



# Overview of Michigan Assistive Technology Program - Social Isolation

Jileesa Irwin , Outdoor Recreation AT Specialist  
Abby Squires , Gaming and Crafting AT Specialist

# Getting to know Jileesa

- a woman with a disability, a mother, and a part of the LGBTQ+ community.
- passion for the outdoors, and enjoys traveling, hunting, fishing, camping, and rock hunting.
- Her Power! since 2010. a camp counselor, personal assistant, and has been involved with the recruitment and registration process for Her Power!
- an Outdoor Recreation AT Specialist for the Michigan assistive technology program (MATP) at Michigan Disability Right Coalition (MDRC).



# Getting to know Abby

- Proud neurodivergent woman.
- Part of Her Power! Her Pride! Since its start in 2010 a yearly four -day event where girls across Michigan challenge media stereotypes and shatter myths about what it means to be a teen girl with a disability and develop/strengthen their disability pride.
- Passionate for assistive technology (AT) and spreading the word about disability pride! being in nature, entomology, photography, crafting, video games and reading.





# Our Mission

Our mission is to cultivate disability pride and strengthen the disability movement by recognizing disability as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity while collaborating to dismantle all forms of oppression.



# What We Focus On

- Disability Justice Infrastructure
- Ending Violence
- Racial Equity
- Increasing Tech Access
- Independence and transitioning
- Public Health - Ending Social Isolation



# Michigan Assistive Technology Program (MATP)

- MATP is a FREE, federally funded program that provides AT-related supports around the state.
- MATP serves people of all ages!
- MATP provides:
  - Demonstrations
  - Loan Program (Lending Library)
  - Awareness Information
  - Training
  - Technical Assistance
  - Resources
  - Services to increase access to assistive technology devices
- MATP is by people with disabilities for people with disabilities, their allies, and other community members.



# Resources and Funding AT

MATP can refer individuals to organizations that can assist with funding.

We have a resource list with various funding information available.

Our goal is to fill the gaps on access to AT.

We can direct individuals to other organizations that may specialize in certain needs.



# Michigan Assistive Technology Program (MATP)

## What is AT?

MATP defines AT as any tool, software, or app that can help people with disabilities, including older adults, do what they want to do.

Technology can make things easier for everyone. For people with disabilities, AT opens up possibilities.

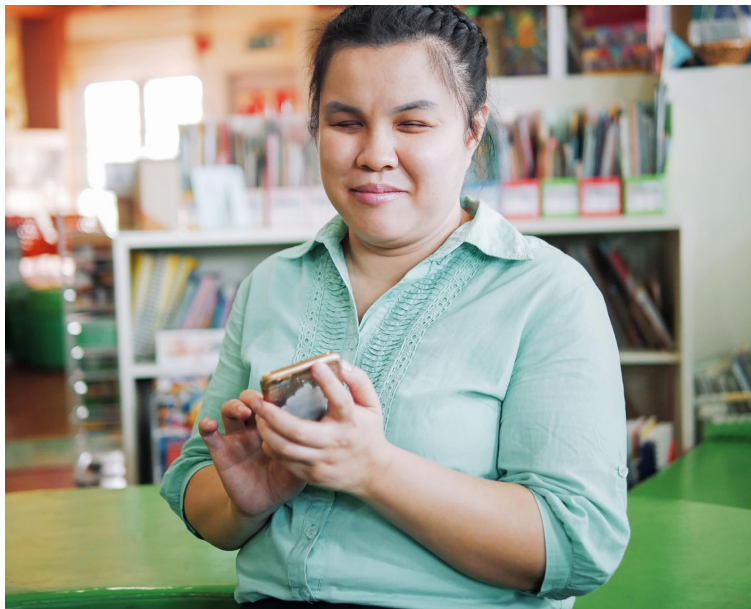


Google Maps





# Michigan Assistive Technology Program (MATP)



MATP helps people with disabilities gain access to AT devices that can assist with:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Community Living</li><li>● Low Vision</li><li>● Mental Health and Recovery</li><li>● Neurodiversity</li><li>● Outdoor Recreation</li><li>● Gaming</li><li>● Gardening</li><li>● Environmental Controls</li><li>● Hearing Loss</li><li>● Reading</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Parenting with a Disability</li><li>● Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)</li><li>● Cooking / Eating</li><li>● Crafting</li><li>● Organizing</li><li>● Calendar Reminders</li><li>● connecting with friends and family</li></ul> |
|---|---|

# Smart Speakers

- Smart Speaker with video screen.
- Watch movies, videos, news stories.
- Connect via video with other people who have Smart Speaker Video Device.
- Can place voice calls.
- Connect to other devices that have video components (i.e. Ring doorbell camera).
- Cooking recipes that read and show recipe and ingredients.



