

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



The Scott A. Mackler, MD, PhD Assistive Technology Program is made possible by the Mackler family, friends, colleagues, and other generous contributors. Dr. Mackler, a renowned addiction researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, has been living with ALS since 1999.

The ALS Association Greater Philadelphia Chapter implemented an advanced comprehensive approach to assistive technology (AT) in 1993. In order to best utilize the most current communication tools and expand outreach to patients, the Chapter hired a full-time assistive technologist in 1996. Thanks to the importance that Dr. Mackler placed on the ability of assistive technology to improve a person's quality of life, the Chapter was one of the first in the country to establish an AT program and a loaner closet.

Today, the Mackler Program enables persons with ALS to have access to assistive technology devices and services which are frequently not covered by insurance policies. Assistive technology is an integral part of our clinic environment. A trained assistive technologist is available at both of the Chapter's certified clinics.

**Pictured above:
Scott A. Mackler (left) with his brother, Harvey.**

OUR MISSION

To lead the fight to treat and cure ALS through global research and nationwide advocacy while also empowering people with Lou Gehrig's Disease and their families to live fuller lives while providing them with compassionate care and support.



THE ALS ASSOCIATION GREATER PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

Every 90 minutes someone is diagnosed with ALS, or Lou Gehrig's Disease, a devastating neuromuscular condition for which there is no known cause or cure. The ALS Association Greater Philadelphia Chapter provides support and resources for ALS patients, their families, and caregivers living in the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and Delaware. The ALS Association is the only national not-for-profit organization dedicated solely to the fight against ALS.

**The ALS Association
Greater Philadelphia Chapter**
321 Norristown Road, Suite 260
Ambler, PA 19002

215-643-5434
Toll free: 1-877-GEHRIG-1
www.alsphiladelphia.org

THE ALS ASSOCIATION GREATER PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

Helping Patients LIVE with ALS



*The Scott A. Mackler, MD, PhD
Assistive Technology Program*



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY Helping Patients Live with ALS

During the course of their illness, many people with ALS will experience difficulty with speech, computer access, phone and other environmental access, and movement. That's where the Chapter's Assistive Technology Program comes in— to help patients maintain activity and communication with family and friends, as well as interact with others such as store clerks or doctor's office personnel, both in person and over the phone.

What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology can enhance the quality of life of persons with ALS by tapping into their abilities, providing new and alternative means to stay active and continue to participate in everyday activities.

Assistive technology can include specialized speech generating devices, hardware and software to enable a person to operate a home computer even without use of their hands, call bells for those that need to alert a caregiver they are in distress or need help, and low technology communication systems including letter and picture boards.

Continued research and funding will help provide patients with the technology to communicate, use a computer, and remain as independent as possible.

Assistive technology is a constantly changing field. The advent of the iPad and the smaller iPhone/iTouch have revolutionized the field. But these devices are not suitable for all people with ALS and it is often a challenge to determine the most appropriate device that will transition as ALS progresses. The ALS Association Assistive Technology program provides a trained technologist to assist people with ALS in learning which devices will best meet their needs and then demonstrating how to properly use them. With these devices, patients are able to surf the internet, use a telephone, access email, make a public speech, and stay involved as their disease progresses.



PROGRAM POLICY AND ELIGIBILITY

This program is provided free of charge by the Greater Philadelphia Chapter. Any ALS patient who is in need of assistive technology and lives in the Chapter's service area is eligible for this program, regardless of where they are receiving treatment. To apply for the program, contact the Assistive Technologist at 215-643-5434.

The Mackler Program Provides:

- In-depth assessment of patients' augmentative communication and assistive technology needs.
- Assistance with submission of all paperwork to insurance carrier.
- Training and education on device for patients and family members.
- Loaner equipment for those who are uninsured or on hospice.
- Financial resources referral.
- Evaluations at our ALSA-Certified clinics in Hershey and Philadelphia.
- Connections with AT consultant services in out-lying geographical areas.
- Home visits for assistance with trouble-shooting.
- Training in-services for community-based agencies.
- Collaboration with other organizations and community agencies.
- Assistance with free and low cost assistive technology that can be downloaded from the web.
- Assistance in finding suitable applications for the iPad/iPhone/iTouch for communication.

Pictured on cover: Patient Mike McGinn shows off his new iPad, which will help him communicate while living with ALS.