



Contact:

S. Meghan Duke

2616 Pointe North Blvd, Albany, GA 31708

(229) 888-6852 office (229) 344-2665 cell

sduke@albanygaarc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2009

Wii-hab

Video Games Are Becoming the New Trend in Rehabilitation

ALBANY, Ga – Twenty-three years after The Nintendo Entertainment System first video game console premiered in the United States in 1986, a new Nintendo system, Nintendo Wii has taken the video game industry as well as many American households by storm, and now at Albany Advocacy Resource Center (Albany ARC) the game system is starting to be used as a form of physical and occupational therapy to help improve movement and motor skills.

The Wii gaming system is based primarily around its wireless controller, the Wii Remote. The controller is a television remote sized device that uses accelerometers in three axes as well as an infra-red sensor bar to recognize gestures in an environment. This technology creates a video game system that relies on three dimensional movements to cue real-time responses within the software.

Rehabilitation centers all over the country are approaching Wii game systems as a part of the physical therapy routines for patients recovering from illnesses, strokes, accidents, and combat injuries. The Wii is useful in occupational therapy because it helps them redevelop the coordination to relearn daily living skills such as brushing teeth and combing hair.

Consumers at The Albany ARC Adult Day Program are finding recreation and therapeutic opportunities in Nintendo's Wii. The ease of use of the controllers and the interactivity of the games makes the Wii a unique and rewarding gaming experience for people of all ages and abilities. It benefits balancing, arm movement, eye-hand coordination, range of motion, and much more. It does not discriminate based on mobility and even people in wheelchairs can play some of the games.

Wii Sports includes five different activities: tennis, baseball, bowling, golf and boxing. Consumers enjoy re-creating the motions to play the video games, just as they would if they were at the lanes, in the ring, or on the field, court, or links. The movements required to play the game have the potential to work with rehabilitation individuals with physical and cognitive impairments.

Video games are fun to play, which facilitates motivation for therapy and in turn influences performance. Consumers play against the system or another consumer or staff members creating competition as well as an unexpected benefit of positive group interaction between consumers.

Albany ARC hopes that community members will see the benefits the Wii has had on consumers and, follow the lead of Wal-Mart, Ms. Mary Johnson Allen, and Porterfield United Methodist Women's group who contributed to purchasing the video game system, and donate Wii games to the Albany ARC Adult Day Program.

About Albany ARC

Albany Advocacy Resource Center is the leading non-profit provider of services in Southwest Georgia for individuals with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities and other special needs. For nearly 46 years, Albany ARC has offered help and hope to children and adults living with disabilities, and to the families who love them. Through therapy, training, education and support services, Albany ARC creates life-changing solutions to help people with disabilities live, learn, work and play. For more information, visit www.AlbanyARC.org.

###