

Lending Support

Foundation Communications Equipment Gets an Upgrade

By Steve Wells, President, Asyst Communications Company, Inc.



The Asyst Communications Company partners with the Les Turner ALS Foundation to provide a variety

of communication and technology products to people with ALS (PALS) all with one purpose – to improve the quality of life for people living with this devastating disease.

While we offer PALS a variety of communication options, including the **HeadMouse**, the **Asyst Portable Alarm** and the **ChatterVox**, our most popular communication devices are the **Asyst 3000** and the **Asyst Touch series**. Both devices are designed to allow severely paralyzed patients to speak, write, print, activate alarms and control appliances – all by the blink of an eye or any slight motion. For PALS who are unable to communicate through traditional means, these systems can truly open the door to effective communication. The result is a dramatic improvement in the quality of life not only for the PALS, but often for family members and caregivers as well.

In 2008, the Foundation upgraded older CommuniMate systems to the new Asyst Touch. While other companies have spent time trying to develop all inclusive devices that work with children as well as adults, our focus for over 20 years has been solely on ALS patients. It is through the thousands of hours spent with PALS – listening to what they use, tossing out options they were not using, adding features they requested, rearranging menus to increase speed – that we have shaped and formed the Asyst Touch series. And it's our most advanced system ever.

We have learned that if you make a device complex and intimidating many folks won't even try it or will give up quickly. The new Asyst Touch is very simple even for non-technical people to learn and use with ease. Yet as a user gets more familiar with the system, there are many new advanced features they can utilize including text editing capabilities, full customization, speech preservation, word prediction, environmental control and television control.

Furthermore, the Asyst Touch can stay with a PALS throughout the duration of the disease. For those who can type, you can type directly into the keyboard and

use the Asyst Touch for speech. If a person loses that ability, they can use a touch pad or mouse to directly select text. If a person loses that ability and is completely paralyzed, a single switch can be used to control the Asyst Touch. And all of the new systems are portable, so they can go wherever the patient wants to go.

The feedback we have received from Foundation patients we have set up with these new Asyst Touch systems has been stunning. From people who have never used equipment like this before, to those who had previously used other devices, the Asyst Touch has been received with great enthusiasm.

We are excited about the opportunity to provide state-of-the-art products and services to the patients served by the Foundation and look forward to continuing that service in 2009.

For more information on the Foundation's augmentative communication speech device program, please contact Claire Owen, LPN, director of patient services at 847.745.6020 or cowen@lesturnerals.org.