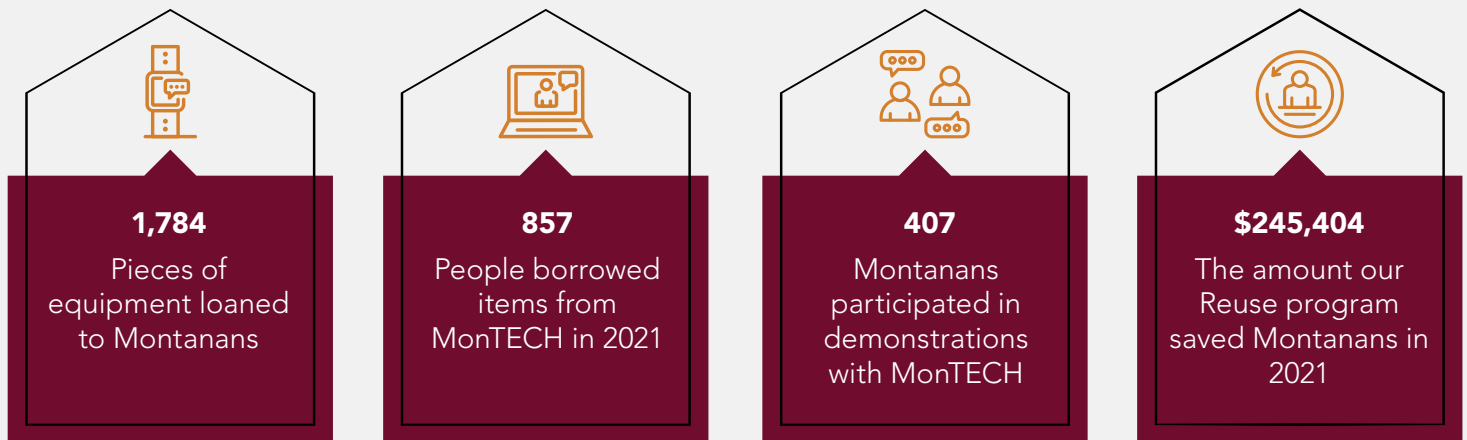




**20
21** | **ANNUAL
REPORT**

MONTECH PROVIDES TECHNOLOGY,
SUPPORT, AND SERVICES THAT **IMPROVE**
THE **QUALITY OF LIFE** FOR MONTANANS
OF ANY AGE WITH ANY DISABILITY.

By the Numbers in 2021



Numbers reflect our fiscal year ending 9/30/2021

MonTECH Eliminates Our Last Financial Barrier!

Prior to January 1, 2021, MonTECH provided free loans of assistive technology (AT) and adaptive equipment, free 1:1 support, and free shipping. The only cost left to our clients was return shipping. Seems like a small thing, right?

Return shipping for high-end loan items can hit \$150-\$200. That's serious money for folks who likely have medical expenses and live in a state where 12% of our citizens live in poverty and average per capita income is \$31,151.

By relieving clients of return shipping costs, MonTECH eliminated our last accessibility obstacle. We can now say with total confidence: **any Montanan can access MonTECH.**



Our Commitment to Communication

MonTECH supports Montanans with complex communication needs, their families, and their educators and therapists. MontCOMM, our annual AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) conference, is a full day of learning with recognized experts. 2021 marked the third year of this "awesome, most applicable conference of the season."

How MonTECH Serves Montanans

Demonstrations

Needs change as an illness progresses, and MonTECH works to provide supports for each phase. This year, 32-year-old veteran Justin Payzant came to MonTECH with his wife and caregiver, Krista. The love between them is palpable and we were determined to help make life more comfortable for them.

Visits to our lab resulted in loans of communication devices and a more supportive wheelchair to use while waiting for funding of a new chair. Justin, Krista, and their son were able to join a camping trip with extended family with the use of MonTECH's Emma X3 All-terrain Wheelchair and wide camp cot. Justin's participation was important to the whole family – MonTECH was grateful for the opportunity to support their time together.



Device Loans

Daphne Magruder's rare diagnosis affects every aspect of her life: speech, mobility, processing speed, and motor skills. What it does not affect: her ability to recreate with her family, thanks to adaptive equipment.

Daphne and mom Kassi have borrowed switch-adapted toys, seating systems, and adaptive recreation equipment. Sometimes the equipment they borrow isn't perfect, but leads them to the right fit. "I borrowed the adaptive sled and it was too big," Kassi recalled. "But I googled that same manufacturer and found they make a slightly smaller sled. She loves it, and it's an awesome way for her to recreate with the other kids." Can't put a price on that!

Evaluations

Four-year-old Thomas has conditions that cause strokes and tumors, and his loving extended family works hard to meet his needs for comfort, communication, and safety. Mom Brittany was glad to find MonTECH. "You come home with this child who needs so much," she said. "That's why I'm so grateful to MonTECH. We can ask to borrow some of these things."

