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President's Message

Dear ARPCT Members,

I fondly recall the feeling of enthusiasm we all felt at last year's conference in Tucson: it was an enthusiasm generated by facing our challenges combined with the desire to move forward and create improved benefits for our membership. Now several months later I am happy to report that we are seeing the fruits of those efforts and are mapping out an exciting year ahead.

At the time of this publication, ARPCT has entered into contract discussions with SkillSoft for a 5-year commitment (by donation) for the full courseware library. Led by ARPCT Treasurer, Dr. Bob Leneway, Western Michigan University, and Willard Scott, SkillSoft Manager of Federal Sales and ARPCT champion, this extremely generous commitment represents the first multi-year commitment from SkillSoft to ARPCT and the only contribution this year of its kind made by SkillSoft (<http://www.skillsoft.com/>). For several examples of how SkillSoft curriculum can be used and incorporated into our programs and services for persons with disability see Mary Carter's article in this newsletter.

The ARPCT executive has also begun planning and preparation for this year's conference. Recent discussions have focused on a joint conference with SkillSoft to be held in Las Vegas this spring. However, the executive committee is seeking your input regarding the planning, location, and costs, etc. before moving ahead with this offering. Please take 5 minutes and

respond to the pre-conference survey to be circulated this week to the membership via email to provide your thoughts and feedback.

The executive is also seeking your feedback and input to this newsletter. As you can see it is a new format, contributed by Vancouver communications firm, Hot Tomali. Specifically, however, we are looking for your ideas, program news, and contributions. One of the mandates of ARPCT is to share information with its members and it is our aim that this newsletter be a responsive vehicle for that information sharing. As we discussed at the Tucson conference, this is not only a means of keeping each other updated, but also a method for addressing and responding to the many challenges, issues, and trends that have affected the training and service for persons with disability in recent years (see the *Cutbacks in Computer Training for the Disabled* article on page 2.) Your input of program innovations, new marketing approaches, BAC tactics and strategies, etc, may be just the solution a fellow program requires to finalize its grant application, solidify a new partnership or improve its intake — please keep us posted.

I look forward to working with you through the year, and hope to see you at this year's conference.

Trevor Van Eerden
President
vaneerdent@douglas.bc.ca



SkillSoft Courseware Implementation Strategy

by **Mary Carter**

The School of Adaptive Computer Training (SACT) of the Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation of Kansas, Inc. (CPRF), established in 1999, is devoted to improving marketable computer skills for people with disabilities and others affected by the digital divide. CPRF is a non-profit organization located in Wichita,

Kansas that provides individuals with all types of disabilities customized services, support and technologies with an emphasis on employment and training options. CPRF maintains two SACT facilities in Wichita, Kansas and Atlanta, Georgia and provides training in Houston, Texas and New Orleans, Louisiana through

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2004 ARPCT Awards Outstanding Achievement

SLCC to Receive National New Freedom Initiative Award

Awards were presented at the International ARPCT Conference Awards Luncheon in Tucson on March 4, 2004. Although each of our member programs are worthy of recognition for their efforts this past year, we would like to recognize the following:

Outstanding ARPCT Member Program of the Year - Tie

- **Projects With Industry, Salt Lake Community College**, has served as a model for implementation of its coaching concept
- **Minnesota Resource Center, Computer Technician Training** offers 7 educational tracks and has developed innovative materials to assist their students

Outstanding ARPCT Member of the Year

- **Dennis Brown, SkillSoft**, for donation of scholarships, financial support and wonderful sense of humor

Outstanding ARPCT Business Advisory Council Member of the Year

- **Sophia Garcia, PWI – SLCC**, is a former student and 7 year BAC member. Sophia has spent “thousands of volunteer” hours serving the community.

Outstanding ARPCT Student of the Year

- **Jan Brown, PWI, SLCC** is noted for her “addictive, energetic, positive attitude” in the classroom. After finding employment she secured the donation of 10 computers for the program.

Willard Scott Lifetime ARPCT Achievement Award

- **Steve Lawrence, Twentyone-Eleven Int'l**, is Past-President ARPCT (served as President since 2000) and has been a member since 1990.

