

Inside this Issue

From the Executive Director.....pg. 2
An Exciting Rebrand.....pg. 3-4
Guiding us today.....pg. 4
The 2024 Calendar.....pg. 5
Matching Gift Challenge.....pg. 5
Meet a Monkey.....pg. 6

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Chelsea and Sharon

HELPING  HANDS
MONKEY HELPERS

has become



**ENVISIONING
ACCESS**

Innovative Solutions
for People Living With
Physical Disabilities

From the Executive Director



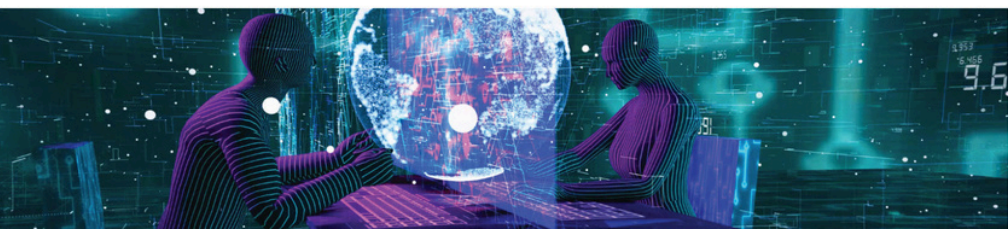
Greetings from Envisioning Access. New name, same mission. What is that saying—what's old is new again. I looked the quote up on the web, and it was attributed to Mark Twain, Winston Churchill and finally according to the article I read the early 18th century author Jonathan Swift best known for *Gulliver's Travels*. That said—we are the same organization. Same wonderful board and staff, just shifting how we fulfill our mission with innovative technology solutions.

Our board has been expertly leading us through the rebranding and transition process for over 2.5 years. No organization transitions quickly from one model to the next, and we are no exception. Our new name Envisioning Access certainly encapsulates who we are as we seek to provide access to all. As you may be aware we are taking the 40+ years of experience, intellectual property, and insights we have gained in service to the disability community and offer it in collaboration with robotics, AR, VR, and AI research organizations, firms, and service providers as we work together to build new technologies specifically for those with physically disabilities.

Look around as you go to work, shop, school or attend social activities. I am guessing that not a day goes by that each one of you reading this column doesn't encounter an individual dealing with a disability. Or, you yourself may be working through the issues associated with a disability. For some the support from family and friends is tremendous and finances are not a problem. However, for many folks facing any number of debilitating illnesses or injuries the experience is isolating and may leave one in financial constraints. As Envisioning Access, as our new name suggests, we see a world where access and freedom from all those constraints are possible. Providing technologies to get folks back to school, work, out of isolation is only the beginning of the journey.

We are forever grateful to our beloved capuchins who started us on this adventure. Over the years we have seen many of our monkeys pass away, but we still are caring for over 90 aging service animals and honor their service to those who were living with a myriad of mobility impairments.

Please stay in touch—no matter how you communicate with us, we love having you as part of the Envisioning Access family.



An Exciting Rebrand!

Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers has completed the transformation into Envisioning Access.

When our organization was founded, we provided a revolutionary and innovative type of assistance to people who were living with mobility impairments. Forty-four years later the frontier of innovative assistance lies in connecting people to new technologies that can enable them to lead more independent and fulfilling lives. It seems odd that after 44 years of business we would cease to be called Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers. But our vision has always been about providing access and envisioning that access for all. Not only now, but 5, 10, or 50 years into the future. Our commitment to the men and women we currently serve and those we anticipate serving will be with tools just as unique today as our monkeys were in 1979.



Billy

Co-Chair of the board of directors, Susan Keyes explained, “after a thoughtful and careful discussion among board and staff, we decided that even though we were no longer training and placing service animals, our path forward was not to abandon our mission of working with those living with disabilities. We are proud to be known as an organization on the leading edge of implementing ‘non-human’ innovative solutions to people living with disabilities, and now once again we will be leading the way with our innovative technologies.”

Co-Chair of the board of directors, Robert Sanders further adds that “with technology, we can help people in a way that is customized to their unique needs, so that they are more independent and socially connected. Technology also allows us to expand our services to those living with a myriad of physical disabilities. We are also exploring how aging affects the onset of disabilities, and how disability and technology intersect to allow older adults to continue to stay independent.”

According to Diane Nahabedian, “we are excited to be working with companies that are developing technologies that will provide accessibility to everyone. Accessibility is the key word. Everyone should be able to live life as they choose and be able to access employment, educational, and social opportunities.”

Envisioning Access is establishing an Innovative Technology Initiative to build pilot projects that involve current and new recipients who are expertly advising companies and researchers developing those technologies to assist adults living with disabilities with their daily living needs. Currently, Envisioning Access is focusing on examining different types of assistive robotic technologies and exploring the various uses of augmented, virtual, and mixed reality. You can learn more about this exciting initiative on our website: envisioningaccess.org/innovative_tech.

Never fear—we will not forget our legacy! We are committed to all the monkeys in our program—those here with us at the Monkey Living Center, those living in special care homes, and those still paired with recipients across the country. We will take care of and love all of them until the end of their natural lives.

Guiding Us Today and Into the Future

Every day when the staff walks through the doors the mission **providing enhanced quality of life and opportunities for individuals, and communities living with physical disabilities** is at the forefront of their minds. Furthermore, when the board of directors meet, and when committees: development, executive, finance, technology, and veterinary gather they all know that the work of Envisioning Access is for the sole purpose of this one mission.

Of course, each staff member, the board, and each committee all have different "job" descriptions within that mission. And, how each individual fulfills the mission is completely different. The board and board committees are leading the organization into the future, making decisions that will affect us today and in the future.

The administrative staff spends all of its time charting the course for building the Innovative Technology Initiative (ITI) and the pilot projects that are within the ITI. And, the animal care staff ensures that our beloved capuchins are well cared for. The mission of Envisioning Access has never wavered. How the organization goes about fulfilling this mission is altering and will continue to diversify as the needs of the primary audience adjusts.

Thank you for supporting the mission and being part of this journey.



Double your Impact in September!



Melanie

Once again, we have been issued a challenge by a generous donor and we are looking to YOU to help us meet it! If we can raise **\$15,000 September 1 through September 30**, they will **MATCH** that donation dollar for dollar.

Your generosity makes **TWICE the IMPACT** this month. (And if your employer matches your donation, you could even triple or quadruple your impact!)

Every gift gets us closer to our goal, no matter the amount. There has never been a better time to make a donation. We appreciate you!

envisioningaccess.org/match

The 2024 Monkey Calendar



We are so excited—another 12 months of adorable monkey photos from the Monkey Living Center is on its way! With a full 11 x 8 1/2 page for each month, you will have plenty of space to write birthdays, appointments, and reminders!

The calendar will be available for purchase in October on our website and on social media. Visit us at envisioningaccess.org for more info. We love our calendar and we hope you will, too!

Meet a Monkey: Melanie!

You may know Melanie from the film Scott & Melanie's Story, but did you know this smart girl was placed multiple times in her career? She's helped many people and now is enjoying her post-service life! Get to know Melanie:

envisioningaccess.org/melanie



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