Most of us take it for granted: We get up in the morning, get dressed, brush our teeth, and start our day. But for people with disabilities, facing these daily routines independently is one of the most coveted privileges, and also one of the greatest challenges.

Today’s technology is often the bridge that makes such independence possible. Over the last few decades, an unprecedented number of technological tools have created new opportunities for people with disabilities—and changed the way therapists help people with disabilities live as independently as possible. UAB occupational therapist Laura Vogtle, Ph.D., says that assistive technology prescription, assessment, and training is one of the fastest-growing areas in occupational therapy today.

New Tools for the Trade

“In the past, occupational therapists mostly worked with low-tech tools—reachers, dressing devices, eating devices, and so on,” says Vogtle, an associate professor in SHRP’s Division of Occupational Therapy. “But in the last 15 years there’s been a virtual explosion in other kinds of functional technology.” In addition to improvements and innovations for wheelchairs, adaptive phones and computers, and driver-training instruments, Vogtle notes that instruments originally designed for the general public have had a marked impact. Electric garage door openers, software that translates spoken words into text, and devices that turn lights on and off are conveniences for “typical” people, but they can provide a new level of independence for people with disabilities.

SHRP’s OT students are trained in assessment and prescription of assistive technology during their studies and in their postgraduate internships. But they also get invaluable preparation for incorporating assistive technology in a very nontechnical way—through fund-raising. As phenomenal as today’s technology may be, its price tag is often a barrier to its utilization.

“Our students are really wonderful about contributing to the purchase of assistive technology for some of the adults in local group homes,” says Vogtle. SHRP physical therapy students also help raise money to cover technology expenses that insurance won’t—and that cost is often considerable. “Medicaid, in most states, doesn’t cover things such as environmental controls—door openers, electronic doorbells, and telephone modifications,” says Vogtle. “Many individuals could live on their own, with only some simple daily assistance, but it’s very difficult to get the funding to pay for the technology they need to do that. It’s a huge problem.” She notes that the fund-raising experience is valuable for
students as well, because in the field, fund-raising skills become even more important.

**Engineering Resources**

Vogtle is participating in a special project with the School of Engineering to help address the growing need for technology resources. With a grant from the National Science Foundation, undergraduate mechanical engineering students of Alan Eberhardt, Ph.D., are designing and building devices for people with disabilities. Vogtle, who is certified as a technology expert by the Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America, offers consulting and assistance on many of the projects. Students have built devices such as adjustable-height computer tables and game tables for group homes, a modified hole-punching device, and diagnostic wheelchairs for children with disabilities. "It’s been a great collaboration," says Vogtle. "Not all of the projects have worked, but most of them have, and it’s been really positive." With each project, the students help fill a need for technology that otherwise might be unaffordable.

"One goal for this program is to arrange for OT students to follow up on these devices and get some feedback on how the devices have worked—and, if they haven’t worked, why not," says Vogtle. "It feeds very nicely into what we're trying to teach our students, which is how to evaluate the interventions that they're using in different populations."

The people who can benefit most from these advances in technology are often those who face the most barriers to affording and implementing such new tools. Vogtle says collaborations between engineers, physical and occupational therapists, speech pathologists, and teachers are essential to bring the best innovations to people with disabilities. "Assistive technology is a real teamwork issue," she says, "and it's a huge part of our goal to help people live as independently as they can."

**LOCAL anesthesia**

*Addressing the South’s CRNA Shortage*

We’ve all heard about the graying of America—about how life spans are stretching, and how this longevity will affect society. The story has been covered so thoroughly that we can easily tune it out.

But Joe Rue Williams, CRNA, M.S., director of the Department of Critical and Diagnostic Care’s Master of Nurse Anesthesia program, can relate some aging statistics to make you sit up and take notice. "The mean age of nurses nationwide is 43," he says. "For nurse anesthetists, the mean age is around 48. We've got a shortage of CRNAs now, and we're looking at the possibility of a real shortage in the near future. It's bad nationwide, but in the Southeast, it's worse."

