



Tech & Disabilities

THIS DOES COMPUTE!

PRRC programming for independence

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



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NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS TO ALL

... And a grateful and hearty THANK YOU to all who supported the Pomeroy Center last year!

2015 was a banner year for the Pomeroy Center. Significant funding from the Irwin Foundation and the Miner Foundation enabled us to fix our leaky roof. Grants from the Herbst Foundation and the Bothin Foundation along with donations from many swimmers will allow us to perform major, necessary pool improvements. And countless additional individual donors helped hundreds of people we serve receive the excellent support and services they need to lead healthy and productive lives. Whether it was access to the self-expression of drama and painting class or access to a job, you helped pave the way with your gift last year.

In this Annual Report we wanted to share the ways technology affects the work of the Pomeroy Center, and, more importantly, the effect it has on the individuals we serve. All around us are smartphones and smart cars, computer-assisted design and robotic manufacturing. We have drones in the sky and vacuum cleaners that clean our floors without us. But how has the silicon age affected individuals with developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injuries?

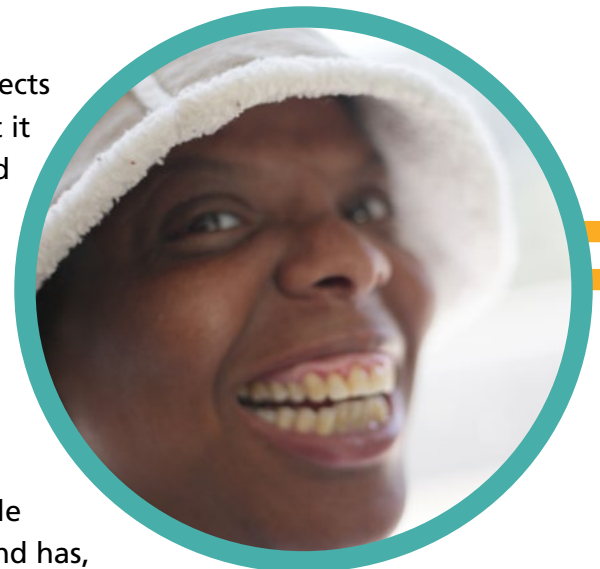
From the excitement of the Pomeroy Chit Chat Clubs to the artists we support who express themselves through digital photography, the Center has a deep commitment to making technology accessible to everyone. Our Computer Lab was founded some 20 years ago and has, with the longstanding support of funders like the Knights of Columbus, evolved along with the technological changes of the past two decades.

For someone with a disability, all kinds of technological accommodations can be deeply powerful: access to the Internet, a way to unlock the voice of those who do not speak, ways to see and hear if one is blind and deaf, a way to tell when to start your lunch break at work (and when to return to work!) and how to use a swimming pool or gymnasium.

With your contributions last year, you helped those we serve increase their power and value – their “agency” in the world – strengthening the very fabric of our community. Thank you for partnering with PRRC to change our world, one individual at a time!



Eric Zigman
Chief Executive Officer



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THIS DOES COMPUTE!

After two years attending PRRC's Computer Lab Children & Teens group classes where he was directly assisted by his personal aid, José got up and made a selection – on his own – on the touch screen. The room erupted in a chorus of cheers and clapping and “Way to go, José!”

Computers and the Internet are so woven into our lives today that most of us take their many advantages for granted: the ability to communicate instantly, increased access to information, entertainment, social networking, shopping, financial tools, and business opportunities. Yet for individuals with developmental disabilities, these tools can seem out of reach and intimidating; and without the proper training and support, Internet access can also leave them vulnerable to financial and emotional exploitation. Fortunately for the people

we serve, parents and funders (notably, the Lab's cornerstone sponsor, the Bay Area Knights of Columbus) recognized way back in 1995 the potential value of computer access

for people with developmental disabilities, and invested early in appropriate technology. The Adaptive Computer Lab manifests PRRC's mission to offer programs “that encourage self-expression, promote personal achievement, and lead to greater independence.”

