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USU Community Partnerships enable Reuse of Helpful Equipment

LOGAN — Utah State University's Assistive Technology Lab has partnered with two Cache Valley businesses, Sunshine Terrace Assisted Living Center and Standers Inc., to provide Cache Valley residents with affordable, used wheelchairs, walkers and other assistive devices.

Sunshine Terrace Assisted Living Center and Standers Inc. have donated used equipment to the AT Lab, where students restore the used equipment for Cache Valley residents who are unable to afford new items.

"The great part about these partnerships is being able to involve the AT Lab in serving the community," said Stan Clelland, AT Lab coordinator.

Students at the AT Lab converted 900 bedrails and 1200 bed trays donated by Standers Inc. into helpful devices. The equipment would have typically gone to the landfill; however, the AT Lab was able to use the parts to build crawlers. Crawlers help small children with disabilities achieve mobility. The devices are distributed to families who participate in the Up-to-3 Program at USU's Center for Persons with Disabilities.

"Standers Inc. enjoys partnering with the AT Lab because we get to work with students to develop new products," said Jan Miller, president and owner of Standers Inc. "We get great feedback from the students as we develop a product from the conceptual stage into the prototype and manufacturing stages. The students benefit from participating throughout the process and then seeing the marketable product in the end."

Sunshine Terrace Assisted Living Center donates broken and worn out equipment to Clelland and the USU students to refurbish or salvage usable parts. Often the restored equipment is returned in an updated form to Sunshine Terrace residents.

"Working with the AT Lab provides a good way for equipment to get to people who need it," said Richard Penrod, rehab director for Sunshine Terrace.

Over the past three years, 30 recycled wheelchairs and other pieces of equipment have been provided to those who cannot afford a new device, or to those who have been injured and need equipment on a short-term basis.

For more information about donating equipment and the types of equipment accepted, contact the AT Lab or the Utah Assistive Technology Program at 435-797-0699 or 800-524-5152.