Williams plans to change that. He and his staff have been supplementing UAB's Birmingham-based CRNA curriculum with a satellite program that targets specific areas of the Southeast where the shortage of nurse anesthetists is acute. Satellite program sites in Mobile and Jacksonville, Florida, draw applicants from these areas, bring them to Birmingham for an intensive, nine-month training component, and then return them to the regional sites where they complete an 18-month clinical program under the instruction of on-site faculty.

The result is a common-sense balance of resources and needs. "The field program provides a way to educate CRNAs in a cost-effective manner, by eliminating the administrative cost of separate programs," Williams says. "Our students who go back to Mobile or Jacksonville will essentially be returning home for their clinical training. If they stay, we begin to fill the shortages in those areas."

Williams is also negotiating for additional remote clinics in Dothan and Huntsville, noting that the CRNA shortage is hardly a short-term issue. "I don't foresee us saturating the market in the near future," he says. "In fact, I think we'll be running wide open for at least the next 10 years."
**ARMED with INFORMATION**

Alums Take Management to the Military

Graduates of SHRP’s M.S. in Health Informatics program take their talents to a variety of health fields. Several alums are currently using their skills in information management in one of the world’s largest health systems: the U.S. military.

"Because SHRP’s program has the management focus and a goal of preparing CIOs, we are different from many of the other health or medical informatics programs," says Eta Berner, Ph.D., professor of health informatics. "I think the military has groomed many of its officers to move into that type of position." She notes that there is a "long blue line" of Air Force officers who have graduated from SHRP—one candidate almost every year since the HI program’s inception.

Mike Fravell, who graduated in 1999, is an Army officer who used his training at SHRP to help create his current position as CIO of the Army Dental Command in San Antonio, Texas. Dental Command oversees the world’s largest comprehensive dental system, providing care to more than 450,000 active-duty soldiers worldwide and their 95,000 family members. "I oversee the information management team," says Fravell, "which provides computer application development and support for 172 Army dental clinics around the world."

Fravell says that although military health systems operate much like any other health system, there are certain advantages. "Everything we do technology wise is leading edge," says Fravell. "We’re always a step ahead of the civilian community in matters of standardizing and centralizing things, because we have the ability to make a decision about programs that we want to implement and then have complete assurance that the users will comply with our systems."

"A number of new army positions are being created for information management," he adds. "There aren’t many training programs like SHRP’s, which is health-care oriented and also addresses the computer and information management field."

**METABOLISM matters**

Dietitians Deal with Genetic Disorders

A new baby is born. A nurse takes a quick blood sample, and most parents are fortunate enough to never have to know what happens if that sample shows that something is wrong.

Newborn blood tests check for genetic irregularities of many kinds—including inborn errors of metabolism, which interfere with the synthesis of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, or enzymes. More than 500 inborn errors of metabolism have been discovered so far; each of them can cause medical and/or developmental disorders.

Some of these errors are untreatable, but some can be treated in part by dietary restrictions. Dietitians play a key role in helping families adjust to these often stringent requirements. Students in SHRP’s Dietetic Internship program may rotate through UAB’s Inborn Errors of Metabolism Clinic, which provides services to patients with these genetic disorders and their families.

Janet Isaacs, Ph.D., R.D., a researcher in the clinic, notes that one of these errors, phenylketonuria (or PKU), is solely treatable by diet. "People with PKU cannot metabolize the amino acid phenylalanine," says Isaacs, "so it builds up and can damage the brain and other organs." Untreated PKU results in severe and progressive mental retardation. But with a diet that strictly limits the intake of protein, and therefore phenylalanine, children can grow up to live normal, healthy lives.

"Compliance with the diet is very difficult," notes Isaacs. "PKU patients can’t eat any foods containing protein—even pasta and bread must be limited." Special low-protein substitutes for some foods and formulas are available, but these products are expensive; a jar of low-protein peanut butter costs more than $7.