PRRC's computer specialist and Augmentative/Alternative Communication Liaison, Sandra Nalls began volunteering at the Center when she was 17 years old; she has held many staff roles at the Center in the intervening years. Since the Adaptive Computer Lab first logged on 20 years ago, Nalls

has witnessed much more than tech skills blossom there: self-esteem, independence, and quality of life improvements.



In addition to all its other benefits, tech know-how can be a social equalizer. Says Nalls, “Computer access allows people who are generally marginalized to feel the same as everybody else, which is a huge thing. When one of our teens can go to a non-disabled cousin's house and show that they, too, do work on a computer, that levels the playing field.”

Nalls says she is energized by her work in the Lab, and her enthusiasm is contagious. For some students in Nalls's classes, gaining computer skills may be a struggle, but she advocates for each individual, encouraging them and affirming for them that they CAN do this. And she was right there on the day of José's breakthrough, celebrating his success alongside his classmates.

HARD FACTS ABOUT OUR SOFTWARE

At first glance, PRRC's Adaptive Computer Lab looks like a hodgepodge of cutting edge and old school. Big, beautiful touch screens share the room with DVDs (remember DVDs?) of movies and educational games. If you look closely, however, you see that software and hardware choices are not random at all; they are driven by the needs of our clients. Ongoing support from the Bay Area Knights of Columbus allows us to purchase needed items and maintain the Lab's 13 computer stations. There are some name-brand products we've paid for: a Microsoft LifeCam is attached to the Lab's 42" touch-screen monitor; Canon's excellent video editing software came with the camera we bought. Some excellent free products



Technology is the best thing to happen to people with disabilities since the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Valerie Jensen
Founder, Prospector Theatre
Panelist, White House Disabilities and The Arts

can be downloaded, though, too, like PhotoScape, a photo editing tool (a favorite of Nalls's Digital Art students) and myriad free educational games for those who enjoy working with letters and numbers.

Speaking of free, who among us has not taken advantage of the free videos on – what else? – YouTube! When you think of YouTube, your mind probably goes to cat videos or the latest viral dance craze. You might not think that YouTube videos could help someone with a life transition. Nalls relates the story of a participant who previously had baked delicious goodies for friends, but had then moved to a group home where she could not bake. Missing the bounty of her former life as she could no longer offer food to other residents; another satisfying outlet for her had to be found. Nalls discovered that YouTube and its many cooking shows satisfied the woman's need to connect with her past; she now spends Lab time watching cooking shows to her heart's content.



GET YOUR HANDS ON ... DIGITAL ART

Seeing beauty in everyday things is part of the human experience. PRRC's Digital Art class takes students out of the Lab and into the field where they photograph familiar objects (flowers, feathers, sky, rocks), download those images to a computer, and then digitally manipulate them. Nalls explains that though the software they

use is free, it is plenty robust: "They can change colors, invert images to the negative, blur and smooth things out, or highlight or exclude some things." She proudly shares many examples of their work, some of which are downright stunning and original. Forget generic Internet memes – one artist enjoys selecting just the right words to superimpose over his images, and the results are something you will find fetching a fair asking price in our annual Art Show (March 10-11, 2016).

TALKING ABOUT CHIT CHAT CLUB

Being non-verbal (or having limited verbal abilities) can lead to frustration and isolation. Technology, specifically augmentative communication devices, can directly address this problem.

Whether you are just learning to use an augmentative communication device or trying to increase your fluency, you can get the support you need in the Center's bi-weekly Chit Chat Clubs. Each participant in our Chit Chat Club has

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THIS DOES COMPUTE! *continued*

access to a designated iPad with software set up just for them. Staff trains clients how to use these tools to express wants, needs, preferences, encourage one another, express empathy, or simply to talk about their weekend.

In the early days of such devices, there were very few clients who used them. Nalls and the other Lab teachers engaged these early adopters in helping teach others. Then, as the new users became comfortable, staff pushed them to the next level.

