

# 2011



## ANNUAL REPORT

Success Through Assistive Rehabilitative Technology



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## LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

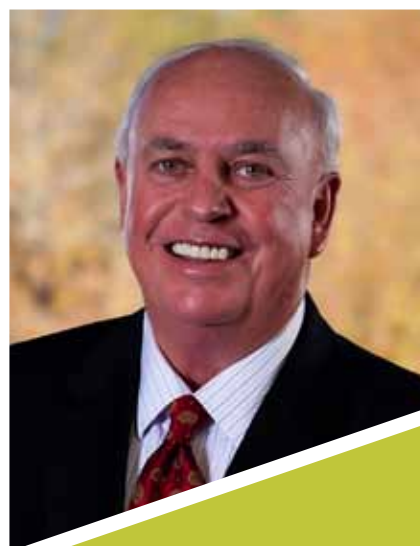
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Thanks to All,

On behalf of Project START and the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS), the lead entity of the Mississippi Technology Act Program, I am pleased to present our 2012 Annual Report. Many people may think they've never used assistive technology or are aware of the benefits of assistive technology. The person wearing glasses, holding a hand magnifier, enlarging print on the computer, or using a wheel chair or cane is benefiting from the availability and use of assistive technology. It's all around us in our everyday lives helping us to work and live independently in our communities.

The mission of Project START is to empower people with disabilities through awareness and access to assistive technology. This report highlights the stories of individuals with disabilities, school districts, parents, home health agencies, and churches assisted and empowered through training, demonstrations and trial use, technical assistance, and reutilization efforts of assistive technology. By partnering with these entities, Project START not only fulfills its mission, but can provide a cost savings to those participating in ways such as ensuring individuals receive the appropriate equipment. Thank you for your continued support of Project START. We look forward to another year of successfully assisting Mississippians with disabilities through the awareness and utilization of assistive technology.

H.S. "Butch" McMillan, Executive Director  
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services



# INTRODUCTION

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What a Year,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my delight in working with Project START in 2012. There is no doubt that we are closing another successful year.

The unique thing about our success is that it is client driven. We have a deep passion for “Customer Service” and “Customer Service” translates into satisfied clients. When we have satisfied clients, we are enhancing the capacities of our citizens with capabilities.

Ms. Young, I look forward to beginning another year. I believe we can build on the successes of this year and aim for even greater heights in 2013.

Sam H. Gleese

Chair Person of Project START Advisory Board

## OUR ADVISORY BOARD

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Ben Waggenknecht; Anita Naik; Stacey Blackwell; Evelyn Washington, Karen Brown, Tanya Bradly

Not Pictured: Sam Gleese, *Chairperson*, Darlene Oliver, *Co-Chair*, Ella Yarbrough, Lisa Indest, and Mary Fortune



# OUR STORIES

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## EDDIE MAE SPRINGFIELD

### DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

In today’s world, it is imperative that the right people be in the right place if an organization is going to be successful. The right individual will know when to lead and when to follow. This will be the direct result of acquired knowledge, skills, and a positive attitude.

Dorothy Young is such an individual. During the years that I worked with Project START, I was impressed with her level of commitment as well as her integrity. Her willingness to go the extra mile to accomplish or complete tasks reminded me that she is indeed a true team player at all times. Loyalty is another one of her strengths.

Ms Young may be characterized as a voice for today’s leadership initiatives. Her true testament to this lies in the choices that she has made. Her work with the children and their families in the Delta has been beneficial to them as they continue to strive for excellence. Her endeavors raised their awareness of their potential to reach new heights. Hope replaced despair under her leadership. Her leadership skills will inspire others to make better choices. Our partnership with her in Project START is an example of her many efforts on behalf of the children in the greater Delta area.

Be it known to others in the communities that it is without hesitation that I recommend Project START to other communities. Ms. Dorothy Young is an asset to any organization that is focused on positive outcomes and is an asset wherever she is. To me, she is a role model for all people who strive for excellence.

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## **JULIE CHADWICK**

### **NMRC TAD CENTER DIRECTOR**

I am writing this letter in appreciation of START's continued support of TAD's demonstration and loan program. With the grant funds that START provides, not only is the TAD Center able to stay current in individual demonstrations to provide the best recommendations for personal assistive technology, but also to maintain the START/TAD Center loan program. Through START's continued grant support, the NMRC TAD Center is able to remain an effective demonstration center, and provide optimum assistive technology services to the citizens of MS.

