

The logo for DEC (Developmental Enterprises Corporation) is displayed in a large, bold, serif font.

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

DEVELOPMENTAL ENTERPRISES CORPORATION

Changes in Technology Free the Disabled to  
Communicate, Connect, Contribute and  
Enjoy the Fun of an *Everyday* Life

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In just five years, electronic devices have revolutionized the ways we work, play, learn and communicate. Whether you view it as a curse or a blessing, technology has been rapidly changing and expanding in every field imaginable, dramatically changing the way we live.

Back in prehistoric times – you know, the Phone Age – people used telephones (with a rotary dial, no less) solely to make calls. How quaint! Today's all-in-one smart device is a map. An alarm clock. A camera. A video recorder. A video-gaming device. A portable music player. A laptop computer. A door opener to the worldwide web. A movie theater. A flat-screen TV. A GPS. A flashlight. Oh yeah, and a phone.

While it might seem that the technology of today has reached its limits, it is still actually spreading its proverbial wings. Only twenty or so years ago, personal computers were becoming small enough and affordable enough for families to buy them for home use. Since then, the world of technology has shown no signs of slowing down and practically every device available today is somehow tied to computer technology.



“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 35th President of the United States

Modern gadgets provide easy access to information. And if information is power, then those who find information and use it well are the ones most likely to succeed. Because technology is challenging, it sparks the brain to work to its full potential. Hence, electronic devices promote creativity and imagination. Communication is like water to life. We cannot develop without communication ... and the process is made more simple and faster by modern technology. Learning has become more convenient and fun. We now have the capacity to be more efficient, more productive, better connected to each other.

But make no mistake – *those in our community without access to these devices run the risk of being left behind.* People such as men and women with intellectual challenges and other developmental disabilities. The individuals to whom DEC is passionately committed.





With increasing frequency, developmentally disabled adults here in the Delaware Valley and all across America are being empowered to participate fully in their communities and to enjoy a safe, comfortable and independent lifestyle through the use of assistive technology (AT) devices.

Assistive technology refers to a broad range of devices, services, strategies and practices that are conceived and applied to ameliorate the problems faced by individuals who have disabilities. AT can make life easier for those men and women who may need help carrying out their daily activities – in the home, at work, for recreation and leisure, outdoors, for exercise and for daily living (personal hygiene, dressing, taking medications, preparing meals, feeding, home maintenance, etc.). AT devices can also be used for communication, safety, education, mobility and transportation within a variety of environments and situations.

“For Americans without disabilities, technology makes things easier. For Americans with disabilities, technology makes things possible.”



Mary Pat Radabaugh, Director, IBM National Support Center for Persons with Disabilities

Since its founding in 1971, Developmental Enterprises Corporation has been dedicated to providing developmentally disabled adults with an “*everyday life*,” in which they make their own decisions, have friends and enjoy social interaction, and give back to society. It should come as no surprise, then, that DEC is aggressively seeking to expand the use of devices that empower the men and women it serves to have greater control over their own lives; to participate in, and contribute more fully to activities in their homes, work environments and communities; interact to a greater extent with people who do not have disabilities, and otherwise benefit from opportunities that are taken for granted by those who do not have disabilities.

DEC’s family of compassionate, caring and dedicated employees invest their skills in one individual at a time – the *whole* person – and look at what he or she wants and needs to feel in control of his or her life. Oh sure, it isn’t something that happens overnight. Liberating any individual struggling with an intellectual challenge or other disability requires commitment, understanding and patience – on the part of the disabled person, his/her entire support team (which very much includes friends and loved ones) and concerned individuals, families, foundations and corporate citizens who wish to improve the quality of life enjoyed by all of us.

**ACCESS TO  
TECHNOLOGY  
PROMOTES  
SELF-RELIANCE**





## TO KNOW HOW TO READ IS TO KNOW FREEDOM ITSELF

If the word “tablet” conjures up sheets of writing paper fastened together to create a pad, then chances are you’ve reached the age when your back goes out more than you do. Simply stated, a tablet, or tablet PC, is a portable computer that uses a touchscreen as its primary input device. Most tablets, such as Apple’s iPad, are slightly smaller and lighter than the average laptop. Extremely portable and easily stowed, tablet PCs provide a different interface than traditional computers and, therefore, offer unique possibilities for graphics applications, games and other programs.

With a single click on an icon, individuals with intellectual challenges and/or other developmental disabilities can tell others what they want or how they feel, unlock motivation and desire, enhance fine motor skills, practice cognitive-functioning skills for self-sufficiency, promote more intuitive learning, boost self-confidence ... and enjoy the fun of being alive.

