

# **LifeStream to Launch LifeTech Program to Promote Assistive Technology Services**

LifeStream recently announced the launch of LifeTech, a new initiative dedicated to providing greater access and knowledge of technology for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and/or autism. In addition to the hundreds of individuals that LifeStream supports, LifeTech services will also be made available to the larger community of people with disabilities and their families living in the greater Fall River and New Bedford areas.

LifeTech will address five main objectives including awareness, accessibility, assessment, training and targeted implementation of technology solutions. Its primary goal is to increase self-sufficiency, technological equity and enhanced ability for people with disabilities to participate in all aspects of life. Funding for the program will be provided by The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

LifeStream developed an internal Assistive Technology committee in 2018 to formalize the need for enhanced technology services for the individuals they support. The committee developed an evaluation assessment tool that was highly praised by DDS, which shared it with other organizations as a best-practice resource. Melissa Pepin, LifeStream's Therapy Services Director and Assistive Technology committee chair, received the 2019 Innovation Award from the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers (ADDP) for her innovative techniques to help raise awareness and successfully implement technology into the everyday lives of those they support.

“The LifeTech program aligns perfectly with LifeStream’s mission of fostering independence and improving the quality of life for our individuals,” said Doug Hughes, Vice President for Clinical Services. “The need for enhanced technology services was made even more evident over the past year as we dealt with the challenges of Covid 19. Technology was crucial in keeping our residents and program participants engaged and connected to our staff, our services, and their family members.”

LifeTech will address issues related to technology access with the creation of a lending library for equipment and devices that can be loaned out for short periods of time and will also partner with Comcast to assist with access to affordable internet service and obtain low-cost computers. A LifeTech website is currently in development.

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