

SHARENotes

The Newsletter of the Society for Human Advancement through Rehabilitation Engineering Foundation, Inc.

Jorge Lobo Makes His Voice Heard Using SHARE Technology

When Jorge Lobo had a stroke in July 2023, it impacted his entire way of life. A hard-working machinist, the New Bedford resident had also been a longtime volunteer for a local Cape Verdean association, helping to raise funds and provide emergency aid for others in need. But with the stroke’s damage affecting both his speech and the right side of his body, Lobo was suddenly facing a long and challenging road to recovery.

After returning home from an inpatient rehabilitation center that October, Lobo would need months of ongoing therapy to help him regain his motor function and ability to talk. In the meantime, he struggled to communicate his day-to-day wants and needs to his partner, Jocelina Pires, and his family.

“Communicating with others was extremely challenging,” said Lobo. “Both my family and I tried our best to get messages across. This was very



difficult for me as I want to be able to speak.”

When one of Lobo’s therapists suggested contacting SHARE, Pires said she hesitated to make that initial call, unsure of how their team would be able to help.

“At first, I was very skeptical,” said Pires. “I’m glad I did.”

After assessing Lobo’s physical abilities and communication needs, SHARE Client Services Coordinator Beverly Thorn recommended an iPad paired with Tobii Dynavox (TD) Snap communication software and provided him with ongoing training at his home to use the device’s features. By simply touching the iPad screen, Lobo can type words or select phrases and names from a preset menu specially customized for him. The device’s voice synthesizer then “speaks” Lobo’s message, easing communication with family and friends as he continues working to improve his vocalization skills.

“Since using the iPad, my life has changed for the better,” said Lobo. “I’m less stressed when trying to communicate. I know that if I am not
Continued on page 3

INSIDE

Community Fundraisers
Support SHARE’s Work 3

TD Snap Software
Keeps Client Connected 3

Thank You to Our Donors 4

SHARE Board of Directors Welcomes Four New Members

The SHARE Foundation is pleased to announce the election of four new members to its Board of Directors. Brittany Botelho, Helena Moronta, Wendy Stern, MD, and Filomena Tripp began their terms of board service in early 2025 following elections held in December and January.

Since 1982, the SHARE Foundation has worked to transform lives through the power of assistive technology, providing thousands of physically challenged and non-speaking individuals with the tools they need to communicate and become more independent.
Continued on page 2

SHARE Welcomes New Board Members

Continued from page 1

Jack Dresser, SHARE Foundation Executive Director, looks forward to the unique contributions the board's newest members will bring in enhancing outreach and service delivery to SHARE clients in need.

"SHARE Foundation's new board members bring experiences and outlooks that will help advance the organization's mission," said Dresser. "The board will be informed by their new colleagues' perspectives as engaged members of our community and their firsthand familiarity with the SHARE Foundation's services."

Serving the community is a shared calling for each of the Foundation's new board members.



A licensed social worker and health-care administrator, **Brittany Botelho** is the executive director of Project Independence

Services Inc. and a Community Crisis Intervention Team liaison for the City of New Bedford's Community Services Division. As the mother of two children with Spinocerebellar Ataxia Type 3 (Machado-Joseph Disease), a neurodegenerative disorder that affects motor function and coordination, Botelho said she understands firsthand the importance of SHARE's work.

"I am professionally and personally invested in their mission," said Botelho. "The work of the SHARE Foundation may be a vital resource for not only my children in the future but others in need. I am hoping for longevity for the foundation through both new and renewed partnerships and advocacy."

Helena Moronta is the First Vice President of Community Development and



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer at Bay-Coast Bank, directing the financial institution's DEI initiatives and

community outreach programs. As a professional in the financial industry and an advocate to community groups across the South Coast and Rhode Island, Moronta focuses on bringing diverse voices and perspectives together to foster optimal growth and success. Moronta said that SHARE's personalized approach to empowering individuals with disabilities resonates with her because it combines "both innovation and compassion."

"I am excited to contribute to an organization that not only recognizes the challenges people face but actively works to remove barriers and offer tangible solutions," said Moronta. "Looking ahead, I hope the SHARE Foundation continues to innovate and expand its reach, ensuring that even more individuals can access the life-changing technology and support they need. I want to help strengthen our partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders to create a more integrated and supportive network for people with disabilities."

A board-certified otolaryngologist, **Wendy Stern, MD**, was founding



partner of a private ENT practice in Dartmouth, MA, and ran a Speech and Swallow Disorders Clinic at South-coast Health System prior

to her retirement in 2018. Stern has witnessed the transformative impact that the SHARE Foundation's assistive technologies can have in people's lives, first as a medical professional and now as resource for her husband, who has advancing Parkinson's disease.

"I've worked with many patients who have medical issues that impact their ability to speak and communicate," said Stern. "I have known about SHARE and have made recommendations for people to contact them through our speech and swallow disorders clinic. I called them when my husband, who has advancing Parkinson's, needed communication help, so I have had interaction with this organization both professionally and personally."

Filomena Tripp has been closely connected to the SHARE Foundation



since becoming a client in 2000. Born without fully developed arms and legs because of a congenital anomaly, Tripp communicates using an

adaptive computer system and Dragon voice recognition software provided by SHARE that allows her to talk rather than type to perform data entry tasks. Before her recent retirement, Tripp spent her career as an independent living advocate providing skills training, peer counseling and support for individuals transitioning from nursing care facilities. A longtime SHARE volunteer, she continues to support the Foundation's fundraising efforts by taking part in SHARE's annual Fun Walk events.

