

The premier community resource for people with disabilities and their families

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More information:  
Ms. Pamela Polacsek  
ppolacsek@saratogabridges.org  
(518) 587-0723 ext. 1255

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**Saratoga Bridges Receives grant from the GLOBALFOUNDRIES-Malta Foundation**

Saratoga Bridges was awarded a \$3,000 grant from the GLOBALFOUNDRIES-Malta Foundation to assist them in sustaining their scope of services for the individuals with developmental disabilities they serve. The funds will purchase 4 iPads and 4 Proloquo2Go software programs.

The iPad has become a popular therapeutic tool for people with disabilities in that they are easily portable, versatile and less expensive than personal computers. For a mainstream technological device like the iPad to have been instantly embraced by the disabled is unusual. It is far more common for items designed for disabled people to be adapted for general use, like closed-captioning on televisions or GPS devices in cars that announce directions. Also, most mainstream devices do not come with built-ins like the iPad's closed-captioning, magnification and audible readout functions. Originally intended to keep it simple for all users, these options are a benefit for the disabled. These devices are revolutionizing the lives of children, adults and seniors with special needs. The ability to utilize 'touch' makes them accessible as well as mainstream because all of their non-disabled peers are using them as well. The end result is that an iPad gives dignity to people with even significant disabilities.

Also, people with Autism are using the iPad and the applications (apps) to link skills learned at their Day Program to their home and community environments. Proloquo2Go software has been very effective because even the tiniest of movements give individuals who have difficulty speaking the opportunity to communicate in an easier manner. Plus, it costs only a fraction of similar devices. It can then be customized with photos or features to suit each person's life and needs.

Additionally, educational, cognitive, hearing, visual, gross and fine motor skills, physical fitness and entertainment options are vastly advanced with an iPad. There are apps to increase math, language, word prediction, memory and innumerable other learning activities. Some are simply fun to use and engage the person in a new manner of teaching. As a result, the sheer ease of using light touch allows people to become more motivated and much more independent.

As one of the largest non-profit organizations in Saratoga County, Saratoga Bridges has been proudly providing the highest level of services and programs to people with developmental disabilities and their families for more than 55 years by promoting their abilities and achievements in every aspect of community life. Throughout their history, family members, staff and volunteers have been committed to ensuring that the individuals they serve are able to realize their goals, hopes and aspirations as they work, volunteer, socialize and recreate while leading full, productive and contributing lives. The agency employs close to 600 conscientious people who work diligently and with great compassion to be responsible for the 24/7 care of over 800 individuals. Saratoga Bridges' philosophy is that every day is full of possibilities!

- 30 -



Saratoga Bridges Boulevard • Ballston Spa, New York 12020 • (518) 587.0723 • (518) 871.9497 fax

[www.saratogabridges.org](http://www.saratogabridges.org) • [info@saratogabridges.org](mailto:info@saratogabridges.org)

Saratoga Bridges, NYSARC, Inc. Saratoga County Chapter

