

## *Solutions to Library Inclusion*

**Jerry** expressed his difficulties to the library staff. The ramp was repaired and the inside aisles were widened to 36 inches. All areas of travel inside the library were kept clear of obstacles such as trashcans, carts, and plants.

Jerry was also given the choice of having a staff person



help him or using a reaching device to gather his materials by himself.

**Chelsea** worked with the library staff to find software that would allow her to use the computer for word processing and searching the Internet. Software for magnification, such as JAWS and Text Reader, was purchased and installed.

**Brian** uses the ergonomic workstation recently purchased by the library. The workstation is wide enough to fit a wheelchair and the height is adjustable. The library also purchased adjustable arm rests, a trackball mouse, and an alternative keyboard. Word prediction software (Co:Writer) and educational software (Math-Blaster) were installed on the computers.

## *LIFE Project Partners*



### **University of Connecticut A.J. Pappanikou Center for Developmental Disabilities**

263 Farmington Ave., MC 6222  
Farmington, CT 06030  
(860) 679-1500 (voice)  
(866) 623-1315 (toll-free)  
(860) 679-1502 (TDD)  
[www.uconned.org](http://www.uconned.org)



### **State of Connecticut Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities**

60B Weston Street  
Hartford, CT 06120  
(800) 842-7303 (voice/TDD)  
(860) 297-4300 (voice)  
(860) 566-2102 (TDD)



### **Connecticut State Library**

231 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06120  
(860) 757-6500 (voice)

*Library  
Inclusion  
For  
Everyone*

## *Challenges to Library Inclusion*

**Jerry** moved to a new town and wanted to go to the library. He had difficulty moving his wheelchair into the building because the ramp needed repairs. Once inside the library, the narrow aisles limited his access to books and magazines. Many items were high on the shelves and he could not reach them.

**Chelsea** had always used the library. She had regularly borrowed large print books. As a college freshman, she was required to use computers for many of her assignments. Her visual impairment, however, prevented her from using the library's computers to do research because she was unable to read the screens.

**Brian**, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student, needed to use a computer to complete his school assignments. He did not have a computer at home, so he used the local library to finish his work. His mobility is limited because he has Cerebral Palsy and this made it difficult for him to use the library's computer workstation.



## *What is LIFE?*

Library Inclusion For Everyone (LIFE) is a collaborative project to improve the accessibility of Connecticut libraries for people with disabilities. Since it is the civil right of every citizen to access their local library, LIFE seeks to provide information and technical assistance to librarians as they work to make their services and programs welcoming to all people, including those with disabilities.

### *The LIFE Project is Available to:*

- ◆ Train library staff to make their building and programs accessible to persons with disabilities.
- ◆ Survey library accessibility for people with disabilities, including the identification of physical and programmatic barriers.
- ◆ Suggest solutions that will improve accessibility for everyone who uses the library.
- ◆ Offer information and technical assistance on the use of assistive technology devices and services.
- ◆ Provide resources and assistance in understanding federal and state laws governing accessibility requirements.



## *Assistive Technology*

The definition of assistive technology (AT) includes both devices and services. An AT device is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. The devices range from simple, or “low tech” (e.g., straws, Velcro), to “mid tech” (e.g., calculators, tape recorders, switch-operated electronics), right through the most sophisticated tools, or “high tech” (e.g., computers, motorized wheelchairs).

AT services consist of assistance in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

## *Legal Obligation*

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the programs, services, and activities of public entities, such as libraries. Both statutes also require these entities to make reasonable modifications in their programs and services, if necessary, to allow the participation of persons with disabilities.