Special thanks to Dot Kret for donating the exceptional award frames and assembly services. Thanks to Joe Quinn for the design and printing of the certificates.

by **Joy Tlou**
Salt Lake City Community College

Salt Lake Community College’s Skill Center’s “Projects With Industry” is among five businesses, three non-profits, and one individual that have been selected by U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao as recipients of the Annual New Freedom Initiative Awards (see companion article on page 5: *Nine Honorees Receive Freedom Initiative Awards*).

Projects With Industry is a multi-faceted training and employment program that features “tele-training” from home for students with significant disabilities, online mentors, daily tutoring, and corporate coaching. This program has placed 168 persons with significant disabilities in gainful, competitive employment over the last 5 years.

This Project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration, has been in operation for 20 years, and serves students with significant disabilities — those individuals who have the most difficulty in obtaining employment.

“The recipients of the 2004 Secretary of Labor’s New Freedom Initiative Awards recognize the value that persons with disabilities bring to the workplace and exemplify that philosophy in their daily operations,” said Chao.

Secretary Chao will honor awardees at a November 17 Department of Labor ceremony.

The NFI Award recognizes exemplary and innovative efforts to train, recruit, and hire people with disabilities, and to incorporate the New Freedom Initiative principles. President Bush introduced the New Freedom Initiative (NFI) within the first 30 days of his Presidency, on Feb. 1, 2001. The NFI represents a comprehensive set of proposals designed to ensure that Americans with disabilities have the opportunity to learn and develop skills, engage in productive work, make choices about their daily lives, and participate fully in their communities.

Biographies on the awardees and additional information can be found at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/newfreedom/nfi04.htm#non>.



Cutbacks in Computer Training for the Disabled: Trend Continues

by **Amanda McElfresh, Staff Writer**
The LSU Reveille

The Louisiana State University discontinued the Computer Rehabilitation Training Program, designed to provide computer training

for disabled individuals, last year after 23 years in service.

The Computer Rehabilitation Training Program Web site described the

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program as one “for individuals with disabilities who want a rapid transition into technology positions.”

Doug Weimer, associate dean of Continuing Education, said the program simply had reached the end of its life cycle.

Weimer said the decision came because of moves to include disabled individuals in the general community.

“This program separated them and trained them on its own,” Weimer said. “The campus is now doing more to include disabled individuals.”

The Web site now displays a new message announcing the discontinuation of the program.

“From 1980 until 2003, the CRT program operated under the combined sponsorship of Louisiana State University, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and CRT’s Business Advisory Council,” the statement said. “Graduates received intense technical instruction to help them prepare for careers in COBOL programming (1980-2000) and Web development/Visual Basic Programming (2001-2003).

“After 23 years of operation, the CRT Program closed operations in August 2003, thus no longer offering courses,” the Web site said.

Weimer said the decision also reflects a nationwide trend toward fewer types of programs. Weimer said about 100 such programs formerly existed in the United States, but that number is now about 24.

Rosemary Yesso, a rehabilitation program manager with Louisiana



Rehabilitation Services, said changes in the technology industry also contributed to the decision to end the CRT program.

Yesso said University and Louisiana Rehabilitation Services officials agreed the program had served its time, and the departments needed to move forward with other trends.

Yesso said although Louisiana Rehabilitation Services has taken budget cuts in recent years, there were no financial reasons behind the decision to end the CRT program.

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<http://www.lsureveille.com/>



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partnerships with Digital Consulting & Software Services, a for-profit technology enterprise located in Houston, Texas. The SACT provides mostly training and certification in Microsoft Office products. Last year, the SACT made a concerted effort to take advantage of the ARPCT benefit of incorporating SkillSoft training into its training programs. The SACT uses SkillSoft courseware in a variety of ways in each of its training locations.

Wichita, Kansas

In May 2004, one SACT-Wichita instructor, Jim Elgin, designed a course he called "Business Skills." Epitomizing the "blended learning" approach to instruction, Business Skills is a combination of SkillSoft lessons from several topic areas: Communications, Customer Service, Telephone Skills, Grammar and Business Writing. The instructor leads an introduction to each lesson; students then access assigned SkillSoft lessons working at their own speed. A group discussion or written activity follows. These activities are complemented with a reading or audio/visual resource or a guest speaker from the Business Advisory Council (BAC). Mr. Elgin developed the Business Skills course in response to feedback from The Arnold Group, a Wichita, KS placement service, regarding weaknesses some graduates exhibited during pre-employment testing. Graduates now report being better prepared for the agency's pre-testing.

