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**PATF** Independence is priceless... we help make it affordable.

**NEWS**

Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation



**From wheelchairs to hearing aids to roll-in showers and more...PATF helps you fund the assistive devices and services you want.**

The roll-in shower pictured here is just one example of many different types of modifications available to make your home safe and more accessible. The wheelchair user transfers from the wheelchair to the shower chair. Roll-in showers can be installed in the family bathroom where every family member will enjoy the comfort and ease it provides.

The PATF is celebrating a major milestone: **over 10 million dollars** in loans to Pennsylvania residents!

PATF provides low-interest loans and information about other funding sources so you can buy the assistive technology you need to do the things you want to do.

**Freedom. Mobility. Flexibility. It's why we own vehicles.**



**R**eliable transportation at our fingertips means more flexibility for daily activities and more control over our lives. Our next job search, doctor's appointment, vacation or last-minute trip to the grocery store may well depend upon such flexibility—especially for those of us who have a disability.

But before you purchase an adapted vehicle, you'll need to consider several important questions. Will you be the driver or passenger? Will your needs change over the next several years? Can you transfer from a scooter or wheelchair into a seat? How much can you afford to spend?

"Having an accessible van and other assistive technology allows me a better quality of life. Ultimately, it means being able to do the things I want to do. "

-Gary Woodring, PATF Board Member

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PATF Loans are Hard to Beat!**

~ CURRENT INTEREST RATE 4.0 % ~



PATF Board President, Peter Kennedy (left) and PATF Executive Director, Susan Tachau (center) accept the 2006 "Inglis Award for Innovation" from Inglis Board Member, Janet Ries-Stern (right).

PATF will use the \$20,000 grant to expand its mini-loan / mini-grant program. "The Awards were created so programs with a real vision for improving the lives of people with physical disabilities can expand their efforts," says

Ries-Stern. PATF Mini-Loan / Mini-Grant provides loans ranging from \$100 to \$1,000 at 0% interest. Some applicants may also receive a partial grant in addition to their loan. Grants are based upon household income; but loans are not. Call PATF or visit the PATF website to learn more.

## Freedom. Mobility. Flexibility.

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Susan Tachau, PATF Executive Director, knows first-hand about having an adapted vehicle. Her son, Michael, is 24 years old and uses a wheelchair. "Because we've had adapted vans since Michael was five, Michael has been able to be a full participant in all of our family activities, from vacations, to trips to the mall, to visiting friends," says Tachau. "It's also been extremely helpful in making trips to the doctor on short notice, or last-minute visits to the movies when there's no time to arrange for a ParaTransit ride. And now that Michael's in college, it's so much easier to just drive him there rather than to take a bus or plane."

Fuel economy may also be a major factor in deciding what type of van to buy. It certainly was for PATF borrower, Deborah Charles, who recently replaced her old accessible Dodge Caravan with a new accessible Toyota Scion. Deborah had curtailed her volunteer work and other activities once gas prices soared. "But now," she reports, "I'm getting 32 miles to the gallon instead of the 10 to 11 miles I got with my old van. Without PATF, I couldn't have afforded to make the switch. I'm now getting out and doing something positive again. And that's a big, big plus."

## PATF Funds Adapted Recreation Devices

Whether you're interested in playing wheelchair basketball, teaching your child to ride an adapted bicycle, or purchasing a bi-ski for adapted skiing--PATF can help. If a lightweight wheelchair helps you play basketball, or take wheelchair dance lessons, we can help finance your equipment. If you want an adapted fishing rod to relax with your favorite sport, or need adapted software so you can play computer games, we can finance those, too.

PATF is a consumer choice program. You choose the device you want and purchase it from the vendor of your choice. We determine your eligibility based upon your ability and willingness to repay.

Our current interest rate is 4% for loans above \$1,000, and 0% for loans \$100 to \$1,000. If your household income is 150% of the federal poverty guidelines, you may be eligible for a PATF mini-grant in addition to your mini-loan. Call us at 888-744-1938 for more details.



