

HELP WANTED

Academy Works

Skills and technologies to level the workforce playing field.

WANTED! Your old Flatscreen Monitor!

Helping the Academy is easy: we may want what you are done using!

While we work to advance the technology that we use to educate our students, we still have 28 old monitors that we jokingly state are about the size of today's "Smart Car". As we focus our resources on software and processors upgrades, we are looking to **YOU** to donate your used 15", 17", and 19" LCD monitors! We think you may have them, take a quick look around your attics, closets, and basements! We'll all be glad that you did ...

Here's why helping is easy:

Step 1: Call Emily Coder at 215-634-2000 extension 258 and say, "I have an extra display, how do I get it to you?"

Step 2: Emily will work with you to figure out how to get it to us. All donations are tax deductible.



A publication of



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High Tech, High Touch: The Power of YouTube in the Classroom

by Emily Coder

As we continue to use technology creatively, we are using our very OWN YouTube Channel to provide quick access to relevant video training tools for our students. How did we do this? Several Academy students joined a student-led Task Force designed to foster innovative methods students and staff can use to reinforce lessons using new technology.

"Having the ability to see and hear the explanation of a software lesson in Word or learning more about how I can use assistive technology helps me feel confident that I am building competitive skills," says Task Force leader and student Kyriyyah Abdus Samad. She adds, "I love knowing that

I can solve my own problems and reinforce the lessons offered to me in class." Michael Fiore, CFO of The Sierra Group, launched the Task Force because problem solving and critical thinking skills just like those alluded to by Kyriyyah are just what the Philadelphia Business Community desires.

Fiore offers that, "Those successful in the marketplace today are able to combine practical skills in technology with critical thinking and problem solving skills to figure out how to identify and then solve problems. These students are creating an infrastructure to allow all students and staff members to move in this direction."



The Academy's YouTube Task Force. L to R: Paul Skalisky, Colleen Stover, Khyriyyah Abdus-Samad, Angela Brown, Dawn McFadden, Jill Crowding





Left: Emily Coder, our Outreach Coordinator, sports the 2011 Team Academy T-shirt. Right: 'TEAM ACADEMY' Runners give it their all in the 2011 Philadelphia Marathon.

Running on Purpose: Runners in the 2011 Philadelphia Marathon Support The Academy

Congratulations Team Academy on completing the 2011 Philadelphia Half-Marathon and Marathon! Emily Coder, Team Academy Coordinator, noted that, "people can show care and support in a lot of ways and the partnership between our runners, Modell's, the Marathon Committee, and our program certainly demonstrate that we can all cross the line together."

Collectively, we have raised over \$4,700 and are closing in on our goal of \$5,000 for The Academy at Liberty Resources and adults with disabilities!

Special thanks to our runners:

- Amy Ortner
- Brant Imperatore
- Cassie Beck
- Diana Bragoli
- Eric Kaag
- Justin Kalnas
- Kate Crosswell
- Kit Bozzini
- Solina Feliciano-Gonnion
- Tolu Lanrewaju



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The LiveScribe Pen: Adapting the Learning Process

by Chris Hyson, ATP

Ferris Bueller said, "Life comes at you pretty fast."

When life is coming at us fast, what do we do? When we're in the meeting with a dozen coworkers and each one is making suggestions, assigning tasks, and asking questions, how do we keep track? What about when an enthusiastic professor imparts a lecture faster than we can scribble our notes, or when a doctor (verbally) gives us 15 "simple" steps as part of a treatment plan?

Here's where a LiveScribe Pen can come in handy. While the user takes basic notes, the pen digitally records all of the ambient conversation. A simple click of the pen can replay part or all of that meeting, lecture, or treatment plan. LiveScribe Pens hold over 100 hours of recording time, and the notes and sound files are also transferable to a computer for future reference.

At The Academy, dozens of students use LiveScribe Pens. C.F. Thomas and Colleen Stover both began their Academy training this fall and have already seen significant benefits. Taking notes by hand is an arduous process for C.F., but he finds, with very little manual effort, that "the LiveScribe Pen helps me to recall important information from discussions."



Chris Hyson, Angelique Green, and Marie Palladino brandish LiveScribe Pens.

He records classes and individual meetings and often reviews these recordings after hours.

Short-term memory issues related to multiple sclerosis necessitate solid note-taking for Colleen, but she needs to limit stress to her nerve-damaged hand. With the LiveScribe Pen, she can "document the important information being presented without worrying about missing any details."

Outside of the classroom, the pen proves just as useful. C.F. lauds the LiveScribe: using the pen recently at a doctor's visit, he was able to learn essential details about his diagnosis. Colleen, who has used her LiveScribe in business and task force meetings, says the pen is a "saving grace" for her.

My Assistive Technology: How I Level the Playing Field

by Colleen Stover, future Administrative Assistant, Job Seeker ,and current Academy Student

As a student of The Academy at Liberty Resources, I am learning to use the assistive technology of Dragon NaturallySpeaking (software that uses my voice to type words), the LiveScribe Pen (an audio recorder of spoken words and a visual recorder of written words that allows me to quickly review needed sections of a lecture and/or my notes), and also Natural Reader (software which reads the words on my screen in a synthesized voice when my eyes tire). An ergonomic chair, desk, and an extra-large monitor display are available and gratefully utilized in each of my classes. My favorite amongst these technology tools is Dragon! Since the fingers on my right hand cannot feel the keys on the keyboard, my typing ability has drastically decreased. Dragon makes me feel connected to the world again! Due to the skills I had lost through my disability, these technologies are assisting in my return to be a functional and valuable marketplace asset. I know I am just as productive and competent as the next person with the same job skills.

In 2005, I learned that I had Multiple Sclerosis. After several damaging flare-ups over the subsequent years, my third medicine finally stabilized me. Currently I am left with a condition they call drop foot, the infamous “MS hug” (which they should rename the MS rib crusher), minimal numbness everywhere,

and almost total numbness in my right dominant hand.

I am a member of the pre-computer generation, so my children taught me the basics such as emailing, browsing the Internet, and shopping. I had a business that would have benefitted from using computers, but it was not a necessity. My business has sadly and reluctantly closed its doors. I now need to find employment. So here I am, dealing with a disability and a lack of necessary vocational computer skills. Several agencies have worked with me to assess my needs. The two most beneficial

ones are The Academy and The Sierra Group. I cannot praise these organizations enough! I see that closed door of the marketplace now opening since I started attending The Academy. Not only are they teaching students the skills necessary to enter or reenter the workforce, but they provide a setting for developing a higher self-esteem. This is an extra, immeasurable benefit!

By the way, this article was created using Dragon NaturallySpeaking. Dragon is a perfectly practical tool – for everyone!



Above: Academy Instructor John Quinn assists Colleen with Dragon NaturallySpeaking.

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Melody Templeton and her textbook,
Public Speaking and Presentations
Demystified published by McGraw Hill

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For more info, visit: Iriacademy.org

Melody Templeton, CIO (Chief Inspiration Officer) of Templeton Consulting based in suburban Philadelphia, has established herself as a powerful force on our Board at The Academy. On December 2nd, she paid a surprise visit to the program and offered encouragement to the students of the YouTube Task Force.

“Creating interactive training environments allows for feedback during the learning process,” Templeton observed, and offered insight as to how curriculums can include more interactive tools. So highly does The Academy value her words that our Basic Business Communication curriculum uses her McGraw Hill published book entitled *Public Speaking and Presentations Demystified* as a core text for the class.

www.Iriacademy.org

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