After all, Nalls explains, real communication isn't just about being able to tell someone you like bacon. "The real goal is not just to learn to say 'I want,' but to ask other people what they want, connect with others, and share your opinions."

QUIET ON THE SET!

We all have a story to tell – and who wouldn't like to see it on the "big screen"? With basic video capture and editing technology, and unlimited creativity, several PRRC

Computer Lab students have their first video production underway; the topic they address is the proper way to greet a stranger, a useful lesson for any social person.

In the hubbub of PRRC's daily activities, Nalls says their biggest challenges are finding quiet places to film and establishing continuity, especially in "wardrobe." "We just ask them to wear the same pants on Wednesdays

(filming days), and now we can top that off with a PRRC shirt." Students in the class are patient, hard-working, and highly collaborative; with effective teamwork, no challenge is too big to overcome. The class plans to share the finished piece at a premier screening here at the PRRC Event Center (TBA).



INDEPENDENT and STUDYING UP!

Marjorie enthusiastically leads you over to the giant monitor with the camera attached to it, sits you down and says, "I'd like to interview you." That's when the fun really begins! She uses the touch screen to select the "cartoon" mode (her words for a "posterized" image) and then has a genial chat with her guest.

Nalls is impressed with Marjorie's originality. "Marjorie specializes in capturing real life with her 'cartoons.' She has really made the mode her own and came up with the interview concept herself." Marjorie has taken such an interest in making her "cartoons," that she is now doing them as an independent study. She saves these brief vignettes in a folder her classmate Jerry helped her set up.

View Marjorie's handywork on our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/PRRCFSF



THE DOWNLOAD

The initial impetus for creating the PRRC Computer Lab was a belief in the promise of technology for people with developmental disabilities; no one guessed that tech skills could foster life skills for students and help build community. Some individuals with developmental disabilities must have a great deal done for them; this can rob them of the chance to contribute and fully participate. Says Nalls, "Our participants are generally so serviced, they are not used to looking outside themselves." To reduce potential friction, Nalls fosters a cooperative learning environment by establishing certain guidelines.

In the Lab, Nalls asks students to keep the volume down to a certain level, to be careful not to trip over each other's chairs, and to put the software or headphones back so others can use it. This gives everyone a chance to give back to the community, to take care of the shared learning environment. Nalls says while some individuals don't appreciate these restrictions, most value the experience enough to do their part. "Though they can choose to 'opt out,' we don't get too many who do. It doesn't take too long for them to decide it's worth it to cooperate. They want to get back in here!"

Nalls shares the story of a young participant new to the program who felt uncomfortable working alongside others with disabilities. "I'm not like 'them'!" he cried in exasperation. Thirteen

computer stations in one room makes for tight quarters, and class after class, he was seated next to one child who he felt particularly strongly about. Nalls knew the new student would adjust in due time. "And wouldn't you know it," she crows, "soon he began to realize the 'them' kid had as much computer knowledge and skill as he did, and was soon asking him for help."

Is the PRRC's Computer Lab, with its social benefits and peer-based assistance, unique? Nalls is confident that it is. "There are lots of workshops, educational institutions – libraries, even – that provide computer training, but they don't provide the support and freedom we do that enables users to pursue further knowledge. There is no recreation therapy facility that is doing what we do in the US, probably the world. There's no place else like this – we are blazing the trail."

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

While the practical assets of technology are many, the emotional benefits have a subtle power all their own. For many PRRC participants, technology provides a lifeline to a community of peers, others experiencing the same challenges and have advice to give, or simply a sympathetic ear. PRRC staff assists participants with setting up social media accounts, while also providing training on how to safely navigate cyberspace. There is nothing artificial about PRRC's commitment to fostering client intelligence and independence!

