



Donka Digest

Summer 2014 - Issue XLII

Congratulations Donka Graduates!

It is graduation season again and all of us at Donka are proud to say that over the last 27 years, we have graduated more than 650 students with disabilities from our computer training programs. Some of these students went on to gain employment, while others live a changed life with their newfound independence. When our students graduate, we ask them to write a testimonial letter to let us and our donors know about their experience here at Donka. The staff is always inspired by our student testimonials.

I recently received a letter from Glenn and Devi Turner, parents of recent graduate Jamie, in which they expressed their thanks to the Donka staff. "Our son Jamie, who has autism, was evaluated by Donka staff and was found eligible to take Microsoft Office lessons," they wrote. "The instructors rose to the challenge of training Jamie and finding unique ways to help him learn. We are very happy that Jamie's training has been effectively done by Kathy Brush. Our thanks to the Donka staff who came to know and help Jamie."

I am grateful to the Turners for having their son at Donka and proud that we were able to make such a positive impact in Jamie's life. Donka is truly a place where caring support makes a difference and I am truly grateful to our staff for that! We look forward to working with and being inspired by more students throughout 2014.

Leanne Stavenger-Vos,
Executive Director

Board Member wins Philanthropic Leadership Award



Joyce Van Der Molen (center) with Donka ED, Leanne Stavenger-Vos (left) and WSPN President Chrissie Howorth (right)

On May 21st, 2014, former Donka, Inc. Board President Joyce Van Der Molen was awarded West Suburban Philanthropic Network's 2014 Philanthropic Leadership Award. Joyce Van Der Molen has been a leader and supporter of Donka since the very beginning. In 1989, Donka's founder Don Van Haveren was quick to recruit Joyce as a board member of an organization to support his vision: to give persons with disabilities a new opportunity at life through computer-training.

Joyce immediately took actions to serve as fundraising and nominating committee chair to ensure Donka's growth and success. During her 24 years on the board, she served as secretary and board president. Joyce personally advocated for Donka's vision and recruited board members and donors alike. She often came to the computer lab to discuss ideas with Donka employees and they loved sharing their ideas with her. Although recently retired, Joyce continues to provide mentorship and support. We

doubt she will ever truly "retire."

When told about her award, Joyce humbly replied, "It is indeed an honor, certainly unexpected, to receive the Philanthropic Leadership Award, I believe philanthropy, which in the broad sense is caring for one's neighbors, is an expression of my Christian faith."

"I have been so blessed by Joyce, and so have all the organizations that Joyce has given her time, talents and resources too over the years," said Donka ED Leanne Stavenger-Vos while introducing Joyce at the Annual Award Luncheon. "We can't thank her enough for all she has done to promote and improve human welfare as a philanthropist in her lifetime." Joyce not only supports organizations financially but also truly exemplifies a leader with her hands-on involvement.

Apart from Donka, Joyce also supports many other non-profit organizations in the western suburbs and is very active in her church community. Joyce's acceptance speech is currently on Donka's YouTube page! Come and see what she had to say about winning the award!

From all of us at Donka, thank you Joyce!

Also in this issue:

- *Donka's Graduates 2014*
- *AT Highlight - ZoomText*
- *Bowling Fundraiser- Save the Date!*
- *Matching Gifts- Double your Donation!*

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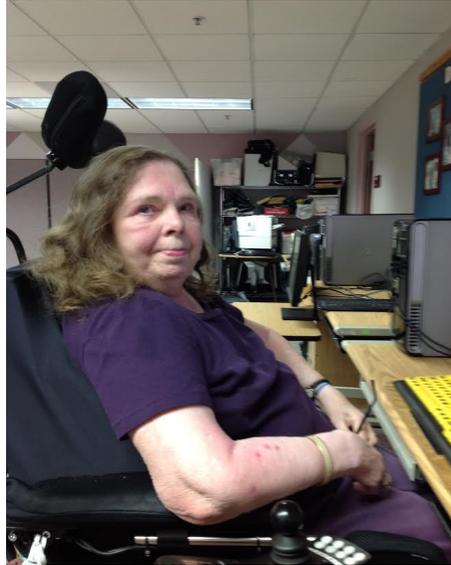
Donka's Mission

Changing lives of persons with disabilities through technology.

Donka's Vision

Donka is the premier provider of services that create personal empowerment, socialization, self-advocacy and job readiness for people with physical and visual impairment, through state of the art technology.

Meet two of our 2014 Graduates: Bonnie and Jamie



Bonnie Capanna, Donka graduate 2014

Bonnie Capanna thought her computer using days were over. When she developed arthritis and was diagnosed with leg paralysis, she came to the DuPage Convalescent Center for treatment and has been a resident for two years. As part of her treatment, Bonnie wanted to pursue different activities to keep herself occupied. Her physical therapist and social worker suggested Donka.

“I have learned computer techniques that I never had the opportunity to learn,” explains Bonnie. “When I worked as a bookkeeper, I never had time to pursue anything other than my job.” She goes on to say that since she has forgotten many of her past computer skills, the one-on-one training at Donka helped her regain her confidence.

Bonnie worked as a bookkeeper for more than 40 years and now, after a 2 year hiatus from the computer, she is proficient in Microsoft Office with the help of assistive technology. What are Bonnie's future goals? She says if she ever decides to enter the workforce again, she will be equipped with the skills to succeed.