After a recent mock interview day with BAC members and other prospective employers, SACT Job Placement staff requested additional class work on interviewing skills. The SkillSoft course "Behavioral Interviewing" answered this need. The ability to respond quickly to a specific need of students, instructors, and employers is possible with SkillSoft. The School has moved another step toward its goal of being a strong partner with job placement and Wichita's employment community.

Houston, Texas

In partnership with Digital Consulting & Software Services, the School of Adaptive Computer Training – Houston sought to develop short-term training that matched job availability with the skills and goals of prospective students. SACT personnel surveyed the Business Advisory Council, state vocational rehabilitation counselors, and area businesses such as the Houston 311 Service Center and JP Morgan Chase call center. As a result, SACT integrated both SkillSoft Business Skills and IT Skills curricula into a customized six-week training program.

The first week students learned Windows basics through instructor demonstration and materials, textbook resources, and assigned SkillSoft lessons in "Windows2000 OS." During the next 4 weeks, the instructor led demonstrations and group exercises. During lab work, students completed assigned textbook study and practices, which were supplemented with the SkillSoft course "Microsoft Office 2000." By customizing SkillSoft lessons, instructors were able to individualize this independent study time—advanced lessons for one student, remedial lessons for two others, reinforcement for the rest.

For the last week, the instructor customized lessons from SkillSoft Business Skills Curricula: "Customer Service" and "Frontline Call Center Skills." The instructor introduced SkillSoft lessons and guided discussion after students independently completed the assigned lessons. Guest speakers Mach Eisenberg from the City of Houston Human Resources, representing Houston's 311 Service Center, and Jane Ivey, recruiter for JP Morgan Chase Bank Call Center, reviewed the employment screening process and job responsibilities of potential call center employees.

New Orleans, Louisiana


In partnership with Digital Consulting & Software Services (DCSS), the School of Adaptive Computer Training – New Orleans initiated a

pilot project using SkillSoft individual learning plans to train selected New Orleans Vocational Rehabilitation clients. SACT staff screened clients to determine basic Windows and email skills, the individual's ability to work independently, and job readiness.

The training is conducted at the DCSS facility for a 3-month period. After a week of SACT-instructor led orientation to SkillSoft and DCSS policies, each student will independently pursue his or her learning plan. Each path differs according to the student's employment goals and the employment opportunities in the New Orleans community. One will pursue Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification at the intermediate level; one will concentrate on MS Access to complement his previous accounting experience; one will complete A+ certification and pursue the first steps to MCSA certification.

The SACT relies on SkillSoft -customized lessons, email reminders, mentoring and management reports to monitor and guide the independent study process. Success will be determined by certification success, job placement, and student and vocational rehabilitation surveys during and at the end of the pilot project.

Atlanta, Georgia

At the SACT-Atlanta location, weekly instruction includes a 2-hour Job Search module. This course includes writing cover letters, thank you notes, and resumes. An intense final week concentrates on interview skills and Internet search techniques. SACT Career Placement Coordinator Robert Shilt plans to integrate SkillSoft Business Skills courseware and skill simulations into these studies starting with the course "Behavioral Interviewing." In addition, SACT-Atlanta has recently inaugurated an Accelerated Success Program for youth that provides training for MOS certification. Instructors are preparing to integrate the SkillSoft courseware "Microsoft Office 2000" as a way to accommodate for student learning differences. 

ARPCT

Executive 2004 - 2005

The following members of the ARPCT Executive committee received nominations and were elected at the Annual General meeting held at last year's conference in Tucson. Two of the executive positions have new representatives: Dorothy Kret as Vice-President and Janis Krohe as ARPCT Secretary. Bob Leneway maintained his existing position as Treasurer. Kim Seeger was appointed to the role of Vice-president from her former role as Secretary and Trevor Van Eerden was nominated as president from his former position as vice-president.

The entire 2004-05 executive wishes to express its sincerest thanks and appreciation for the stewardship, innovation, and always-progressive efforts of past Vice-President, Joe Quinn and Past-President, Steve Lawrence.

