

To make the maximum possible contribution to the quality of life for all amputees.

Step Ahead

Winter 1991

Institute for the Advancement of Prosthetics (non-profit) Lansing, I

REMEMBER Your year-end contribution is tax deductible. Please include us in your giving this year.

Lansing company helps visiting Polish amputees compete in marathons



Marathon runners from Poland (L-R: Zbigniew, Grazyna, Janusz, Roman, Elizabeth) display their new prostheses manufactured using CAD/CAM technology. I.A.P. staff prosthetists are Sam Cratch, CP, Teri Lammers, CP, and Jerry Vilminot, CP.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

makes "A Dream Come True"

Imagine yourself going to work one day and being involved in an accident that requires amputation of both your legs below the knee. Then consider the pain, trauma, and delays involved before you're able to be fitted with prosthetic legs--from two to five YEARS depending on how long you must wait for a PERMIT TO RECEIVE a prosthesis! Once you get permission, you must again wait for at least SIX MONTHS to see a doctor before initial fitting can proceed. Another SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS will pass before you receive your final prosthesis--and you'll have to wear it even if it is uncomfortable because you know you can't get another one.

Such a situation is considered normal in many parts of the world where the technology in use is several years out of date. Experiencing what can be accomplished with the latest computer-aided-design/manufacture (CAD/CAM) technology would be like traveling from the 17th into the 21st century. For five amputee runners from Poland (three men and two women, one a double amputee), the I.A.P. was a dream come true.

After seeing amputee runners from the U.S. compete in European marathons without the aid of crutches, the Polish runners came to the U.S. with the international Achilles Track Club to compete in the Detroit, Chicago, and New York marathons. At the request of Poland's Minister of Health, the I.A.P. agreed, as a gesture of good will, to provide the time and technology necessary to fit the runners with new prostheses. Cost to produce the six legs was covered jointly by the Achilles Track Club and I.A.P.

Willing interpreters from the Lansing area Polish community volunteered their time to translate to enable their countrymen to understand what we were doing during the process of fitting the new legs. Only in this way was it possible for the prosthetist to know if the amputee felt pain or discomfort, and then correct the problem so that the limb would fit properly and comfortably.

JANUSZ MARYNOWSKI was born July 7, 1966, in Rypin. He is a single student. He is a right below-knee amputee, having been born with a congenital birth defect. He said that "the time I've spent here has been wonderful. The people and service are marvelous. I'm dreaming, like probably everybody, to have this technology come to Poland."

GRAZYNA DOMAGALSKI was born May 30, 1953, in Dola Vkruska. A birth defect left her a left below-knee amputee. She is divorced and works as a secretary. "This visit brought me happiness. The hospitality is wonderful. I wish we had this prosthetic technology in Poland. I'm very delighted."