Jamie Turner, Donka graduate 2014

Jamie Turner, who has Autism and Hyperlexia and is a senior at Clare Woods Academy in Bartlett. He came to Donka with the goals to learn job readiness skills while improving his math and spelling.

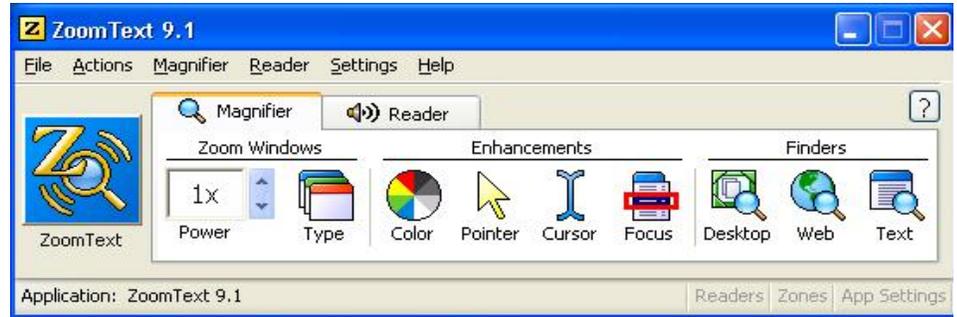
With Jamie's parents' strong support, Jamie completed his computer training in Microsoft Office. In their testimonial letter, Glenn and Devi Turner remarked that with the one-on-one instruction, “Jamie moved through the course quickly to the amazement of not only us, but also his teachers at Clare Woods Academy.” After his teachers from Clare Woods came to observe Jamie's lessons, they were convinced that many of their special needs students would benefit from Donka's computer training program.

Donka is graduating 30 students in 2014 from our Wheaton, Aurora and remote labs. Graduation is always bittersweet here at Donka. On the one hand, we are very excited to see our students complete the computer training course successfully. But as with most one-on-one training, instructors get to know their students well and will miss spending time with such inspiring individuals.

Assistive Technology Highlight: ZoomText for Low-Vision Impairment

After being diagnosed with a detached retina, Jewel Barron thought her vision loss diagnosis was a death sentence, condemning her to her home in slowly ensuring darkness. But when her case worker urged her to sign up computer training at Donka, she realized that she could regain her independence with a click of a button.

For those with low-vision, there are amazing assistive technology options that will allow them to continue using the computer just as they had, with a few modifications. ZoomText is one such program for Microsoft Windows. ZoomText enlarges and enhances everything on the computer screen, making



ZoomText Magnifier Reader is provided by Ai Squared and helps those with low-vision

everything from the mouse cursor to words and icons easy to see and use. There is also a read aloud option.

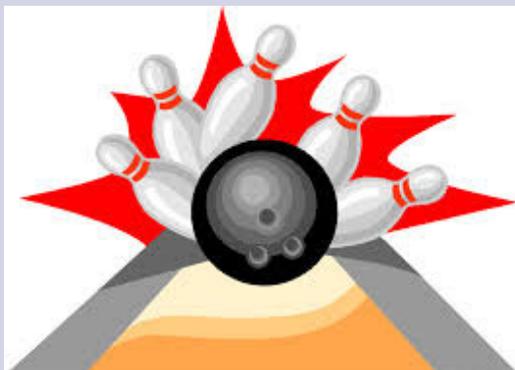
ZoomText can help individuals with early vision loss, computer vision syndrome and visual impairments such as macular degeneration and glaucoma.

Even with her low-vision, Jewel is learning Microsoft Office

applications with the goal becoming employed. “I feel like I can be part of society again,” she says. “I no longer have to be dependent on others.”

ZoomText is one of many specialized software programs used at Donka to meet the unique needs of our students. ZoomText is available through Ai Squared (www.aisquared.com/zoomtext).

Save the Date - Bowling Fundraiser - Sunday, October 26



Sponsorship opportunities available!

- Perfect game - \$1,000
- Turkey - \$500
- Strike - \$250
- Spare - \$100

Put on your bowling shoes and join Donka and friends for an afternoon of family-friendly fun!

Activities include:
3 Games
Silent Auction
50/50 Raffle

Where: Fox Bowl
1101 Butterfield Rd.
Wheaton, IL 60189

When: October 26 from 2pm-5pm

*Wear your Halloween costume –
award for the best!*

For more information about this event and sponsorship opportunities, Contact Leanne Stavenger-Vos at 630-665-8169 ex10.



Match your Donation Today!

Did you know that your employer may match your donation to Donka? That means, if you donate \$500, your employer will match you \$500 and Donka will receive \$1,000 to help computer train persons with disabilities. Your employer may have mentioned their matching gift

program during your initial orientation and you have not heard about it since.

Here is what to do:

- 1. Go to your HR department and see if your employer has a matching gift program
2. Fill out a matching gift form specifying you would like to have your donations matched for Donka.
3. Return the form to your HR department and retain a copy for your records.

Are you retired and would still like to Double your Donations? Some employers match their retired employees donations. Check with your previous employer for more information.

What is that strange symbol?

That is a QR Code (Quick Response Code), a machine-readable code consisting of an array of black and white squares, typically used for storing URLs or other information for reading by the camera on a smartphone.

What does it do?

Using a QR Code reading app on your smart phone or tablet, you can quickly access our website . Give it a try!



Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Carol Stream, IL 60137 Permit #1565



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