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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Signal Centers Charts Fresh Direction for Assistive Technology Services**

*Deardra McGee to Lead Program and Upcoming White Cane Awareness Day*

**[CHATTANOOGA, TENN.] October 7, 2024** **–**After 33 years of providing resources, devices, and training for self-sufficiency, Signal Centers’ Assistive Technology Services is turning a new chapter with Deardra McGee at the lead.

McGee was attracted to the role, because the work is brand new but still in a similar vein with the rest of her career. All throughout, she’s been in the trenches developing relationships for the betterment of the community.

“I love being in the community and especially serving a population who may not have access to services or those who may need assistance in negotiating a recent disability,” said McGee.

She retired from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 2019 after 28 years of service. Her focus there was readying youth for college, as well as preparing college students for life in the real world. She then worked for Big Brothers Big Sisters, where she exposed kids to the world of work by pairing them with mentors. After, she spent time at United Way of Greater Chattanooga, overseeing tutoring through a grant from the Tennessee Department of Education.

McGee wanted to continue to reach out into the community to educate and engage. But she was ready for a new challenge. Enter Assistive Technology Services.

As one of only two organizations to provide technology services through the Tennessee Technology Access Program and enabling technology through the Department of Aging and Disability in the state of Tennessee, the program covers a 34-county area and focuses on providing tailored solutions. The program also serves managed care organizations, such as United Healthcare, BlueCare, and WellPoint. These services come in the form of technology trainings, demonstrations and loans, as well as home and workplace adaptations.

“We’re excited for the renewed energy Deardra brings to this pivotal program that improves quality of life for those with a disability,” said Carolyn Boyd, Chief Programs Officer at Signal Centers. “Under her direction, Assistive Technology Services will continue to eliminate barriers and promote inclusion for clients by helping them navigate a tech-driven world as independently as possible.”

McGee’s first initiative is an event for White Cane Awareness Day on Oct. 15 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Carver Community Center. The goal is to bring the community together to celebrate the independence of those with low to no vision.

Spearheaded by the National Federation of the Blind, White Cane Awareness Day highlights the importance of an essential tool. The white cane is an extension of a person’s arm that allows for quick assessment of the world and the ability to move freely and safely with speed and confidence.

Those attending the event will find assistive technology demonstrations, smart phone assistance, accessible board and card games, and white cane mini clinics.

As a big-picture, forward thinker, McGee is excited about the potential for Assistive Technology Services and tapping into new areas of expansion. She aims to increase community partnerships and clients served.

“I want Assistive Technology Services to be a hustling, bustling building here in Chattanooga, and readily accessible in our other counties,” said McGee. “I look forward to working with our partners in this effort.”

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**About Signal Centers**

Signal Centers has been a cornerstone of the Chattanooga community since 1957. Its comprehensive early childhood education and disability services focus on fostering lifelong learning and independence for all. From one classroom of nine children with cerebral palsy to a statewide organization comprised of 13 distinct programs, the nonprofit’s mission of self-sufficiency remains unchanged. For more information, visit [signalcenters.org](https://signalcenters.org).