"I really admire the program," said Tripp. "The SHARE Foundation has great assistive technology to assist people with physical disabilities. My goal is to increase the Foundation's funding to help better the community."

Community Fundraisers Support SHARE's Mission and Work



Walkers begin the scenic route along Westport Point at SHARE's Fun Walk 2024, which raised \$27,000 to support the organization's work.

This candy apple red 1965 Ford Mustang won "Best in Show" at September's Antique & Classic Car Show sponsored by the Downshifters Car Club of New England. An annual fan favorite, the event raised \$1,100 for SHARE.



The South Shore chapter of Rock Voices, a no-audition adult choir that sings rock music for local communities, donated \$600 to SHARE from their recent concert.



YOUR FUNDRAISING MATTERS! Thank you to the many community groups and individuals who have spearheaded events to benefit SHARE. Through car shows, golf tournaments, concerts, online fundraisers, and "in lieu of" gifts at private functions, your efforts have helped SHARE carry out its vital work. If you or your group would like to create your own fundraiser in support of SHARE, please contact us at 774-992-0674.

SHARE Client Jorge Lobo

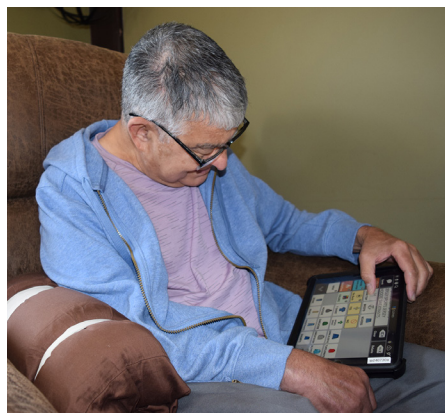
Continued from page 1

able to verbalize it, I have another resource—the iPad from SHARE.”

“It just bridges the gap—that was my first impression,” said Pires of the assistive technology. “Instead of getting frustrated when not able to let others know what he is trying to communicate, he turns to the iPad. I believe the iPad gives him peace of mind, knowing that he has something to assist him to get his message across when having a difficult time verbalizing or writing it.”

Recognizing Lobo's many years of quiet service to those in need throughout the local community and on his native island of Sal in Cape Verde, USAL (United Sal) recently celebrated his legacy of kindness and generosity by honoring him at their annual Gala last November. “Jorge was recognized for being a great supporter and always willing to assist whenever needed,” said Pires.

After decades of extending a helping hand, Lobo is steadily making his own progress at regaining his mobility and independence with



the love of his family and ongoing support from SHARE. He is now walking with a cane, can sound out short sentences, and has started singing along to favorite songs from his homeland.

“Since connecting with SHARE and receiving the personalized iPad with my favorite things and places, and being trained on how to use it by a lovely and patient lady, it has been much easier to communicate,” said Lobo, expressing special gratitude for Thorn's attentive instruction. In a soft but clear voice, Lobo spoke a simple yet heartfelt message.

“Thank you,” he said, smiling.

iPad & TD Snap Keep Jorge Connected

Helping Jorge Lobo stay connected to his family and friends is the iPad and Tobii Dynavox Snap (TD Snap) communication software provided at no cost to him by the SHARE Foundation. TD Snap is a flexible, robust communication software for people with speech and language disabilities.

With the help of SHARE Client Services Coordinator Beverly Thorn, Jorge has customized page sets on his iPad to match his unique communication needs. He operates the page sets by touching the iPad screen, and the iPad then speaks on his behalf.

We thank the Thomas A. Rodgers, Jr. Family Foundation for their grant to SHARE, which funded the purchase of iPads and TD Snap software, as well as training time for our clients.

Do you know of someone who would benefit from the technology and services the SHARE Foundation provides? Please contact Client Services Coordinator Beverly Thorn at 774-992-0674.

THANK YOU to our many donors for partnering with us to bring help and hope to others through the power of technology.

The following donations were received from July 24, 2024 to March 4, 2025.

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42nd Annual Ben Boyle & Ron Kostyla Golf Classic

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For more information, contact Don Osley, dosley@navigantcu.org



Protecting Your Online Safety

Scams are becoming more sophisticated, and it's important for SHARE clients and friends to stay vigilant. Always be cautious when you receive unsolicited emails or phone calls asking for personal information or access to your devices.



Here are a few common scenarios and how to handle them:

Device Virus Alerts: If you receive a communication claiming your computer or tablet has a virus, be very cautious. Legitimate companies do not randomly reach out to fix virus issues. If you're unsure, call SHARE directly at 774-992-0674. We're here to help.

Credit Card Fraud Alerts: If you get an email about a charge or fraud on your credit card, do not call the number in the email or visit the website it provides. Instead, use the contact information on the back of your card or your bank statement to call the bank directly. If you receive a suspicious phone call, tell the caller you will contact the bank to verify. Legitimate institutions will respect this.

Finally, if you've accidentally shared personal info, contact your bank right away for financial issues, or call SHARE if you think your device has been compromised. Stay safe and be cautious!



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