Isaacs says that although many obstacles remain to treating every child, dietitians working very closely with families can find ways to keep PKU children healthy. "It’s fascinating to see how diet can make the difference between a healthy child and a person who will have irreversible disabilities," she says.
Romanian native Andreea Voinea-Griffin, D.D.S., came to UAB as a Fulbright fellow with an additional International Peace Scholarship from the P.E.O. Sisterhood, a philanthropic educational organization. When she graduated from the M.S. in Health Administration program in August 2000, she left with an award for academic excellence from the MSHA alumni association, SHRPs Alfred W. Sangster Award for the Outstanding International Student, and UAB’s Academic Excellence Award for an International Student. “I was very efficient,” she jokes of her many achievements.

Having completed her health administration residency with David Fine, CEO of UAB Health System, Voinea-Griffin is currently in Washington D.C., on a fellowship from UAB’s Lister Hill Center for Health Policy. While her future goals are “wide open,” she hopes to apply her skills in academic medical centers and health care administration education.

“It’s a very challenging field because it’s so rapidly changing,” says Voinea-Griffin. “It’s complex, and it has so much importance in people’s lives. A physician’s impact is on the patient he treats, but an administrator’s decision can impact a great number of people concurrently.”

Voinea-Griffin feels her background has made her uniquely prepared for the challenges of health care administration. She has an M.B.A. and also practiced in and managed her own dental clinic in Romania for five years—where working in a more turbulent economic environment had its advantages. “There are a lot of things that you learn in books but you can’t see here clearly because the change happens incrementally,” she says. “When a society goes through huge economic upheaval like Romania is going through now, everything changes overnight, and you can see the effects and the implications very quickly. I got a lot of experience in a very few years.”

One of the things that Voinea-Griffin considers a great challenge for the American health-care system is insurance. “I come from a system of socialized medicine,” she says. “I don’t believe in socialized medicine for the U.S., but I’m disturbed that a country with so many resources can’t find the right way to handle the uninsured problem here.”

On August 18, 2000, the following students were recognized for outstanding performance during the academic year:

**School-Wide Awards**
- Cecile Clardy Satterfield Award
- Tracy A. Podraza
- Alfred W. Sangster Award for the Outstanding International Student
- Andreea Voinea-Griffin
- Charles Brooks Awards for Creativity
  - Melissa Sexton
  - Marie Shunnarah
- Dean’s Leadership and Service Award
  - Matthew C. Wyatt
  - Gary Cooley

**Program Awards**
- Allied Health
  - Thompson T. Abercrombie Distinguished Graduate Student Award
  - Sandra K. Gilley
- Respiratory Therapy
  - Medical Specialties Faculty Award
  - Deanna C. Harrington
- Medical Specialties Clinical Excellence Award
  - Melissa Hopkins
- Medical Technology
  - Michael S. Branham
- Health Informatics
  - Outstanding Graduate Student
  - James M. Hughes

**ANNOUNCING: NEW shrp DEAN**

Harold Jones Will Join UAB in April

After a national search, the School of Health Related Professions is preparing to welcome its next dean—Harold P. Jones, Ph.D., who currently serves as dean of the School of Allied Health Sciences at East Carolina University. Jones will join UAB this April.

“I want to thank Dr. William Bailey, professor of pulmonary and critical care medicine, for chairing this successful search, and all the members of the search committee for their efforts through this process,” says UAB Interim Provost Arol Augsburger, O.D. “We are most grateful, too, to Dr. C. Michael Brooks, who has served with distinction as interim dean this past year and will continue in that role until Dr. Jones arrives.”

Jones has served as dean at East Carolina since March 1992. He earned his bachelor’s degree in biology from Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, and his doctorate in biochemistry from Duke University.

“Dr. Jones brings a tremendous breadth of experience as an administrator, instructor, and researcher,” says Augsburger. “I am very pleased that we have been able to attract a person with such outstanding credentials.”
FACULTY FOCUS: DONNA slovensky

Allied Health Goes Online

For Donna Slovensky, Ph.D., director of the B.S. program in Allied Health, education is strategy. The veteran instructor and researcher—whose interests in health-care delivery include a strong focus on strategic management—constantly seeks better ways to connect her product with its target market. “I am first and foremost an educator,” she says. “But what I do in the classroom is apply the disciplines I study.”