## Are you interested in joining a wheelchair paintball league?

If so, Andy Pope, a consultant who adapts sports equipment and co-owner of Pope & Boytim Adaptive Sports, would like to hear

from you. The paintball league, sponsored by PB Sports, has the complete package of needed equipment available for purchase. "We can adapt equipment to fit any type of wheelchair or golf cart," says Pope.

For more information about the PB Sports paintball league, or other adapted sports needs, email Andy Pope at [andypope@verizon.net](mailto:andypope@verizon.net) or call Andy at 724-600-4965.

**Assistive technology helps you do the things you want to do.**

This year's annual World Congress & Expo on Disabilities (WCD), will be held at the

Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia from Friday, November 17th through Sunday, November 19th. WCD Expo is dedicated to people with developmental and physical disabilities, their families, friends and professionals who serve them.

The event features assistive technology exhibits, educational seminars and presentations. Over 200 exhibitors will present products and services to ease and enrich the lives of people with disabilities. Exhibits will include accessible vehicles, lift systems and the world debut of an automatic transport and retrieval system. Other program highlights will include wheelchair dance performance and a Disabilities Career Fair. PATF will be presenting information about its loan program on Saturday morning, November 18th.

For more information about the WCD Expo, call 201-226-1446 or visit [www.wcdexpo.com](http://www.wcdexpo.com).

**World Congress & Expo on Disabilities**  
**WCD EXPO**  
November 17-19, 2006 Philadelphia, PA



## In the Market for an Accessible Vehicle? There are More Options Than Ever Before.

More options mean more to consider when shopping for an accessible vehicle. To avoid paying extra for accessibility features you don't need, or buying a vehicle that's unlikely to serve your needs in a few years, it pays to do your research.

The Internet is a good place to start. It can provide safety and reliability ratings, photos and specifications. You may also want to speak with accessible vehicle vendors who have experience with different makes and models and can help you with some practical considerations.

"You don't want to underestimate the need," says Jack Donovan, President of Accessible Vans & Mobility, LLC, located in Norristown and Bethlehem, PA. "But you also don't want to sell a lowered floor mini-van if it's not needed. For example, he points out, "A swivel seat is a fraction of the cost of a lowered floor mini-van. It's more profitable to sell a lowered floor van, but some are able to get by with a swivel seat. There are a lot of products on the market that people may not know about," he says. "Many traditional car dealers might not know about them, either. We ask questions to ensure the right fit. Does a person have a progressive disease in which the need may change? Is the van for a growing child who is likely to need a new, larger wheelchair which will cause him or her to sit higher?"



"There are many products on the market that people may not know about."

## Let PATF Finance Your Accessible Vehicle

It's no wonder we provide more loans for accessible vehicles than any other assistive technology. Our current 4% interest rate and generous repayment terms make PATF loans more affordable than traditional bank loans. With PATF's flexible guidelines, some applicants who wouldn't typically qualify for a car loan can qualify for a PATF financing. You can even use PATF loans in conjunction with other funding sources.

**Repayment terms: New vehicles - 7 years; Pre-owned vehicles - 6 years**

PATF serves people of all income levels.

## PATF Welcomes Five New Board Members

This past July, we welcomed five new members to our Board of Directors. In keeping with our efforts to serve people of all disabilities and all geographical areas throughout the state, we are delighted to increase our membership and diversity of our Board. We welcome:

**Laura Schwanger**, volunteer board member for several disability agencies and recently retired PA Programs Administrator of United Spinal Association; **Dan Rossi**, Associate Director of United Cerebral Palsy of Pittsburgh; **Stephen Suroviec**, Executive Director of the ARC of Pennsylvania; **Gary Woodring**, Chief of the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids at the Philadelphia Veterans Administration Medical Center; **Joel Solkoff**, Writer, graduate student at Penn State University.



Bill Wallace, Sales Manager of American Mobility in Bensalem, PA, agrees. "I talk with people mostly about lifestyle," he says. "A young family with lots of kids may want a full-size van instead of a mini-van. If the van is mainly used for occasional trips to medical appointments, you might consider a pre-owned rather than a new van."

