



The Thomas H. Perkins Legacy Society

Spring 2011

Making a Big Splash

The typewriter.



For one Perkins student who was born completely blind in 1944, this object was the technological tool of the time that enabled her to connect with her social and academic community. As a seventh grader, she would sit in one of two typing classrooms in the Howe Building, learning how to use a machine that has long since been extinct in today's homes and offices.

"When I was growing up, that was the high tech," said this former student, who requested to remain anonymous for this story. "We had that and our radios. I have always, even since the time I was very small, been frightened of technology. I

resisted the new technological things coming out. I couldn't understand why I might need them."

While that fear may have held her back from exploring the possibilities of technology within her own life, it eventually became the driving force behind her decision to establish a charitable lead trust for Perkins and steer the annual distributions into a fund created to pay for technology for Perkins students. "Some donors say, 'I want others to have what I had.' I'm the opposite," she laughed. "I want students to be able to confidently accomplish things that I am afraid of and probably will never do."

After graduating from Perkins in 1962, this donor acquired her master's degree and returned to Perkins, this time as a teacher. While she donated quietly to Perkins during her time as an instructor, it was after her

retirement that a cousin suggested the idea of creating a charitable lead trust – a planned gift that provides income to Perkins for a fixed number of years before the principal returns to the donor's survivors.

"A drop in the bucket makes a big splash," he had told her. A charitable lead trust would indeed help Perkins thrive while making good use of her money, she decided. But above all, she wants Perkins to send students out into the world just as able and knowledgeable as their sighted peers, whether it be at home, in the office or in social settings.

"I don't even have a cell phone, let alone an iPhone," she said. "But I know there's a lot more stuff out there for people who are blind to be independent and I wanted to make sure that Perkins' kids would have access to as much technology as possible."





An iPad makes an ideal classroom tool for Elvis.

Technology Ignites Drive to Learn

Learning braille was a struggle for 10-year-old Colby. He worked daily with his teachers in the Deafblind Program, but progress was slow, given his cognitive, vision and other disabilities.

And then, thanks to the generosity of Perkins donors, an electronic braille notetaker found its way into his hands, igniting a new drive to learn.

“He is so motivated by using the technology,” said Wendy Buckley, Assistive Technology Specialist in the Deafblind Program. “It’s made a huge difference. I knew that he had a fascination with technology, but I did not anticipate he would grow so much by using it.”

Perkins classrooms have come a long way since the days of using a typewriter. Today, students of all ages are using a variety of devices that help them communicate, learn and interact. No matter

how high- or low-tech each device may be, each one is being utilized for the same purpose: to assist students, whatever their disability, to discover and relate to the world around them.

One of the newest technological devices at Perkins today is one of the most in-demand items on the tech-savvy market: the iPad. The first of these tablets arrived in the Deafblind Program last summer and Perkins has since increased the number in use, given their preliminary success as communication tools. For students who have multiple cognitive and physical disabilities, the iPad can be more accessible than a standard computer or touch screen on a desktop.

“It’s technology they can hold,” said Buckley. “If a student is in a wheelchair and very restrictive in their movement, you can put it in their lap

and they can touch it or tap it and make something happen.”

On a larger scale, programs all over campus have embraced an interactive whiteboard called the SMART Board. The tool uses projected images that students can manipulate by hand or by remote switches and wireless keyboards. But what makes them special is the way teachers can use them to conduct group activities. Even more exciting, said Buckley, is a new SMART Table coming soon to the Deafblind Program – a mobile cabinet that projects an image through its table top. Unlike the SMART Board, which is permanently affixed to a wall, the SMART Table can be rolled from room to room.

“You can have four children sitting around it and they can interact with it from their perspective, as well as interact with each other,” she added.

Not every device is right for every student. But when teachers find the right tool that clicks with a student’s interest and abilities, the possibilities are endless. Colby, who has come so far, so fast, since discovering the braille notetaker last fall, is the perfect example.

“If you could see him turn on his notetaker, practice his new words, plug in the embosser and braille out his paper... Two years ago I never could have imagined he would do that,” said Buckley. “He’s just grown so much.”



