

# COMPUTER

## NEWS AND NOTES

### COMPUTER ACCESS WITHIN REACH FOR SHRINERS HOSPITAL PATIENTS

(NAPSA)—After a spinal fusion, Ryan, a patient at the Twin Cities Shriners Hospital, in Minneapolis, Minn., wanted to get back to his routine. For many 13-year-old boys, an average routine includes computer video games. However, Ryan accessed the computer in a way that is considered anything but average.

Ryan wears a brace that covers his torso and limits his range of motion. This cumbersome brace is at times uncomfortable, but Ryan can ease this discomfort by sitting on the floor. The hospital accommodated Ryan's unusual sitting position on the floor with a specially designed computer that extends from a moveable arm, which is attached to the hospital's schoolroom wall. Because this particular computer is adjustable, Ryan can play his favorite computer game, "Jump Start," in complete comfort.

While 15-year-old Dan was an inpatient for several days, he had computer access. However, he accessed a different type of adjustable computer, which is not attached to a wall but is self-contained and moveable. This moveable computer was a miracle for Dan because it came to him.

Since Dan was confined to a 2,000-lb. bed, he was not able to go to the schoolroom or any other area of the hospital. For class or therapy, staff had to come to him. The portable computer has made it possible to bring learning and high-tech recreation activities to isolated patients like Dan.

"Assistive technology is a growing and much-needed teaching tool in many hospital schools. Shriners Hospitals are leading the way in bridging the gap between technology and children with physical limitations," said Debra Blondeau, schoolteacher.

The self-contained, moveable computer that Dan used has a touch-screen monitor, wireless



**A specially designed computer that extends from a moveable arm on the hospital classroom's wall, offers Ryan easy access to playing his favorite computer game, "Jump Start," in comfort.**

input, wireless Internet access, voice recognition software and an ergonomically adjustable cart that allows patients to lie on their backs or stomachs and use the computer.

Craig Jaakkola, a Shriners Hospital volunteer, noticed that children who could not use a standard mouse or keyboard, or could not sit up to see a standard screen, were unable to use a computer by themselves. So with the help of the information systems and child life staff, he was able to use his computer experience to create a computer setup that would include patients of all physical abilities.

For more information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607, or visit the Web site at [www.shrinershq.org](http://www.shrinershq.org). Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States, or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.