Before you look at a specific make, model or color, you'll want to be sure it offers the accessible features you need. Accessible vehicle vendors can provide an assessment, or make local referrals for an evaluation and training on how to use certain modifications. Lance Alexander, General Manager of Mobility Works in Pittsburgh, PA,

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stresses the importance of completing steps in logical order. "Most people aren't prepared to select a vehicle when they come in because they haven't been evaluated, or approved for funding yet. If you're planning to seek funding assistance," he says, "it's important to do so before you select a vehicle and negotiate a price." Some funding sources will only approve specific types of modifications, and they can take a long time to authorize funding.

"It's helpful to have basic information about different models," says Don Shelpman, Jr., Mobility Specialist at Keystone Coach in Allegheny County, PA. For example, "GM is the only model offering a 13" drop floor," he says. "For people who sit higher than 5'4", that may be the only model that sits them comfortably. Other models offer a 10" drop floor."

"If you're planning to seek funding assistance, it's important to do so before you select a vehicle and negotiate a price."

Kathy Stone, publisher of *Disabled Dealer Magazine*, *Mid-Atlantic Region*, advises, "Don't rush out and buy. Rent an accessible vehicle, if necessary, to insure a good fit." People are often in a rush to purchase a vehicle in anticipation of a loved one being discharged from a rehabilitation facility, an upcoming event or medical appointment. Stone recalls one man who had to resell a brand new accessible vehicle he purchased for his wife before she received her new wheelchair and while she was in a rehabilitation facility.

If you're not in a position to test drive the vehicle you're thinking about purchasing, renting might be a solution. And it may prevent you from making a hasty decision based upon urgent transportation needs.

Most accessible vehicle vendors rent vehicles. And there are accessible vehicle rental companies such as "Wheelchair Getaways" who serve all of Pennsylvania.

Keep in mind that rented accessible vehicles are not designed to be driven by a person using a wheelchair. "They're not equipped with hand controls, and you won't find all the specific accessible features you need," says Stone. "But renting allows you to see if your wheelchair fits in the van, and determine whether a rear-entry is preferable to a side-entry vehicle. It's cheaper in the long-run than buying a van that doesn't fit."



Van pictures on pages three and four are courtesy of Vantage Mobility. Visit [www.vantagemobility.com](http://www.vantagemobility.com) for more information.

## Accessible Vehicle Resources

**Accessible Vans & Mobility** - [www.accessvansandmobility.com](http://www.accessvansandmobility.com)  
610-666-9100 (Norristown); 610-837-0707 (Bethlehem)

**American Mobility** - [www.theindependencecompany.com](http://www.theindependencecompany.com)  
856-986-5211 (Bensalem)

**Disabled Dealer Magazine** - [www.disableddealer.com](http://www.disableddealer.com)  
888-651-0666 (Mind-Atlantic Region); 888-625-4965 (Ohio & Western PA)

**MobilityWorks** - [www.mobilityworks.com](http://www.mobilityworks.com)  
800-638-8267 (Pittsburgh)

**Keystone Coach Works** - [www.keystonecoachworks.com](http://www.keystonecoachworks.com)  
412-833-1900 (Allegheny County)

**Wheelchair Getaways** - [www.wheelchairgetaways.com](http://www.wheelchairgetaways.com)  
800-642-2042

To find additional accessible vehicle vendors near you, visit [www.patf.us](http://www.patf.us).

### Funding Sources for Vehicle Modifications:

Most sources fund modifications only, not the vehicle. **OVR (Office of Vocational Rehabilitation)** may fund vehicle modifications for people who already work, are on the verge of returning to work, or live at home and need transportation to and from college. Specific modifications must be approved. Professional evaluation is required. To find your local office visit [www.dli.state.pa.us](http://www.dli.state.pa.us), click on your geographical area, scroll down to "Office of Vocational Rehabilitation."

Department of **Veteran's Affairs** provides funding for veterans with some service-related disabilities. Call **1-800-827-1000** to inquire.

Other funding sources to explore:

- Organizations serving people with specific disabilities
- Auto manufacturers' rebates
- Workman's Compensation for work-related disabilities
- Local churches and local community organizations
- Local fundraisers.