Staying Safe and Independent
How Technology Can Help

Can technology be used to keep a child or adult with special needs safe? More and more technological devices and applications are being developed for just this purpose! Here are a few of these devices and how they work.

Wearable devices

The Leo Watch can be worn on the wrist of a child or adult and can keep track of their location. Inventor Jason Sullivan thought it would be an effective tool for locating lost children, caring for adults with Alzheimer's disease, and prevention of child abduction. The waterproof watch features a GPS signal for locating the wearer, a panic button that calls 911 if the wearer needs help, built in voice communications, emergency contact information, and a tamper proof lockable wrist strap. The Leo Watch is scheduled to be launched next spring for an expected price of $250. For more information go to **http://leowristwatch.com/** .

The PocketFinder is a small personal GPS locator device that provides real time information for the device and the loved one carrying it. Caregivers are able to locate the wearer through a website or mobile application. Caregivers can also receive alerts if the wearer goes outside of a geographic zone. They can be worn by people or pets, attached to vehicles, luggage etc. The cost of the device is $150, plus a monthly service fee of $12.95. For more information go to **www.pocketfinder.com**.

Apps for your Mobile Device

AbleLink Technologies has developed several apps for use on the iPhone, iPad, or windows devices. The Community Sidekick app for an iPhone was developed to increase the safety and mobility of an individual with special needs in the community - perhaps while the individual is learning mobility skills, or for someone who may lose their way and needs a little more support. It sends automated emails to let a friend, family member or other caregiver at regular intervals, on the user's location. The Community Sidekick App is available at the Apple App Store. For Windows mobile users, the WayFinder uses GPS based audio and visual cues to support independent travel for the user, and can provide customized prompts for navigating a travel route. Caregivers can send a text message and receive an automatic return text message with a map link to the traveler's location. The WayFinder is listed at $799. To learn about more AbleLink Technology developments for the support of people with cognitive disabilities, go to **www.ablelinktech.com**.

Home Systems

Companies like Alert1, Phillips Lifeline, Life Alert, SimplyHome and Sengistix operate emergency response systems which can be used to support independence for seniors and people with disabilities in their homes. They range from a simple device worn at home, to a complex system of sensors that can be installed within a home setting to support family caregivers, supported living agencies, or licensed

residential services. Such systems and devices are able to monitor activity within the home, and detect problems or unusual activity such as falls, wandering, smoke or carbon monoxide, etc. and send alerts to trained responders at call centers. For more information go to: **www.lifealert.com, www.Alert-1.com, http://philips.lifelinesystems.com/ , www.simply-home.com/ , and http://sengistix.com/** .

Support from Law Enforcement Agencies

In our area, the Torrance Police Department's Return Home Registry is a program designed to assist officers in locating lost or wandering persons when they go missing from their home or caregivers. This program is geared towards persons of all ages with conditions that would make it more difficult for them to find their way home, such as persons with Alzheimer's, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome or other special needs. The registry maintains a searchable database that can provide police officers with the vital information they need to locate and return family members. This voluntary program is offered at no cost to participants. Families and caregivers can submit a registration form online to be entered into the online database. For more information go to
http://www.torranceca.gov/TPD/18621.htm