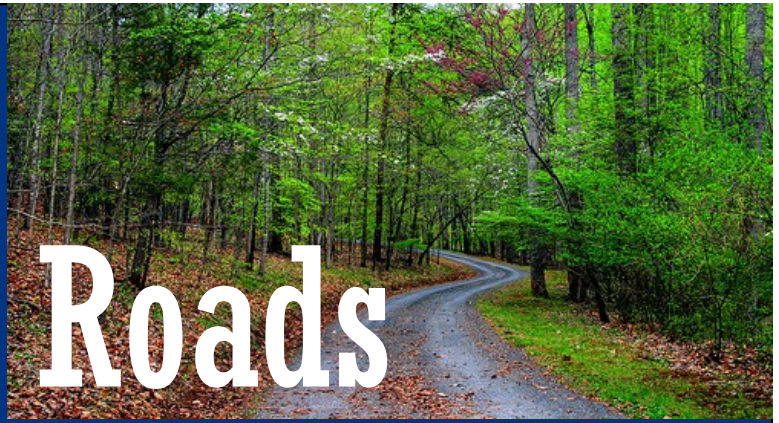


Country Roads

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KARRN Mission:

A collaborative team including individuals impacted by neurological conditions, providers who serve them, members of communities in which they live, advocates, and researchers who investigate these impairments will identify, develop and disseminate information and strategies, and maximize resources to improve outcomes and quality of life.

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Assistive Technology Conference Grows in Frankfort

This year's Summer Institute in Assistive Technology was bigger and better than ever. It was held June 13th and 14th and was attended by 150 people representing a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The event's new location at the Kentucky State University Research and Demonstration Farm in Frankfort provided a superb backdrop for sixteen sessions on a variety of topics related to assistive technology. This year, tracks were offered in Community Living, Agriculture, Education, and Driver Rehabilitation. This allowed for more in depth discussion around each of these areas. Attendees had true hands on experiences by driving a utility vehicle on a closed course, trying out adaptive sport wheelchairs for tennis, basketball, and racing, and seeing accessibility features of an on-site greenhouse. Other session topics included: *Mechanization for Small Farms and Small Scale Vegetable Production*; *Home Modifications: Assessing Your Home*; *Can You Use PASS to Help Pay for Assistive Technology?*; *Functional Vision and the Kentucky Bioptic Driving Program*; and *Education and Assistive Technology: Classroom and Home Implementation*.

The event was a collaborative effort between the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Kentucky AgrAbility, and the Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky.

If you have suggestions for topics for the next year's event, please contact Kathy Sheppard-Jones at kjone@uky.edu



Sodexo/Easter Seals Grant Recipient gains independence

Carlos Taylor is a 33 year old who suffered a spinal cord injury following a 30 foot fall from a scaffold at work where he assisted with building log homes. He lives on 5 acres in Winchester Kentucky.



Carlos was referred to the AgrAbility program by Kara Lee, a physical therapist with Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital Outpatient Services where he received services. During the initial interview Carlos stated he just wanted to be able to take care of his property and perhaps start a vegetable garden where he could share with friends, neighbors or even sell locally.

An AgrAbility farm visit assessment identified that Carlos had limited resources and equipment, interfering with his ability to manage his farm activities. High grass and weeds made it difficult to propel his manual wheelchair from his house to utility shed located short distance from the house. Overgrown trees and brush lined both sides of a long gravel drive that leads to the road where his mailbox is located.

“the worst feeling is having to depend on others, and being able to take care of my property makes me feel more independent”.

After receiving the Sodexo/Easter Seals mini grant, Carlos was able to purchase equipment that allowed him to keep critical areas of his land cleared, mowed and even tilled. This summer he planted a garden which produced a variety of vegetables that he was able to enjoy and share with friends. He grows berries and has several fruit trees which he has been able to keep clear from being overgrown by weeds and tall grass.

Carlos wants to thank Sodexo and Easter Seals for awarding him the grant along with AgrAbility for their services. He stated that having the equipment has enabled him to “do for myself now versus having to ask other people to do so much for me”. He also expressed, “the worst feeling is having to depend on others, and being able to take care of my property makes me feel more independent”.



Save the Date: No Barriers Summit, August 8-11, 2013

The No Barriers Summit 2013, to be held in breathtaking Telluride, CO, is a four day gathering of scientists, inventors, academics, practitioners and end users exploring cutting edge assistive technology. The summit has hands-on clinics, product demonstrations, outdoor adventures, art, film, and more. It is an amazing opportunity for anyone to experience different outdoor activities and learn about new advances in assistive technology. Sasha Rabchevsky, UK professor and KARRN community member, is on the Board of Directors for this inspiring organization.

