

I think for most of us that are reading this message there are things that we take for granted: every day things; opening mail and reading it and paying bills with checks or through our on-line banking accounts. For most of the students here at EmpowerTech these things are done with assistance usually by another person. The following story will anger and appall you but I promise it has a very good ending.

The main character of this story is Sarah (not her real name for privacy purposes). Sarah is one of our recent Blind/Low-Vision program graduates, she is extremely independent and even more so after completing the program. There were still a few things that she did need help with, primarily opening of her bills and then writing the checks. She did have a hired assistant who would come in a few hours a week to help her with this. Sarah and her got along very well and a trust began to form. For several months, a few hours a week, the assistant helped Sarah with her finances. Then one day by sheer luck, Sarah called her bank to check her balance. She was overdrawn and the check that the assistant wrote for her rent was going to bounce. Very upset and beside herself she called Tom Lange, EmpowerTech's Blind/Low-Vision Director. Tom immediately calmed her down and helped her navigate along with her bank's assistance, the source of the overdraft, a check was forged by the assistant. The bank acknowledged the problem and replaced the funds. A few days later and through a series of phone calls, Tom taught her how to use on-line banking.

You see there are things you and I take for granted; opening our mail, paying bills and on-line banking. But now because of EmpowerTech and Tom's help our Blind/Low-Vision students are all being taught and taking advantage of on-line banking even furthering their independence.