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## **REBECCA ROBERTS**

### **SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR | AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

I would like to take this opportunity to express my continued satisfaction with Project Start and the staff. The relationship our district has developed with Ms. Young and Project Start has allowed our district to perform the required tasks of meeting the needs for students within the Amite County School District with effortless ease.

This past year, Project Start provided a student with a hearing impairment a UBI-DUO assistive technology device. The student used the device to access the curriculum to the maximum extent possible. The device also aided the student with transition activities. The teachers found the use of the device extremely user friendly.

Ms. Young personally came and demonstrated the use of the device and was available for follow-up help when necessary. This technical support for our students and staff was greatly appreciated. When I or anyone on my staff had a concern, it was addressed very quickly.

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## **GWEN BROWN**

### **PARENT**

I would like to take this opportunity to show my appreciation for Project START. Over the years, Project START has personally transformed from an organization that I used to borrow equipment from to a wonderful source of information and training for assistive technology.

The sessions I have provided a wealth of information for parents like me, other parents, professionals and consumers. Project START has been and continues to be one of the best resources for parents like myself to utilize assistive technology equipment and to stay current with new developments. As technology changes and advances, we will need the services that Project START provides even more. I look forward to having the program around indefinitely!

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## **JANET WAGNER, M.S., CCC\_SLP**

### **AAC COORDINATOR - VICKSBURG WARREN SCHOOL DISTRICT**

As the AAC coordinator for the Vicksburg Warren School District, I have the opportunity to utilize Project Start's resources on a regular basis. I have borrowed the Vantage Lite Communication Device several times for students who have been evaluated and are waiting for a device. I have also borrowed the Vantage Lite for students to use as a trial period prior to purchasing a device. Project Start is very helpful when I call and strives to get the devices to me in a timely manner. In addition, Project Start offers frequent training sessions that address a variety of issues involving AAC.







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## **TOM ALLAIN**

On behalf of my uncle, the former Governor Bill Allain, and myself, I want to thank you for all of your help and assistance in the loan of the vision equipment that you provided to us. This is one of the best programs that the State of Mississippi has to offer.

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## **KATHLEEN WENTLAND**

**SUPERVISOR OF SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY - UMC**  
**UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER**

I am employed as a speech language pathologist at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. I see adults with a wide variety of communication disorders who require augmentative communication devices. Project Start provides an invaluable service to patients served at the Medical Center.

In recent years funding has been cut for communication devices from various agencies making it challenging to meet the communication needs of our patients. Project Start has allowed me to obtain various devices for evaluations. Their loan program has been instrumental in providing the communication devices for patients, particularly those with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. The use of these devices allows the patients to communicate medical needs to healthcare providers, interact in social situations with friends and family, and communicate over the telephone. One of my patients was even able to sing in church with her communication device, which greatly enhanced her quality of life.

Ms. Dorothy Young is extremely proactive in meeting the communicative needs of our patients at the University. I am so appreciative of Project Start's program and it has greatly enhanced the quality of life for citizens throughout the state.

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## **JANIE CIRLOT-NEW, M.S., CCC-SLP**

### **DIRECTOR OF T.K. MARTIN CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY AND DISABILITY**

Project START has been a tremendous support in promoting assistive technology throughout the state of Mississippi. Through the efforts of Project START and the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Mississippians have had the opportunity to learn about assistive technology and to “try it out” by borrowing equipment from the loan programs across the state. Project START has provided support to several loan programs throughout Mississippi including the loan program at T.K. Martin Center for Technology and Disability at Mississippi State University. Due to the support of Project START, assistive technology has been provided to over 2000 individuals over the past five years giving these individuals the opportunity to try out the technology prior to purchasing.

Project START has assisted with Camp Jabber Jaw, a camp for children who use augmentative communication devices. Over the past five years this support has affected the lives of over 500 children, families, professionals and college students. This event provides opportunities for all involved to improve their skill with assistive technology.

Project START has directly and indirectly supported the training of over 5,000 individuals in assistive technology for over the past five years by staff from the T.K. Martin Center. These trainings provided awareness level training as well as in depth training in a variety of assistive technologies.

Project START should be recognized for the significant role they have played in the implementation of assistive technology for individuals of all ages throughout the state of Mississippi.



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**KENDRICK R. KENNEDY, ESQ.**  
**ATTORNEY, CONWAY & MARTAIN LAW FIRM**

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of Project START. The services the program provides are vital to Mississippi Citizens. Without you providing equipment for the citizenry many people would not be able to pursue their rehabilitation goals.