KARRN will be sponsoring a community partner to attend the 2013 summit– watch for more information! To learn more about the summit, visit the No Barriers website, <http://nobarriersusa.org/summit/>.



The town of Telluride from the ski hill, photo by John Fowler, 2010, via Wikipedia.

Become the New Voice for Women in Wheelchairs

The Ms. Wheelchair Kentucky pageant is a competition based on advocacy, achievement, communication, and presentation. The judges select the most articulate and accomplished spokeswoman for persons with disabilities. During her year-long reign, Ms. Wheelchair Kentucky will have the opportunity to impact advocacy groups through public appearances such as radio and TV interviews. This is a great opportunity to display the achievements of women who are wheelchair users! To apply, you should:

1. use a wheelchair for 100% of mobility outside the home
2. be between 21–60 years of age
3. be a U.S. citizen who has lived in Kentucky for at least 6 months.

To request an application, call 502-394-9160, or email patobryant@bellsouth.net. This year's pageant will be held on **Saturday, October 27, 2012**, at the Hurstborne Holiday Inn.



Research

Research 101 Grants Available to Community Members

The Research 101 Pilot Grant Program is seeking applicants! This unique opportunity aims to de-mystify research to allow anyone in the community to answer questions related to health and quality of life for people with neurological conditions (stroke, brain injury, spinal cord injury) in rural Kentucky.

The first funded project is being led by Emarjun Brucal and Violet Sylvia from Appalachian Regional Healthcare. They will be studying whether people who have had a stroke and participate in a post-therapy wellness program have an improved quality of life compared to people who do not participate. The study is currently in progress.

If you are curious to learn how community research works, the first step is to visit www.karrn.org and click on the left-hand tab, "Research 101: Everybody Can Do It". These modules provide an excellent introduction to research. Once you have an idea in mind, the staff at KARRN is happy to work with you to develop it into a full-blown research project. The "KARRN Pilot Grant Program" tab on the KARRN home page gives you detailed information about the application process.

Anyone is welcome and encouraged to apply! If you have any questions, feel free to contact Patrick Kitzman MSPT, PhD at phkitz1@email.uky.edu or 859-218-0580.

Collaborative research advances understanding of treatments for spinal cord injury complications

Dr. Alexander "Sasha" Rabchevsky of the Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Research Center and Dr. Patrick Kitzman in the UK Division of Physical Therapy, both KARRN partners, have collaborated on a series of scientific research projects investigating drug treatments for muscle spasticity and autonomic dysreflexia (AD), two serious complications that affect individuals with spinal cord injury.

Their recent scientific article titled "*Effects of gabapentin on muscle spasticity and both induced as well as spontaneous autonomic dysreflexia after complete spinal cord injury*" was published in August 2012 in the journal *Frontiers in Physiology*. Their findings show that the drug gabapentin is promising in treating both spasticity and AD in rats with spinal cord injuries; however, it has yet to be tested in humans for this purpose.

Collaborative research is valuable because scientists with different knowledge and expertise can combine their skills to answer complex questions. These are some incredible questions being answered right here in Kentucky.



NAPS Project makes important findings about those affected by stroke in rural Appalachia

The KARRN project, “Needs Assessment of People with Stroke” (NAPS), involves interviewing people with stroke and their caregivers in rural Appalachia to gain a better understanding of their lives and their support systems. In so doing, we have learned a great deal about the lived experiences of people with stroke, and about the supports and barriers faced in their communities. We are thankful to all those who opened their doors to us and shared their lives.

One of the many things we learned is that the timing in which one receives education is critical for the success of learning the information. For example, in the hospital, there is great support and education provided, but often it is more than an individual can absorb in a short period of time, especially while s/he is adjusting to the realities of having had a stroke. Then, when an individual returns home, support declines dramatically for practicing necessary skills such as transfers and walking with assistive devices. Furthermore, while there are some excellent resources in rural Kentucky, those resources are often not accessible or known to the people who need them. Therefore, an outcome of the project is the development of educational videos regarding common barriers related to mobility, and a resource library for Southeastern Kentucky (in the works).



The NAPS project is also in the process of getting the word out about its findings by submitting articles and research presentations to peer reviewed venues. Two presentations occurred at the American Speech and Hearing Association annual conference, and two additional presentations are occurring at the American Physical Therapy Association annual meeting in San Diego in February. One article was submitted for publication and 3 more are in the works. More importantly, we are continuing to seek support and develop strategies to help address the needs of people discovered through the NAPS project.

In order to help people with their return home after a stroke, the NAPS project is developing educational videos regarding common barriers to mobility, as well as a resource library for Southeastern Kentucky.

Community Photos



KARRN community partners Sasha Rabchevsky and Bob Patterson visited an accessible pier made from a converted pontoon boat in London, KY in August for a day of fishing.



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