Bill Chapman, a program coordinator at DEC’s Center Point Training Center in Worcester, was among the early advocates who recognized the power that the new technology wielded among those with developmental disabilities. A former computer software developer at the global information technology company known today as Unisys, Chapman realized that by teaching individuals to solve puzzles and play both sensory and matching games on a tablet device, they could be less dependent upon others and empowered to do more on their own.

What started as an experimental project two years ago with but one individual – a young man with a passion for computers, diagnosed with moderate-to-severe mental retardation and cerebral palsy – has, thanks to funding provided by several foundations in the Greater Philadelphia area, spread to DEC training facilities in Hatfield, Norristown, Pottstown and Willow Grove.

“Today’s tablet is much, much more affordable than similar devices that sold for upwards of \$8,000 just a few years ago,” Chapman explains, “but we still must rely on the generosity of others to purchase even the modest equipment and apps that the people we serve require to navigate, investigate and communicate.”

For individuals with emotional and behavioral issues, many of whom communicate with gestures due to an inability to vocalize, a tablet PC provides a remarkable diversion, an effective tool for keeping the disabled calm, focused and involved.

“Life is all about changes,” notes Mary Kessler, program coordinator of the Adult Training Facility at DEC’s Willow Grove Training Center. “We all want to learn new things, hone new skills, have more choices. Millions of Americans use their iPads to unlock their curiosity, stretch their imagination, receive vocational training, communicate with friends and family, learn to live more healthfully, listen to music and simply have fun. How then, in good conscience, can we possibly deny men and women with developmental disabilities the very same opportunities?”

Mary Steffey, a literacy tutor at DEC’s Pottstown Training Center, is particularly mindful of how powerful hand-held electronic devices are as tools for teaching the disabled to read.

“Imagine how difficult and dangerous it is to maneuver throughout your community without being able to read a street sign or a bus route sign,” she explains. “To know where to get on and off public transportation, or to be able to distinguish the library from the bank. Think of the risks involved in food shopping without being able to read a label or a safety warning. Literacy builds confidence and self-esteem. It permits us to enjoy books and newspapers, write a grocery list, recognize traffic signals, be more interactive.”

Among the benefactors of DEC’s assistive technology program is Amanda – an intellectually challenged woman in her mid-20s, who has been receiving services from DEC’s Center Point training facility since 2010. At the time she graduated high school at the age of 21, Amanda was unable to read, sound out words on her own or even identify all of the letters in the alphabet. Without any vocational skills to draw on, the young developmentally disabled woman exhibited a lack of confidence and a fear of taking on new responsibilities.

“All human life has value; every human being should have meaningful options to make choices about issues that affect our lives.”



Part of a declaration adopted by representatives from 14 nations meeting in Honolulu at the Global Perspectives On Independent Living Summit

Today, thanks largely to the collective perseverance, expertise and devotion of the Center Point staff, Amanda not only reads ... she participates twice each week in a current events workshop, reading newspaper articles aloud to keep other individuals up-to-date on world affairs. She has accepted the duties of secretary of her center’s Meals on Wheels program – reading the addresses of each shut-in to a driver, to ensure accuracy and seamless delivery of foodstuffs to those in need. Hungry to learn, Amanda uses an iPad provided by DEC to practice spelling and word association and, perhaps most important, is rightfully proud of her own development and filled with feelings of excitement and self-worth as a result of her many achievements.

By using tablets to promote literacy, DEC is dramatically and meaningfully changing the lives of people with disabilities.



Even with only a modest supply of devices, all of which require significant upgrades as newer and more powerful instruments continue to hit the marketplace at break-neck speed, DEC staff at all five training facilities throughout Montgomery County have begun to achieve startling results through the use of tablet PCs.

## RELYING ON THE GENEROSITY OF OTHERS...LIKE YOU

Some may callously and foolishly write off those with disabilities as “hapless” or “hopeless;” but everyone associated with DEC knows that the individuals they serve – with passion and compassion – have the potential to learn, to make choices, to be engaged. People who have historically been resistant to change now eagerly look forward to participating in “class.” Non-communicative individuals are increasingly using their devices to express a range of feelings and emotions. More and more, disinterest is being replaced by involvement.

People may think they’re just having fun; but they are actually learning, socializing, becoming more inquisitive, staying focused for longer periods of time, eating smarter, becoming less dependent on others and learning to do more for themselves.

