**Beverly Crull consumer profile**

**iCanConnect Helps Indiana mother and grandmother maintain close family ties**

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Beverly Crull has spent her entire life overcoming disability.

As a child, the 63-year-old Hagerstown, Indiana, grandmother taught herself to read lips because she was deaf in one ear and afraid she would get in trouble at school.

Born blind in one eye, Beverly developed optic nerve damage and lost sight in her other eye three years ago. While she retains 40 percent of her hearing in one ear with the use of a hearing aid, the gradual loss of vision and hearing left her feeling scared and depressed, she admitted.

“You feel like your world is shattered,” she said. “I was afraid I was going to live in a silent and dark world, and that was hard to cope with.”

But then, a vocational counselor told her about iCanConnect, the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, and after applying for the program, Beverly received an iPad and iPhone last fall.

“The technology blew my mind,” she said. “I got my life back. I got my independence back thanks to iCanConnect.”

The equipment Beverly received through iCanConnect is her lifeline to her son, who lives in Colorado and developed serious medical issues last year. Through Google Hangouts, she and her husband chatted regularly with him during his treatment.

“He said the thing that helped him the most was that he had contact with me on the iPhone and iPad,” she said. “A mother’s heart is with her children, I don’t care how old you are.”

Beverly also uses her iPhone and iPad to connect via email, Google Hangouts and Facebook with family in Iowa and Georgia, where she grew up. She communicates with her grandchildren in Texas, and uses her phone to text and send grocery lists to her daughter, who lives nearby.

A lifelong poet, she also appreciates being able to speak her poems into her iPad and share them with others. “I find it very comforting and therapeutic, and it wouldn’t be possible if it weren’t for the equipment I received through iCanConnect.”

“I’m finding so many different uses for the equipment. It has given me a lot of enjoyment!”

Beverly recommends iCanConnect to others with vision and hearing loss. The program, she said, “brings hope and sunshine into the lives of people who are struggling.”

She would be lost without the new technology, she said. “I am thrilled that I have my life back, and I want to encourage other people who are struggling and don’t know there are programs like iCanConnect out there to help.”

“It is a very emotional situation to go through, but don’t give up. Just keep fighting through.”