As many people know, I completed law school about a year ago and had been seeking employment for some time. I was fortunate to meet Mr. Warren L. Conway, partner at the law firm, Conway & Martin, PC. Conway provided me an opportunity at his law firm to work, but he was concerned about me having to access a computer. Project START was able to offer me a computer in a timely fashion to get me into the law office working as one of the few visually impaired attorney's in the State of Mississippi.

In conclusion, I fully support the efforts of Project START, providing services to our Mississippi Citizens.

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**STUART LANIER**  
**EVALUATOR | ABILITY WORKS, INC.**

I would like to thank you for providing the Amigo Model # AMG2-A-BL for my client to use while at Ability Works. It has allowed her to function more independently on the job while working at Ability Works.



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## **MISSY TATUM, LOTR, ATP**

### **KURZWEIL & INTELLITOOLS REPRESENTATIVE**

I am the Kurzweil Educational Software and Intellitools, Inc Representative for AR, LA, and MS. For the past several years, I have had the opportunity and distinct pleasure to work with Dorothy Young, Director of Project Start. I'm writing this as a letter of support for her and all that she does for individuals with disabilities in the state of MS.

Over the years, I have participated in many conferences that Ms. Young has organized throughout the state of Mississippi. Each of these events was well organized, had excellent attendance, and was held in a beautiful, accessible facility. As a conference presenter, Ms. Young always made sure that I had what I needed and was able to demonstrate flexibility to accommodate my schedule when needed. I've also conducted professional development workshops for Ms. Young on several occasions. Again, the events were well organized and handled in a very professional manner.

In closing, I cannot say enough about Dorothy Young and the services that she provides through Project Start. She is an extraordinary advocate for individuals with disabilities and works tirelessly to insure that they have the resources that they need to become as independent as possible in all areas of their daily lives. It is always a pleasure to collaborate with Dorothy. She is a true professional with a remarkably compassionate heart. I also consider her a friend. The state of MS is lucky to have her.

## **ANNE SULLIVAN, M.ED., CED**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MAGNOLIA SPEECH SCHOOL**

Magnolia Speech School is a private not for profit program for children who are deaf, hard of hearing and/or several language disordered. Since its founding in 1956 the school has earned a stellar reputation for its success in teaching spoken languages to students with communication challenges. The children leave Magnolia to mainstream in their local school without the need for further special education. For 8 years Project START has been a strong partner for Magnolia. Because of funds granted from Project START, the school opened a Demonstration Center which includes sound field equipment, digital hearing aids, fm systems and other audiological equipment that is needed for someone with a hearing loss to succeed.

Magnolia consults with school districts, clinics, and individuals offering expertise in both listening and speaking technology and therapy. Because of the equipment provided by Project START we are able to share equipment with both programs and Individuals who need it. Ms. Dorothy Young has met with us on a regular basis to discuss our monthly and quarterly reports, our public relations efforts and our service to the state of MS. Through our home based Early Intervention program, our Clinics and our Classrooms, Magnolia has delivered life changing services. The technology provided by Project START has supported our work and enabled us to reach those who could not afford to purchase equipment themselves. We are most grateful to Mrs. Young and her staff at Project START for making this possible. If you have any questions about Magnolia's Demonstration Center and our work with Project START feel free to contact us.



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## **SUZANNE M. BAILEY, M.S., CCC-SLP**

### **LANGUAGE/SPEECH AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR MADISON COUNTRY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

As the Assistive Technology Coordinator of the Madison Country Schools, I would like to thank Dorothy Young, Director of Project START, for the many opportunities she has provided for us to learn about Assistive Technology and what it can do for students. Mrs. Young has provided us training opportunities where we can learn about new technologies and how to use “tried and true” technologies better. We send as many of our special education staff as possible to workshops at Project START because they are always well planned, very organized and very professionally presented. Due to the successful nature of these workshops, many districts attend which also affords us the opportunity to network with other professionals in our fields. Dorothy’s experience, from working with districts around the state of Mississippi, is extremely valuable to those of us that would like to know how other districts around the state are doing things in the field of Assistive Technology.

The sharing of information among professionals is so important and helpful, and Dorothy helps make this possible by arranging meetings, conferences, and workshops for this purpose. She also brings in professionals in the many different fields that comprise “Assistive Technology” and they present their products and knowledge in timely form at these workshops. This information is invaluable, and would be difficult to gather if not for these programs through Project START. Our school district has benefitted from using the extensive library of Assistive Technology devices at Project START on numerous occasions. At times, we need to borrow a device as an assessment tool to see if a student is able to use a particular device. We have also borrowed equipment to use with a student until the funding is established for the student to be able to get their own device. Being able to try our devices prior to purchasing is an invaluable asset to those working in the field of Assistive Technology in the school districts of Mississippi.