CALMING THE BRAINSTORM

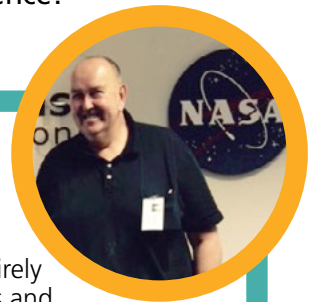
For survivors of traumatic or acquired brain injury (TBI/ABI), technology can be a huge help with everything from the practical (independently managing one's schedule) to the emotional (reducing one's feelings of isolation). In many cases, access to one type of technology opens doors to more. A free "Budget Mobile Lifeline" phone, for example, is available to anyone with an email account. PRRC's Brainstorm program, for adult TBI survivors, supports participants in accessing email and many other useful technologies, leading to greater independence.

In 2015, Brainstorm participants had a visitor from BrainAid, the creators of PEAT, (Planning and Execution Assistant and Trainer). PEAT is a new hand-held device "designed to increase the independence of persons with brain injury. PEAT uses powerful new technology to help users stay focused and on task despite surprises and distractions."

Essentially, PEAT is an app that reminds you where to be and when.

PEAT technology was developed by NASA, a leader in brain science. It is entirely fitting, therefore, that our Brainstormers and PRRC Program Specialist Coordinator Terry Twitchell visited NASA and met with four members of NASA's "TBI and Eye Study" research team. These included the Deputy Director of the Human Systems Integration Division, Dr. Jeffrey W. McCandless and Dr. Dorian Liston. These researchers are committed to helping those with TBI, specifically by creating new modes of measurement so that non-invasive medical diagnostics become the norm.

Whether you are a NASA researcher studying the brain or an individual dealing with the daily challenges of a TBI, technology can play a major role in your success. We are lucky to be living in these times of creativity and growth!

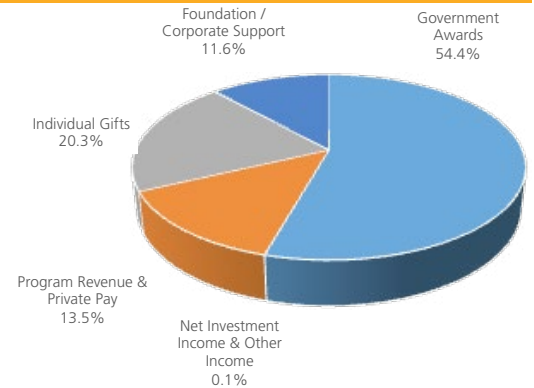


2014-2015 FINANCIALS

Pomeroy Recreation & Rehabilitation Center for the Year Ended June 30, 2015

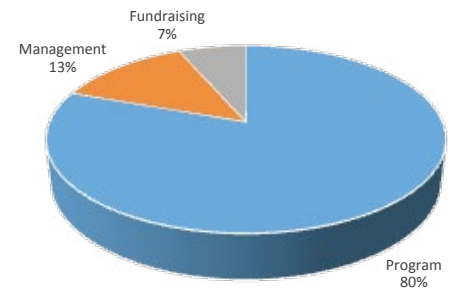
INCOME

Government Awards	\$4,259,976	54.4%
Program Revenue & Private Pay	\$1,060,858	13.5%
Individual Gifts	\$1,589,658	20.3%
	Annual Fund \$730,670	
	Bequests to Endowment \$858,988	
Net Investment Income & Other Income	\$8,813	.1%
Foundation/Corporate Support	\$910,580	11.6%
TOTAL	\$7,829,885	



