

In Honor of Dr. Carol Utay

Winner of the International Association of Business Communicator's

Pittsburgh Business Communicator of the Year Award

By, Diane Hartman

When I heard about the IABC/Pittsburgh Business Communicator of the Year Award, I was only able to think of one professional that exemplified not only the characteristics of a great communicator but a wonderful person as well. Dr. Carol Utay has demonstrated a continuous commitment to communication in her professional and personal life. I had the utmost confidence that she was the most qualified candidate and would be deserving of this award.

As the Executive Director of the Total Learning Centers for the past ten years, Dr. Utay must tailor her message to a variety of public sources every day, from parents and students to neuro-psychologists, school administrators, advocates, attorneys to pediatricians and psychiatrists. She seamlessly transitions from one audience to the next. This skill set is vital when communicating to children and adults with disabilities.

Her extensive experience working with this population helps her understand her audiences' needs and she has learned how to make a lasting impact on their lives. She has such a deep love and commitment to education and is willing to do all that it takes to help a student of any age become an independent learner. Dr. Utay is exceptionally innovative in devising communication strategies that employ the widest possible range of tools, each appropriate to reach a specific audience. She is not only locally recognized but is a national expert who speaks throughout the country and has been widely published. However, beyond these powerful and important traditional mediums, Dr. Utay is a master at social media.

Her adoption of innovative technology comes at no surprise to those who know her. Since 1980 she has been an advocate for technology integration into the public school system. When most of us were working on typewriters, Dr. Utay as the Director of technology for the Shelton School and Evaluation Center in Dallas, Texas, was instrumental in the development of technology integrated into the curriculum and then developed a teacher application training module. Her early integration of technology helped shape her career.

Dr. Utay is at the forefront in her industry. Even with her time in great demand, she developed a Facebook tutorial program for parents. She believes it is especially important for parents to understand how social networking can be a powerful tool in business by directly communicating with your public. Professionally, I have known Dr. Carol for over 14 years. As

the Supervisor of a Mental Health Children's Program, I would collaborate with her and refer students to Total Learning Centers because I knew the student I was referring to her would receive best practice education strategies. I also knew that she had the ability to change their lives. I have witnessed this many times.

I was fortunate to be hired by her as the Director of Student Services at Total Learning Centers for the past four years. She has been my professional mentor and teacher. I have not only grown professionally, but as a person as well through her continuous advisement and leadership.

Personally, I believe her to be one of my dearest and respect friends. She has the ability to take a person where they are, accept them for who they are, and then through her communication style, teaching and mentoring... that person will be enriched with newly learned intrinsic skills that will last them a lifetime. I am honored to introduce you to the Communicator of the Year, Dr. Carol Utay.