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MORE THAN \$5 MILLION IN LOANS FOR EQUIPMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

LOGAN — The Utah Assistive Technology Foundation, in partnership with Zions Bank, has funded 970 loans worth more than \$5 million throughout Utah for individuals with disabilities to purchase assistive technology devices, adaptive vans and home accessibility modifications to help improve their quality of life and independence.

“I am really glad UATF is an option,” UATF loan recipient Matt Maw said. Maw purchased a modified van to transport him and his motorized wheelchair.

“There is no way I would spend this much money on a vehicle if I didn’t have a disability,” Maw said. “UATF is essential to be able to afford something like this.”

The UATF offers Utah residents with disabilities of all ages the opportunity to borrow money at an affordable cost (no fees and very low interest) so they can purchase much-needed devices including hearing aids, scooters, Braille electronic notebooks, wheelchairs, print enlargers, accessible vans, augmentative communication boards, home modifications and more.

Marianne Fisher, a UATF loan recipient, has been blind since birth, and she recently retired from a successful career assisting other individuals with visual impairments. Fisher’s success partially comes from a device called a BrailleNote, which she purchased through a low-interest loan through the UATF.

Another loan recipient is Ally Saunders, a 7-year-old first grader from Tremonton. She uses a motorized wheelchair to get around. Because Saunders is growing and her

wheelchair is heavy, her parents are developing back problems from lifting and loading her wheelchair. Often one of Saunders' parents stays home with her while the other members of the family go out. To resolve these difficulties, Saunders' parents purchased a mini-van equipped with a ramp with the assistance of a loan through the UATF. The van will allow Saunders to stay in her chair and allow her family to travel together on appointments and outings.

The UATF, a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization, was founded in 1991. The program helps children and adults enhance their independence, education, employment and quality of life through assistive technology.

“We are delighted that we have been able to help almost a thousand children and adults with disabilities in Utah receive the equipment they need,” said Marilyn Hammond, UATF executive director. “Many assistive technology devices cost thousands and thousands of dollars. There are no other funding options available for a number of these devices, including hearing aids and wheelchair accessible vans.”

The foundation was started to provide affordable financing to fill this gap. It was one of the first in the country to begin offering these services, now there are 33 similar programs in other states.

The UATF is part of the Utah Assistive Technology Program, housed at the Center for Persons with Disabilities on the Utah State University campus, but services are provided statewide. For more information about the UATF and how to apply for a low-interest loan, call 800-524-5152 or visit uatf.org.

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