# Robotic Pets

- A pet that you do not have to feed, water, clean - up after...
- A pet that interacts with you
- From dogs, to cats, and even birds!
- A fish tank? Yes!



# AT for Gaming

- Assistive Tech for tabletop gaming
- Adaptive Controllers
- Switches
- Information on Accessibility features on consoles



AbleNet Jelly Bean Switch



AbleNet Micro Light Switch



AbleNet Spec Switch



# What does gaming have to do with social isolation?

- According to AbleGamers, 35-45% of people with disabilities were profoundly socially isolated even before COVID.
- Research on digital games has shown that they contribute to higher levels of well-being, less depression, and less negative affect amongst older adults (Allaire et al., 2013).
- Going to an arcade or gaming meetup is also good for combating social isolation but is not always an option.
- Video games allow individuals to connect with family and people who have similar interests.
- Helps to create an amazing support network and foster lifelong friendships which has such a positive impact on one's well being.





These are just one of the many varieties of paintbrushes in our inventory with alternate grips

# AT for Painting



Information on DIYs like making your own custom grip with air dry clay

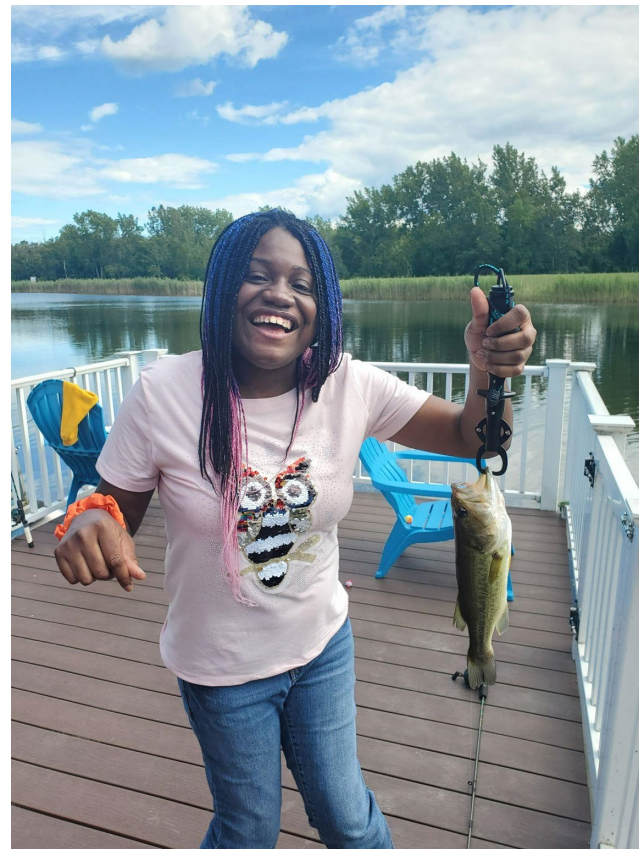


Art Roller is a new painting technique using adaptive equipment. Can be used in a variety of ways



# AT for Outdoor Recreation

- Ebikes
- Fishing
- Camping
- Hiking
- Hunting
- Gardening
- Rock Hunting
- Birdwatching





# Take Away

We are here to help!

We provide demonstrations on how to use devices.

If you are interested in a device, but unsure if it will work, worried about funding, or if your organization does not have the capacity to learn a new device.

**We can help.**

You can borrow the devices and try them!

The device does not have to be in our lending library, we add new inventory all the time.

We are a free, federally funded program, we are here for you to learn and create a space for more access to AT devices.



# Contact Us

If you are interested in learning more about our organization, receiving training, AT demonstrations, or need information and assistance please contact us.  
The link to our resource guide, that includes more information and how to contact us is in the chat.

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**Self - discovery.  
Cultivate Community.  
Develop Pride.**

