



PHOTOS BY ERIC STOCKLIN

# Kris Appel

## ENCORE PATH

More than 5.5 million Americans are living with a stroke and the number is expected to rise as baby boomers age. Some of them will be able to live better with a device that Kris Appel has brought to market through Encore Path, the firm she founded and heads as CEO.

Appel was in a program for women

technology entrepreneurs at the University of Maryland Baltimore County and was looking for technologies to license when she became aware of BATRAC, a device developed by researchers at the University of Maryland Medical School that restores and improves arm movement in stroke patients.

“My previous career had nothing to do with stroke but I was intrigued by the device. The university had secured a patent on it and it was available for licensing. The inventors were inspiring and wanted me to help them get it on the market. After I met them, I thought, ‘Well, somebody has to do this,’” Appel says.

So she did it, with Tailwind BATRAC, a re-engineered, newly

designed version of the original device that enables production manufacturing. The Tailwind was redesigned by engineers at Sagentia, a local engineering firm that specializes in designing consumer-friendly medical products.

Now Encore Path holds exclusive worldwide license to the only clinically proven, low-cost device that stroke survivors affected by arm paralysis can use in their homes without the need of a physical therapist or health care worker. Appel and Encore Path expect it to reach more than 50,000 stroke survivors within five years.

“It was a great innovation and we have such a tremendous need for stroke rehabilitation that I felt this needed to get out on the market,” says Appel.

— By Alan Dessoff