Summer 2021, Thomas and his parents spent a week working with MonTECH in tandem with a team at U of M's School of Speech, Language, Hearing, and Occupational Sciences. The partnership meant focused troubleshooting to find the right equipment for Thomas. Bonus: Thomas got to meet the UM Griz football team!



Reuse

Charles "Chuck" Webber, 99, is no stranger to tough situations. He served in the U.S. Air Force on 60 missions during World War II. But in recent years, macular degeneration has stolen away much of his vision and it's been hard to take. An avid reader, Chuck built a massive library to enjoy in his retirement, but his progressive eye disease wrecked plans to enjoy his carefully curated books.

A long-term loan of a CCTV from MonTECH made a powerful difference. This desktop device magnifies text and changes contrast to improve readability. Ironically, this CCTV was donated to MonTECH by the daughter of another 99-year-old WWII veteran, James W. Hahn. Chuck explained the impact: "Suddenly you can read again and it's a whole new world."



Financial Assistance

Rhea Snider, 79, needed hearing aids. Not just any hearing aids; custom hearing aids to fit an ear damaged by a childhood stroke. She also wanted Bluetooth capability so she could connect directly to her smart tv. Hearing aids like that come with a hefty price tag: \$5,425.

Rhea contacted the Montana Assistive Technology Loan Program (MATL), MonTECH's financial loan program managed by Rural Dynamics in Great Falls. She was quickly approved. "The payments are very reasonable," Rhea said. "It's not like I have to quit eating or quit buying my normal things. It fits my budget."

MonTECH's financial assistance loans doubled between 2020 and 2021! Apply for an AT loan at matl.ruraldynamics.org.



Technical Assistance Ensures an Accessible Boat Dock

A lesser known service MonTECH provides is 'technical assistance' (TA). Businesses and programs can contact MonTECH for free help assessing accessibility of physical and online sites.

This year, the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks asked MonTECH for TA related to an accessible dock. MonTECH's director accompanied FWP staff to the state park to discuss optimal positioning of the dock and offer recommendations on fishing and boat launch options.

We also assessed websites for accessibility and suggested equipment for an indoor playground for children with autism. If you are concerned about inclusion and accessibility, MonTECH is ready to help.

Transition Training

Every year, MonTECH does trainings for high school students planning their next steps. We expose them to assistive technologies that mediate challenges and support success, whether they plan to attend college, a certification program, or enter the workforce.

Hands-on projects ensure MonTECH's workshops make an impression on students likely to need some technological support to succeed after high school.



Virtual Trainings

Virtual education is an important training option in our vast, rural state. In 2021, our team conducted free online trainings for education teams, vocational rehabilitation teams, and agencies providing in-community care for Montanans with developmental disabilities.

Focusing on AT for education and employment, we spotlighted apps and devices for note-taking, behavioral support, and dyslexia, as well as tools to increase independence in the workplace. AT can decrease the need for 1:1 supervision – an extremely important consideration in the midst of the current worker shortage.

Food Network Has Nothing on Us

MonTECH Director Molly Kimmel and Media Design Specialist Wisam Raheem may have bright futures as the next Food Network stars. This year they created two cooking classes for adults with disabilities.

Online CHEW classes (Cost-effective Healthy Eating), in partnership with a regional Center for Independent Living, showcased adaptive cooking tools. Multiple cameras and mounts gave participants the best possible remote experience.





“ These devices literally saved my life and provided me a little bit better quality of life during my recovery from ankle reconstruction. And the staff was very courteous, kind, and helpful. ”

“ MonTECH has definitely played a part in my journey. And not just the technology, but in being validating during a time when everyone around me was not. ... I am very grateful to have worked with nonjudgmental professionals in my effort to help myself and move myself forward. ”

“ Staff was very kind and patient. They went above and beyond to be sure I understood what was being explained and the options I had available. It was an amazing experience for a difficult topic, as I am an adult with learning disabilities. ”

“ You guys are absolutely awesome! I think your presentation was perfect and I loved how hands-on it was! ”



MonTECH Turned 30 This Year!

We made our 30th anniversary an opportunity to connect with consumers past and present by selecting daily winners of anniversary-edition Bluetooth speakers or Bluetooth beanies. Winners included the physical therapist who borrowed the most equipment from MonTECH in 2021, and a teacher who borrowed an accessible music instrument for her students.

Between October 1st and October 31st, we posted 64 Facebook posts and selected 36 winners of speakers and beanies – MonTECH's logo sits on desks and warms heads all across Montana!



MonTECH serves Montanans virtually or in-person at our physical locations in Missoula and Billings (by appointment). Borrow assistive technologies and adaptive equipment through our website, or contact us to discuss your needs and/or make an appointment.

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