

# > 100th Centre Milestone!

## Momentum Skills Launches Assistive Technology Facility

Ian Karten felt inspired as he watched a young man, who was paralysed from the neck down, beam with pride after writing his first ever letter using a chin-operated keyboard.

**R**EALISING THE POTENTIAL of technology to transform people's lives, Ian set himself a goal to open 100 Computer-aided Vocational Training, Education and Communication (CTEC) centres. In 2011, this dream became a reality when the Ian Karten Charitable Trust funded its 100th centre at Momentum Skills in Glasgow.

Momentum Skills' new centre was officially opened by Glasgow Central MP Anas Sarwar in September. The facility is now assisting people with disabilities across the city to access computers, providing support to individuals in developing skills that will improve their quality of life and enable them to undertake further education or training, or gain employment.

As well as offering training and support in using standard computer applications and the internet, the centre has a range of assistive technologies to support individuals in using the equipment. Family members and personal assistants are also offered training, allowing them to provide additional support



Anas Sarwar MP tries out some of the technology at the centre.

to clients while, thanks to a suite of portable equipment, an outreach service is available to people unable to access the centre.

Dougie Taylor, Momentum Skills' Head of Operations, tells *Rehab News*, "We are thrilled to host this new facility at Momentum Skills and at becoming the 100th Karten CTEC centre. The centre provides assessments to identify the assistive technology solutions that best fit individuals' needs, as well as training on how to use the various technologies. Some of the specialist technologies at the centre include advanced speech-recognition software, screen-reading programmes and a large range of ergonomically-designed furniture and

devices such as computer mouses and keyboards. The access to technology provided by the centre is opening more doors for people with disabilities across Glasgow."

Ceri Hibert, Network Development Manager for the Ian Karten Charitable Trust, says, "It was always Ian Karten's vision to have 100 CTEC centres for disabled people funded through the Trust. The network of centres is a wonderful legacy to Ian, and one that continues to have an impact. Thousands of people have benefited from the use of technology to improve the quality of their lives and enhance access to employment and training. We are delighted to be associated with Momentum Skills in the setting up of this 100th CTEC centre."



Pictured (left to right): Dougie Taylor, Head of Operations at Momentum Skills; Colin Baird, Manager of the new centre at Momentum Skills; Anas Sarwar MP, and Ceri Hibert, Network Development Manager for the Ian Karten Charitable Trust.

**Ian Karten MBE, 1920–2011**

Ian Karten was born in Vienna in 1920 and moved to Germany at the age of three. He experienced anti-Semitism at his German high school and so in 1937, aged 16, he moved to a Jewish school near Cologne. It was here that he was introduced to the Cambridge School Certificate syllabus that prepared him for later education in Britain. The following year, Ian got a place at London University, where he studied Engineering. Ian was given a scholarship to complete his degree, and vowed to pay back what he was given. He did so by awarding over 3,000 scholarships, and endowed a professorship at Southampton University.

After university Ian served in the Air Force. His father and brother had been shot in a concentration camp. His mother and sister had been sent to a different camp. His sister died, but his mother survived and was reunited with Ian after the war. She lived with him in the UK until her death.

After the war, Ian joined Multitone, a medical electronics company where he eventually became the Chief Executive. After seeing a young man use a chin-operated keyboard to write a letter, Ian knew he wanted to direct his trust funds to set up IT centres for people with disabilities. Since 1997, 108 CTEC centres have been set up. The first was at Ravenswood Village in Crowthorne, and the 100th at Momentum Skills in Glasgow.

Ian Karten MBE died in May this year. He is survived by his wife Mildred, who remains a trustee of the Ian Karten Charitable Trust. ■

**Getting a Taste for the Web**

Bridie Gallacher took a one-day computer taster course at Momentum Skills' new CTEC centre in Glasgow in September this year. Bridie enjoyed it so much that she decided to take her computer skills to a new level by signing up to a European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) course at the centre. Bridie tells *Rehab News* about her experience.

Before I took early retirement, I was using computers in my job but problems with my sight and coordination meant I found it hard to keep up with people who were more familiar with computers. I was embarrassed to ask questions if I had any problems with the computer and my confidence was at rock bottom.

I heard about Momentum Skills through Glasgow Disability Alliance and signed up to do its one-day taster course on safety and security on the web. I am now working towards gaining an ECDL qualification at its centre. The equipment there makes a great difference to me. As I have cerebral palsy and osteoporosis, the adjustable desk, chair and footstool I'm using makes accessing the computer much more comfortable. Also, the bigger computer monitor



along with a larger keyboard makes it easier for me to use the computer.

I find Momentum Skills' staff very supportive and the one-to-one support they provide is great; they really help boost my self-belief. I can't praise them enough; they think of everything and are very flexible, working around my other commitments.

I'm going to get a computer at home soon and the training I'm receiving at Momentum Skills is helping me become more confident of using one. Having a computer will open up more opportunities for me. For example, I will be able to research places that I would like to visit to make sure they are accessible, keep in touch with family who live overseas like my nephews in Germany and London, access cheaper deals online, catch up with programmes I've missed on the radio and book theatre tickets.

**WHO TO CONTACT**

**Colin Baird**

*Manager*

Momentum Skills  
Room 203, The White Studios,  
62 Templeton Street, Glasgow  
G40 1DA

Tel: 00 44 141 550 4922

E: colin.baird@momentumscotland.org

W: www.momentumscotland.org