“Technology is a lot like freedom. . . . Once it’s uncorked, there’s no putting it back. Its fruits are there for everyone’s enjoyment and benefit. It is often said that assistive technology is liberating [for the individual with a disability] and that is certainly the case. But it is time to be clear that assistive technology is liberating not just for the individual with a disability but indeed for America as a whole.”



B. Williams, testifying before the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Select Education



There is, however, much more to do. And with more and better assistive technology being made available every day, there is so much more that can be accomplished. *Must* be accomplished, for those who support DEC's crucial mission to continue to make a meaningful difference.

"More often than not, we see the newest products on the market and convince ourselves we must have them – without taking into consideration the cognitive, emotional and physical abilities of each individual," notes Beth G. Shapson, a registered occupational therapist licensed in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey, with a certification in assistive technology. "We must look at assistive technology as a means to becoming more independent, and thus each device needs to be individualized to fit the person and situation."

Technology may be much like freedom, but let us not forget the fact that freedom is never free.

To achieve DEC's vision and enable the developmentally disabled to be valued, productive, hopeful and safe, additional up-to-date devices with more memory, more capabilities and more apps must be acquired, along with more staff training.

Today's AT devices are, thankfully, much more affordable than earlier variations. Still, a non-profit such as DEC is confronted with a difficult conundrum: how do you pay for what you cannot afford to be without? Indeed, how does an organization with a hard-earned reputation for sound fiscal responsibility incorporate more and better life-altering technology into its programming to help level the playing field for so many men and women with intellectual challenges and other developmental disabilities in the face of a tough economic climate?



With a tip of the hat to The Beatles,  
we'll get by with a little help from our friends.

DEC values the partnership it has long enjoyed with individuals and families, businesses and civic organizations, institutions and private foundations, as well as government agencies. Each of you look to DEC to provide a dignified and positive environment for all individuals, and to support men and women with developmental disabilities to reach their fullest potential through personalized training, tailored therapies and innovative programs and services.

In return, DEC asks that you embrace the very special individuals we represent. Give them your love, your respect, your friendship. And, so we may rise to the challenges that confront us, we ask that you give DEC your financial support.

Together, let us heed President Kennedy's warning. Let's look neither to the past nor the present, but straight ahead to a glorious future in which all things are possible.

[DONATE NOW](#)



## Numbers Tell the Story

DEC is the largest  
Day Program in  
Montgomery County,  
**servicing 400+**  
people daily

**1-in-10**  
American families  
is directly affected  
by intellectual and  
developmental  
disabilities

DEC supports  
people in **6**  
**COUNTIES** in  
Pennsylvania

DEC administrative  
costs are  
**less than 9%**  
of our  
operating costs

In the last 42  
years DEC has  
exceeded its  
budget  
**ZERO**  
**Times**

**100%**  
of DEC's Board  
of Directors  
donate annually

DEC employs  
more than  
**180**  
**PEOPLE**

DEC serves  
people who range  
in age from  
**18 to 85**  
years old

DEC offers  
**24/7**  
support to those  
who need it

More than **54%**  
of the people we  
support volunteer  
with local civic  
groups, clubs  
and churches

**100%**  
of those DEC  
supports live, work  
and play in their  
communities

20% of the people  
DEC serves are  
**60+**  
years old



# Financial Highlights for the Fiscal Year

Ended June 30th, 2012

Government Support  
\$8,396,715



Gifts & Contributions  
\$224,546



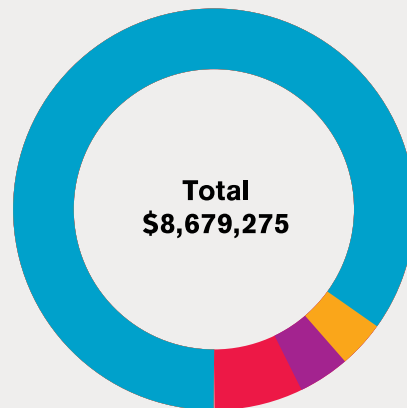
Grants  
\$32,049



Other  
\$25,965



## Source of Funds



Program Services  
\$7,337,511



Administrative Support  
\$707,640



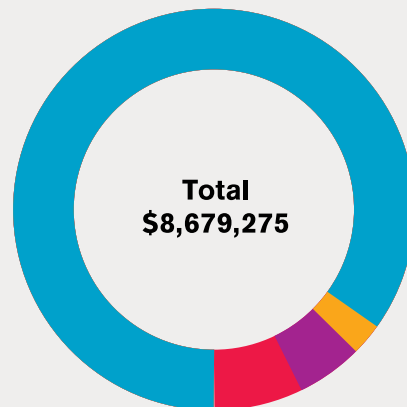
Change in Net Assets  
\$471,828



Program Development  
\$162,296



## Use of Funds



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### Mission Statement

DEC is passionately committed to supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to reach their fullest potential through personalized training, tailored therapies and other programs and services that promote independence, choice and community integration.