Thanks again to Dorothy Young of Project START, for all of the support and help you have provided to the Madison Country School District.



# ROYAL P. WALKER, JR., JD

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE FOR DISABILITIES STUDIES | USM

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The University of Southern Mississippi institute for Disabilities Studies (IDS) is please to have partnered with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services’ Project START for another year. This important partnership has allowed IDS to provide needed assistive technology to many Mississippi families of individuals with disabilities.

Our partnership with Project START has, in fact, served consumers, families and professionals. In promoting assistive technology services to schools and long term providers, IDS has continued to support its mission to positively affect the lives of Mississippians with developmental and other disabilities and their families across the life span and to work toward increasing their independence, productivity and integration into their communities.

IDS would like to commend Project START for the valuable and critical assistive technology services it provides to Mississippians with disabilities. Project START has IDS’ pledge for continued support for its vision and work.





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## **TANYA SMITH**

### **WIA DISABILITY COORDINATOR**

As the WIA Disability Coordinator, with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Dean of Business Development Services I appreciate the assistance you provided me through your program. A WIA Provider needed a talking calculator to help a WIA Participant take a test and you sent 3 calculators in efforts to assist our need. Thank you very much for being there when we needed you the most. Again, thanks for your needed service.

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## **RENEE LOWERY, M.S.**

### **WIA DISABILITY COORDINATOR**

It is my pleasure to offer this letter of support for Project Start. As the new Dynavox AAC consultant for Mississippi, I have been very warmly welcomed by you and Ms. Monica Nash. You have both been an invaluable resource in helping me to increase AAC awareness and share Dynavox's mission and products with Mississippians. Your passion for helping people with disabilities is evident and your knowledge of the landscape of the disabilities community has been and continues to be profoundly impactful. Thank you for the opportunities I've been afforded to attend Project Start's trainings, workshops and demonstrations throughout the state. I've met people from every corner of the state and have been able to collaborate with numerous schools, agencies and individuals as a result of those introductions.

Many Mississippians, including adults and children, now have a voice as a result of Project Start's excellent leadership and programs. I look forward to our continued partnership in helping Mississippians achieve independence through assistive technology.



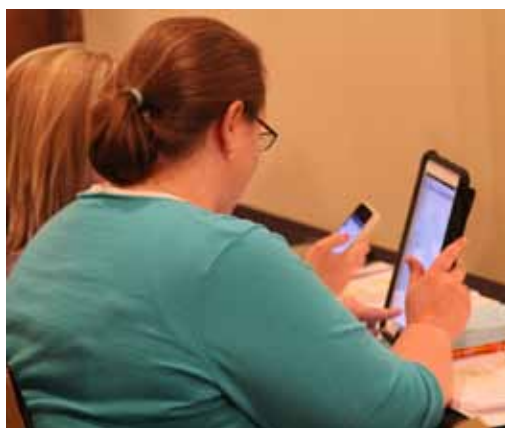
# PHOTO GALLERY

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## TRAINING



## COMPUTER REFURBISHMENT.



## PHOTO GALLERY

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TRAINING

ANNUAL REPORT

## STATISTICS | 2011

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### Number of Recipients of Reused Devices

In this section, report the number of recipients of devices through device exchange,\* reassignment/refurbishment and repair activities,\* and open-ended loans. In the table below, report on the number of individuals who receive devices through a reuse program. Recipients should be reported only once, even if they receive multiple devices during this reporting period. (The multiple devices will be reported in subsequent sections.)

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| A. Device exchange   | 0   |
| B. Reassignment/refurbishment and Repair   | 495 |
| C. Open-ended loans  | 46  |
| D. Total Served  | 541 |
| E. Device Exchange - Excluded from Performance Measure   | 0   |
| F. Reassignment/refurbishment and Repair and Open-ended loans<br>Excluded from Performance Measure because AT is provided to<br>or on behalf of an entity that has an obligation to provide the<br>AT such as schools under IDEA or VR agencies/clients) | 0   |
| G. Total Number of Individuals included in Performance Measure.  | 541 |