Slovensky’s interest in strategic management has launched her courses into cyberspace, where she has been able to overcome many of the conventional difficulties of a program geared at busy health-care workers. “The primary market for the B.S. in Allied Health is employed health professionals,” she says. “They are part-time students taking courses at night. Online courses give them more flexibility to work on assignments according to their own schedule.”

And the assets of online courses go well beyond flexible convenience. Slovensky is able to offer students an abundance of information via the Web, including PowerPoint presentations, video lectures, chat rooms, and bulletin boards. Many conventional class formats, such as independent studies, may lack some of these tools.

Slovensky also sees the virtual classroom as breaking down old geographic boundaries of education, and she plans to take the Allied Health program to an even broader audience than UAB. “There are very few programs like ours,” Slovensky says, “so we believe we have a large market outside the Birmingham area—customers out there in a broader market who need this product. Using today’s technology, we can provide them with the same content a student would get sitting in a classroom.

“What we’ve done for the past 25 years—which is essentially to lecture and work face-to-face with students in a classroom—is not the only way we can do this anymore.”

ALUMNI PROFILE: ELLEN templeton CARROLL

Good Food, Good Taste, Good Nutrition

For Slovensky, education and strategic management go hand in hand.

As senior editor of projects for Cooking Light magazine, SHRP Dietetics Internship alumna Ellen Templeton Carroll likens herself to Mikey, the Life-cereal-tasting child icon. “If it doesn’t fall directly into the pages of Cooking Light, they give it to Mikey,” she laughs. Carroll oversees such projects as Cooking Light’s cruise, its kitchen makeover contest, and special publica-

tions for Cooking Light magazine. She also does media spokesperson work, from the Food Television Network to NBC’s “Today” show.

“When I talk to nutrition students about what I do, they wonder what it has to do with nutrition,” says Carroll. “But I tell them that I couldn’t do my job without a strong food and nutrition background.” One of the main goals of all Cooking Light projects is to help make good nutrition a livable part of everyone’s everyday life. “If we can get people excited about cooking, maybe we can get them cooking Cooking Light recipes, and then we’re getting them to eat healthier.”

Carroll, who graduated from SHRP’s program in 1977, also has a master’s degree in nutrition science from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. She wrote the “Cooking Light” column in Southern Living magazine for three years prior to the launch of Cooking Light magazine in 1987. The evolution of her career into the realm of mass media has been “a wonderful opportunity and a great challenge,” she says. Instead of treating hospital patients with immediate needs, Carroll translates important information to the general public—promoting lifelong good nutrition.

Carroll says her work allows her to use her training in a way that best suits her strengths. “It has allowed me to grow, both personally and professionally,” she says. “We help people understand that light cooking is a celebration of good food and good taste, and that it’s not a sacrifice.”
At the age of 27, Michael E. Stephens was building a successful career in publishing when he injured his spinal cord in a diving accident and was paralyzed from the neck down. Doctors predicted he’d be lucky to regain partial use of his arms—and that he’d never walk again. Stephens didn’t accept that prognosis.

After six weeks in traction and two months of intensive rehabilitation at UAB, Stephens walked out of the hospital and into an enormously successful career in health administration. Thirty years later, this SHRP alumnus is still a testimony to the power of determination and enterprise. He is also providing for SHRP students to follow in his footsteps, with a $250,000 endowment to create the Richard A. Lind Scholarship for the M.S. in Health Administration program.

Stephens earned his M.S.H.A. from SHRP in 1971. In 1975 he became executive director of Lakeshore Hospital—at that time a small rehabilitation facility—and transformed it into a world-renowned center for rehabilitation and a model for the restructuring of several rehabilitation systems in this country and Britain. In 1986 he founded ReLife, a successful comprehensive rehabilitation system that merged with HealthSouth in 1994. He also founded the Lakeshore Foundation, a charitable organization supporting the development of programs for people with disabilities, in 1984.