Megan enjoys the interaction of the SMART Board.

From the Chair



Communication is everything. From work, to study, to recreation, the way we process and respond to information makes up a major piece of who we are.

At Perkins, we focus on helping students develop their communication skills, no matter their disability. The use of technology for this purpose comes naturally. Innovation has stretched the possibilities for individuals who are blind or deafblind, including those with additional disabilities, in ways no one thought possible even a decade ago. A walk through our classrooms illustrates this very fact. From the new iPads to the interactive SMART Boards, we are helping more individuals gain the skills and confidence to be participating members of their communities.

Our donors are a major reason that students and educators have access to this amazing technology. Thanks to generous individuals like our alumna and teacher who created a charitable lead trust for Perkins to support technology purchases on campus, we have the means to seek out and test new devices to determine whether they can help in our classrooms. With your generosity and Perkins’ steadfast belief in possibility, the future for so many students is indeed promising.

To learn more about including Perkins in your charitable giving, please call the Gift Planning Office at 617-972-7680 or email Alleather.Toure@Perkins.org.

Sincerely

Charles Platt, Chair
The Thomas H. Perkins Legacy Society

A Cost Effective Way to Transfer Assets

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May 5, 2011

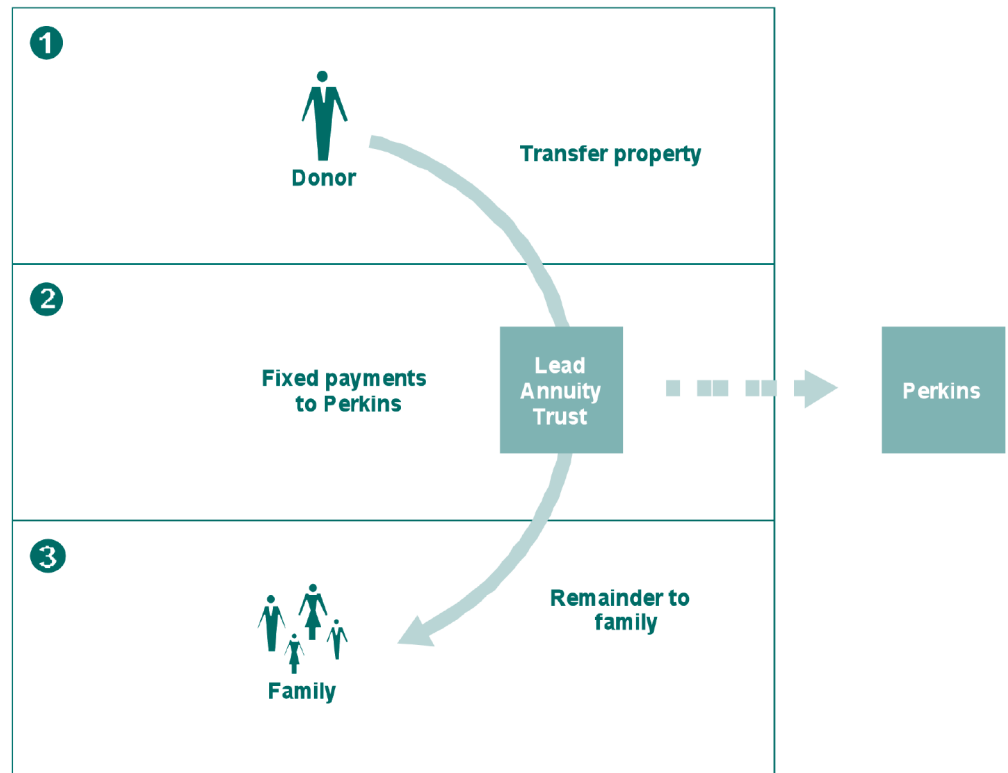
Graduation
June 17, 2011
Dwight Hall

For more information, visit www.Perkins.org or call Becca Rogers at 617-972-7579

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3. When the trust ends, its remaining principal passes to your family or other heirs you name. Trust growth passes to them tax-free.



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All we see is possibility