## B. Device Exchange Activities

| Type of AT Device/Service               | Number of Devices Exchanged | Total Estimated Current Purchase Price | Total Price for Which Device (s) Were Exchanged | Savings to Consumers |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---|----------------------|
| Vision                                  | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |
| Hearing                                 | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |
| Speech communication                    | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |
| Learning, cognition, and developmental  | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |
| Mobility, seating and positioning       | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |
| Daily living                            | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |
| Environmental adaptations               | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |
| Vehicle modification and transportation | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |
| Computers and related                   | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |
| Recreation, sports, and leisure         | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |
| Total                                   | 0                           | \$0                                    | \$0   | \$0                  |

## C. Device Recycling/Refurbishment/Repair Activities

| Type of AT Device/Service               | Number of Devices Recycled / Refurbished / Repaired | Total Estimated Current Purchase Price | Total Price for Which Devices Were Sold | Savings to Consumers |
|---|---|--|---|----------------------|
| Vision                                  | 4   | \$2,100                                | \$0                                     | \$2,100              |
| Hearing                                 | 0   | \$0                                    | \$0                                     | \$0                  |
| Speech communication                    | 0   | \$0                                    | \$0                                     | \$0                  |
| Learning, cognition, and developmental  | 0   | \$0                                    | \$0                                     | \$0                  |
| Mobility, seating and positioning       | 436   | \$167,239                              | \$0                                     | \$167,239            |
| Daily living                            | 39  | \$7,587                                | \$0                                     | \$7,587              |
| Environmental adaptations               | 0   | \$0                                    | \$0                                     | \$0                  |
| Vehicle modification and transportation | 0   | \$0                                    | \$0                                     | \$0                  |
| Computers and related                   | 60  | \$24,000                               | \$0                                     | \$24,000             |
| Recreation, sports, and leisure         | 0   | \$0                                    | \$0                                     | \$0                  |
| Total                                   | 539   | \$200,926                              | \$0                                     | \$200,926            |

## D. Open-Ended Loans

| Type of AT Device/Service               | Number of Devices on Long-Term Loan | Total Estimated Current Purchase Price | Cost to Consumer for the Loan | Savings to Consumers |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Vision                                  | 0                                   | \$0                                    | \$0                           | \$0                  |
| Hearing                                 | 0                                   | \$0                                    | \$0                           | \$0                  |
| Speech communication                    | 0                                   | \$0                                    | \$0                           | \$0                  |
| Learning, cognition, and developmental  | 0                                   | \$0                                    | \$0                           | \$0                  |
| Mobility, seating and positioning       | 46                                  | \$27,000                               | \$0                           | \$27,000             |
| Daily living                            | 0                                   | \$0                                    | \$0                           | \$0                  |
| Environmental adaptations               | 0                                   | \$0                                    | \$0                           | \$0                  |
| Vehicle modification and transportation | 0                                   | \$0                                    | \$0                           | \$0                  |
| Computers and related                   | 0                                   | \$0                                    | \$0                           | \$0                  |
| Recreation, sports, and leisure         | 0                                   | \$0                                    | \$0                           | \$0                  |
| Total                                   | 46                                  | \$27,000                               | \$0                           | \$27,000             |

## IN CONCLUSION

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Thank you, our fellow Mississippians, who are dedicated in helping other Mississippians with disabilities, have access to assistive technology when they can't afford it. Your donations of wheelchairs, hospital beds, walkers, computers and lifts, when recycled are gifts of independence to your neighbors, family members, co-workers, or someone in need. The partnerships, training, equipment trial use and network building around the state, continue to position MDRS Project START as Mississippi's state hub for assistive technology awareness and access.

A very special thank you to Mr. McMillan and my MDRS family for working with the START staff making it possible to carry out the federal mandates of the Technology Act on a daily basis. We appreciate your support of Project START programs and services. If you have any questions or wish to learn more about Project START, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the MDRS Project START staff at 1-800-852-8328 or visit our website at [www.msprojectstart.org](http://www.msprojectstart.org)

Finally, we hope that you will share information about MDRS Project START with anyone you know or come in contact with that may need some type of assistive technology to help live independently in communities of their choice.

Until the next time Mississippi, thanks again.

Dorothy Young, M.S.

Director, Project START



# NOTES:

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**Mississippi Department of  
Rehabilitation Services**

*Providing the freedom to live*



Mississippi Project START is funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended by the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration.

MDRS Project START, the statewide assistive technology program for Mississippians, is coordinated by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services agency.

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For More Information Please Contact Us:

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[www.msprojectstart.org](http://www.msprojectstart.org) | 1.800.852.8328 or 601.987.4872