“After achieving much of what I’d wanted to do in my career, I began to wonder what I could give back to the community that had supported me for so long,” says Stephens. He chose to pay tribute to his longtime friend, mentor, and fellow SHRP alumnus Richard Lind, who recently retired as president and CEO of Memorial Health Systems in Ormond Beach, Florida. Lind has had a distinguished career in health administration in both Alabama and Florida, and his son, Trent, is a student in SHRP’s Department of Health Services Administration.

“Dick helped guide me to making a commitment to rehabilitation. I wanted to recognize him for what he’s done, for me and for the rehabilitation community as a whole. Considering his commitment to the field of health administration and to the SHRP program, I thought the best thing I could do would be to endow a scholarship in his name here.” Stephens’s gift will help SHRP pass Lind’s legacy on to other deserving students at UAB—ultimately benefiting the field of health administration nationwide.

The Campaign for UAB is blazing toward its goal—recently raised to $350 million—to support the university as it continues to provide high-quality education and world-renowned health care to Alabamians and people worldwide.

In September 2000, the campaign kicked off a special phase of fund-raising: the Faculty and Staff Campaign. Led by former UAB presidents Richard Hill, M.D., and Charles McCallum, D.M.D., M.D., this ambitious endeavor plans to raise $10 million from UAB employees by 2003.

“As members of the UAB family, we all have a stake in the success of the Campaign and the success of the university,” says Shirley Salloway Kahn, Ph.D., vice president for alumni, development, and external relations, “and many of us have already joined the cause. We’re in the unique position of seeing UAB’s needs firsthand—and knowing how support from the campaign can make an immediate difference.”

UAB employees also are invaluable in their ability to lead by example. “When we as faculty and staff members give of our own resources to support programs that are meaningful to us personally, we send a message to the community,” says UAB President W. Ann Reynolds, Ph.D. “Gifts from faculty and staff are testimony that those who know the university best are willing to invest.”

For information about the Campaign for UAB or to support SHRP’s role in this endeavor, call Andrea Martin, director of development, at (205) 934-4159. You can also send contributions to: The Campaign for UAB/SHRP, WEBB 634, 1530 3RD AVE S BIRMINGHAM AL 35294-3361.
Anita Burnett Turner, R.T. Certificate (Burnett ’74), works in respiratory therapy at HealthSouth Metro West in Fairfield, Alabama. She is married and has a 15-year-old daughter.

Charles P. Gray, M.S.P.T. ’75, is an assistant professor and founding faculty member of the physical therapy department at the University of South Alabama. He was named the 1999-2000 Sebastian Professor/Faculty Member of the Year by the university’s student government association. His son, Jeremy, works as a physical therapist at UAB Hospital.

Charles E. Lilly, B.S. in Physical Therapy ’76, has worked in home care for Gentiva Health Service in Florida since 1987.

Melanie F. Dale, B.S. in Respiratory Therapy (Farren ’81), married Donald Dale, Jr., in 1986. She is a substitute teacher for the Walker County, Alabama, Board of Education. Her daughter, Ashley Michelle, is nine years old and in the fourth grade.

Carla Allen, B.S. in Occupational Therapy (McLendon ’82), married Barry Allen, assistant director of media relations for the University of Alabama, in July 2000. She works as an education coordinator in organizational development and education for the DCH Health System in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Ramsey Jennings, M.S.H.A. ’83, is president of The Jennings Group, Inc., a senior-housing consulting firm specializing in development and contract management of assisted-living facilities in the Southeast. He lives in LaGrange, Georgia.

Marina Bynum, M.S.P.T. (Woods ’89), married Ken Bynum in 1990. After working as a physical therapist for three years, she became a stay-at-home mom when her oldest daughter, Kathryn, was born in 1993. She has two other children—David and Laura—and she currently homeschools Kathryn and David.

Molly Dayton Bargainnier, B.S. in Occupational Therapy (Dayton ’91), was married in 1998. She works as an occupational therapist in the Jefferson County School System in Birmingham and lives in Hoover, Alabama.