### Vision Statement

DEC envisions persons with disabilities living healthy, meaningful, productive and safe lives that are rich in community associations and contributions and who have valued roles in their communities. DEC's services are dedicated to this vision.

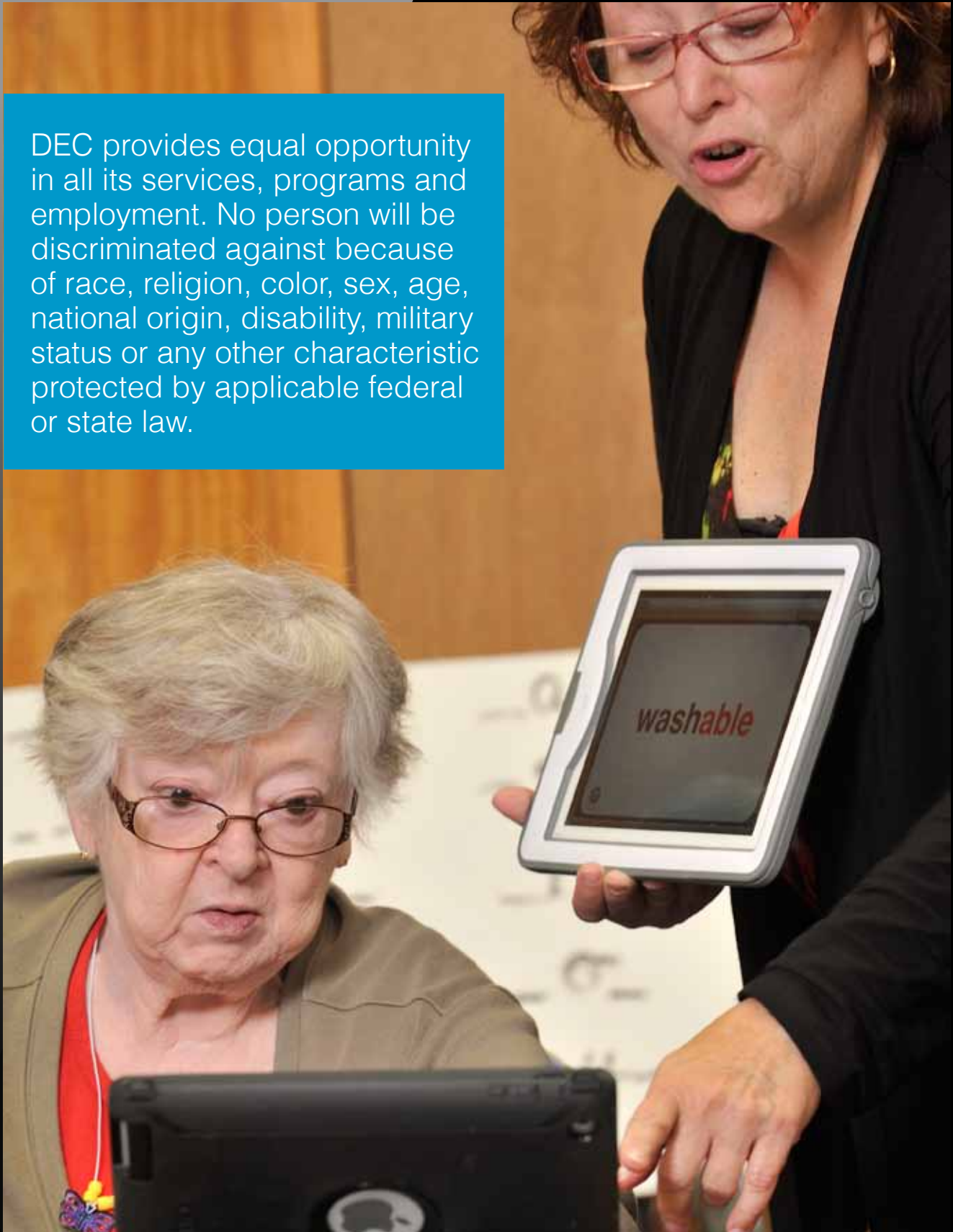
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