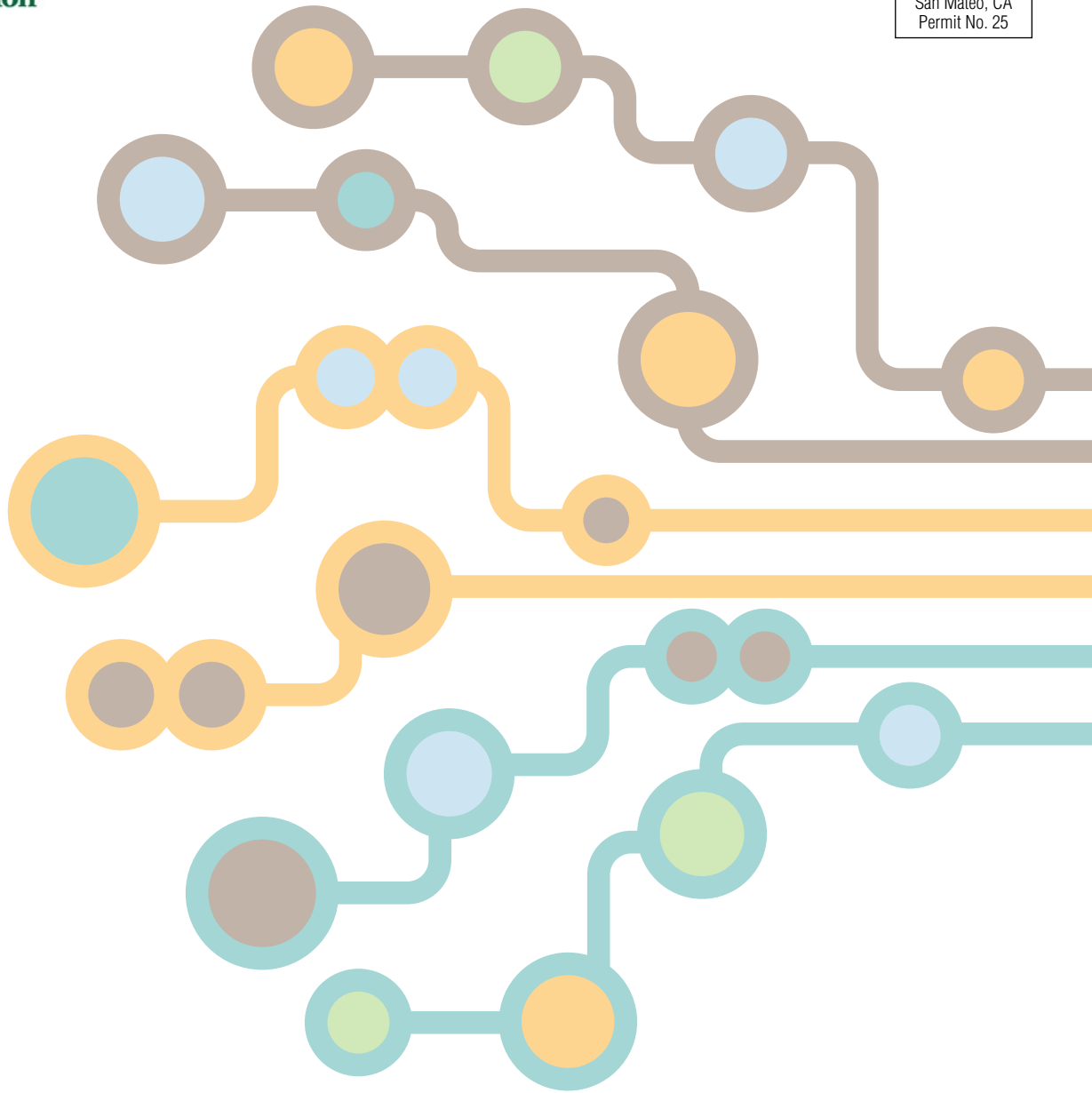
EXPENSES

Operating Expenses		
Program	\$4,926,418	80%
Management	\$795,862	13%
Fundraising	\$399,777	7%
SUBTOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$6,122,057	
Capital Expenses*	\$1,423,940	
TOTAL OPERATING & CAPITAL EXPENSES	\$7,545,997	



*Includes roof renovation and other essential facilities repair





POMEROY EVENT CENTER AVAILABLE FOR RENT rentals@prrcsf.org

POMEROY ART SHOW | MARCH 10-11 | POMEROY MAIN HALL events@prrcsf.org

SAVE THE DATE
BANNER OF LOVE 2016
SATURDAY, APRIL 9 - St. Mary's Cathedral
Dinner & Dance Honoring SF's Rocca Family