Elizabeth R. Ambard, M.S.P.T. (Buckley ’93), is clinic director at the Physiotherapy Association in Alabaster, Alabama. The clinic treats adult outpatient orthopedic patients, has a certified hand therapist, and offers pediatric physical and occupational therapy and speech therapy. Her husband, a native of Venezuela, is a dentist and is studying prosthodontics at UAB.

Rita Edwards, B.S. in Allied Health ’95, has been promoted to vice president of clinical and administrative services at Walker Baptist Medical Center in Jasper, Alabama.

Mike Valentine, P.A. Certificate ’96, became coordinator for the cardiac surgery program at White County Medical Center in Searcy, Arkansas, this year. His second child, Molly Michelle, was born July 18, 1999.

Deborah Corpening, B.S. in Medical Technology (Givhan-Corpening ’97), gave birth to a son in May 2000. She previously worked as a medical technologist in a blood bank at Scott and White Memorial Hospital in Temple, Texas.

Marcelino Lin, Jr., M.S.P.T. ’97, is an acute-care physical therapist at Northeastern Alabama Regional Medical Center. He has two daughters, four and two years old, and his wife, Cathryn, is writing a book.

Kimberly Morris, B.S. in Occupational Therapy ’97, has been promoted to center manager at the HealthSouth Outpatient Rehab Center in Gretna, Louisiana. She lives in New Orleans.

J. Todd Lewis, M.S.H.A. ’00, is a lieutenant in the United States Navy. He has been promoted to administrator in the USS Theodore Roosevelt Battle Group Medical Department, which consists of the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt CVN 71 and several surface ships and submarines.
In addition to a new dean arriving this April, the school is pleased to note the recent appointments of nine new faculty members:

- **Gerald L. Glandon, Ph.D.**, Department of Health Services Administration. Glandon serves as the new chair of this department. He has a distinguished career in research, health administration education, and academic administration. Prior to joining UAB he served as program director of the Department of Health Systems management at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Medical Center in Chicago.

- **Philip Blatt, P.T., NCS**, Division of Physical Therapy. Blatt is an experienced clinician with expertise in the management of patients with vestibular disorders. He is in the final stages of completing his doctoral degree in physical therapy from the University of Miami.

- **Jeffrey Burkhardt, Ph.D.**, Department of Health Services Administration. Burkhardt previously served as senior assistant director of research at the American College of Radiology in Reston, Virginia. He specializes in health-care finance and has published several articles in health administration journals.

- **David Fine, M.H.A.**, Department of Health Services Administration. Fine is CEO of the UAB Health System, and his primary faculty appointment is in the Department of Health Services Administration. He was recruited from Tulane University, where he served as professor and chair of the Department of Health Services Management.

- **Stephen O’Connor, Ph.D.**, Department of Health Services Administration. O’Connor serves as director of the MSHA program. He previously served at the Parkland Memorial Health and Hospital System in Dallas, Texas, and was a member of the Health Care Administration faculties of Saint Louis University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

- **Anthony Patterson, M.S.H.A.**, Department of Health Services Administration. Patterson serves as assistant director of the MSHA program. He has a varied professional background that combines knowledge and experience in health-care management, clinical nursing, health-care product development, and the application of Internet technologies. He has served at UAB Hospital, Covenant Health System in Knoxville, and Pyxis Corporation in San Diego.

- **Claudia Peyton, M.S., OTR**, Division of Occupational Therapy. Peyton is the new chair of this division. She was recruited from Creighton University, where she served as chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy (see her profile in the Summer 1999 issue of SHaRP Banner).

- **Claire Spiro, M.H.S.**, Department of Critical and Diagnostic Care. Spiro is a clinical coordinator in the Surgical PA program. She has served at Children’s Hospital in Denver, Colorado, and at Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland.

- **Janet Steiss, Ph.D., D.V.M., P.T.**, Division of Occupational Therapy. Steiss is an experienced researcher with a background in veterinary medicine and physiology.