Clay Christensen describes recent AT fabrication projects to members of the Disability Law Center

Representatives from the Disability Law Center, Utah’s protection and advocacy agency, visited the Assistive Technology lab at Utah State University’s Center for Persons with Disabilities recently.

“The DLC wanted to learn more about AT and explore further collaboration,” said DLC advocate Sheri Newton. “We wanted to see what’s available and the role of the AT lab in the state. We want to make sure Utahns with disabilities are getting the AT they need.”

AT lab coordinator Clay Christensen said the lab serves 600-1,000 people every year through device demonstration, the loan bank, fabrication, repairs and reutilization.

“Sometimes it’s a quick fix, at times it’s pretty overwhelming,” he said. Ideally, he said, the AT lab provides services to people who are waiting for insurance approval of new devices, or provides low-tech solutions to bridge the gap as they wait for higher tech devices.

While the lab receives outside funding, donations of used equipment are crucial. They can also be heartbreaking.

“It’s a pretty jagged pill when you work with a family to fit a chair for a kiddo and then the mom comes in with an empty wheelchair to donate it,” he said. However, it usually isn’t long before the wheelchair is repurposed for another family’s use.

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