2004-2005 Executive

Trevor Van Eerden, ARPCT President
*Operations Manager, Douglas College
Vancouver, BC*

Dr. Robert Leneway, ARPCT Treasurer
*Professor/NSF/Skillport EditU Grant
Director
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan*

Dot Kret, ARPCT Vice President
*President, Dorothy Kret and Associates
Tucson, Arizona*

Kimberly Seeger, ARPCT Vice President
*Independent Consultant
Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

Janis Krohe, ARPCT Secretary
*Vice-President, Employment Services
Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation of
Kansas, Inc.,
Wichita, Kansas*

Board Bio: Janis Krohe, Ph.D.

CPRF Employment Services Vice President



Janis Krohe is Vice President of Employment Services for the Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation of Kansas, Inc., (CPRF), where she has been employed for 20 years. CPRF is a non-profit organization located in Wichita, Kansas providing services to individuals with all types of disabilities, including employment, certified computer training, accessible housing, transportation, wheelchair repair, posture seating, home and worksite modifications, and adult day programs. Dr. Krohe oversees day-to-day operations of the Employment Services Division, which encompasses vocational assessment, training, and career placement departments. CPRF's School of Adaptive Computer Training is a key training component of the Employment Services

Division. CPRF maintains training facilities in Wichita, Kansas and Atlanta, Georgia.

Dr. Krohe began her career at CPRF as a rehabilitation engineer after receiving a bachelor's degree in engineering from Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas. She also holds a master's degree in business administration and a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering (Human Factors/Ergonomics), both from Wichita State University. She is a certified Assistive Technology Practitioner and 20-year member of the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA). Dr. Krohe also has managed many research and demonstration projects. Many of her early projects were components of the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Workplace Accommodations, which was co-sponsored by CPRF and the College of Engineering at Wichita State University.

She also has been Project Director for the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration Projects With Industry grant and the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Disability Information Technology Initiative grant. Janis became the newest member of the ARPCT Executive Committee, serving the organization as Secretary.

Nine Honorees Receive NFI Awards

Recognizing achievements of People with Disabilities

WASHINGTON—Five businesses, three non-profits, and one National Football League player have been selected by U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao as recipients of her Annual New Freedom Initiative Awards.

The NFI Award recognizes exemplary and innovative efforts to train, recruit, and hire people with disabilities, and to incorporate the principles

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of President George W. Bush's New Freedom Initiative (NFI). The NFI is a comprehensive set of proposals designed to give people with disabilities the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of community life, including employment. Awardees will be honored by the Secretary at a November 17 departmental ceremony. Biographies on the awardees and

additional information can be found at www.dol.gov/odep/newfreedom/nfi04.htm.

"President Bush wants all Americans to have the opportunity to develop skills and engage in productive work," said Chao "The recipients of the 2004 Secretary of Labor's New Freedom Initiative Awards recognize the value that persons with disabilities bring to the workplace and exemplify that philosophy in their daily operations."

The awardees are:

INDIVIDUAL

Michael John Maslowski,
Kansas City Chiefs, Overland Park,
Kansas

NON-PROFITS

Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities
Washington, DC

Project SEARCH
Cincinnati, Ohio

Salt Lake Community College Skills Center Projects With Industry
Salt Lake City, Utah

BUSINESSES

A & F Wood Products
Howell, Michigan

Hewlett-Packard Company
Palo Alto, California

MBNA America Bank,
N.A. Wilmington, Delaware

Microsoft Corporation
Redmond, Washington

SunTrust Banks, Inc.

Atlanta, Georgia

The announcement came during National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Secretary Chao selected "**You're Hired! Success Knows No Limitations**" as the official theme for October to continue to bring focus and awareness to solutions that ensure the full inclusion of persons with disabilities into the 21st Century workforce.

The department's Office of Disability Employment Policy has the key responsibility for implementing the employment-related aspects of the President's New Freedom Initiative. 

New ARPCT Imagery

ARPCT thanks Vancouver advertising agency **Hot Tomali Communications** for providing ARPCT with new compelling imagery for our marketing materials. The two images, featured in this issue on pages 3 & 6, were shot by award-winning Redpath Photography, who kindly agreed to transfer full usage to ARPCT. The photos were originally used in Open Learning Agency's Turning Points and Opportunities Fund program posters, designed by Hot Tomali. These programs catered to individuals with disabilities trying to obtain work or make a career transition.



If you would like to contribute an article to an upcoming issue, please email Trevor Van Eerden at Vaneerdent@douglas.bc.ca.

