visit www.sears.com or call 800-697-3277.



Green Thumbs, Healthy Joints 2014 – 2015 Mini-Grant Recipients

Green Thumbs, Healthy Joints is an accessible gardening program for West Virginians with arthritis, osteoporosis, other musculoskeletal conditions and joint limitations. Administered by the West Virginia Assistive Technology System since 2007, Green Thumbs, Healthy Joints is funded by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health's Osteoporosis and Arthritis Program.

Arthurdale Heritage, Inc. (Arthurdale, WV) plans to rebuild the community's Victory Garden with accessible raised garden beds.

Brooke County Committee on Aging (Follansbee, WV) plans to construct raised beds for fruits and vegetables on two lots that were converted into gardens.

Community Resources, Inc. (Parkersburg, WV) plans to partner with the Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Division of Westbrook Health Services to build raised flower beds.

Greenbrier Valley Master Gardener Association (Lewisburg, WV) plans to install a deep portable raised bed that can showcase different crops and move around the garden.

Hamlin Library Crafty Ladies (Hamlin, WV) plans to start growing seeds in an old greenhouse, experiment with square foot gardening and plant raised vegetable and herb beds at the Hamlin Public Library.

Hardy County Health and Wellness Center (Moorefield, WV) plans to build raised garden beds at their wellness center, which is next door to a local senior center.

The McDowell County Commission on Aging, Inc. (Welch, WV) plans to replace old vegetable and flower beds with accessible raised beds at its building.

Morgan County Master Gardener Association (Berkeley Springs, WV) plans to revitalize the Senior Life Services Atrium, and put in raised garden beds with pavers so people who use wheelchairs can garden. The project also plans to use a drip irrigation system on a timer to reduce the amount of water needed to nurture the plants.

National Church Residences Foundation, Rivermont Presbyterian Homes (Montgomery, WV) plans to partner with WVU University of Technology nursing students to plant organic vegetables in raised garden beds.

National Church Residences Foundation: Twin Oaks Plaza (Oak Hill, WV) plans to build raised garden beds with an intergenerational team of volunteers that includes seniors and local Boy Scouts.

New Martinsville Rotary Club (New Martinsville, WV) plans to add tops and seats to raised beds at local senior centers. The project also plans to work with a local non-profit food program to plant raised garden beds at New Martinsville Community Gardens and Paden City Community Gardens.

Planned Approach to Community Health of Taylor County (Grafton, WV) plans to construct raised garden beds with a seating area and a wheelchair accessible path to start a community garden in coordination with WVU Extension Service and the City of Grafton .

Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital (Weston, WV) plans to do an intergenerational project that includes seniors and local Girl Scouts. The project plans to plant raised beds beside Criss Manor, a high rise for seniors, and make a natural playground for children across the street.

Summers County Council on Aging, Inc. (Hinton, WV) plans to construct raised vegetable beds with hand rails to make gardening more accessible. They also plan to add a rain barrel to make watering the plants easier.

Wayne County Community Services Organization, Inc. (Huntington, WV) plans to plant raised garden beds to provide accessible gardening opportunities at the Fort Gay Community Center.

Contact WVATS

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Website address: www.wvats.cedwvu.org



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Specialized Family Care

The Specialized Family Care (SFC) Program links adults and children who have intellectual or developmental disabilities with foster families who are specially screened, trained and certified to provide care in their home. The person is lovingly welcomed into that home as a family member, and receives personal care, support, training and supervision on a 24 hour basis.

SFC allows a person to continue living in the community in safe, loving family units, rather than being confined to an institutional setting or left unattended without care in the community. It also helps natural families by providing part-time care for their family member who has an intellectual disability or ID/DD developmental disability by referring time limited respite care. .

For more information visit www.sfc.cedwvu.org or call **304-356-4562**.

All provider families receive both room and board payments and monetary compensation for the care of the individuals in their homes.



The Moore family opened their hearts and home to two young men with disabilities over 10 years ago. These young men are nurtured, cared for and a part of the family. Travis, pictured on the far left, just graduated from high school with his "brother," the Moore's son, and attended his high school prom.