**iCanConnect profile - Hunter McGowan**

July 2018

**iCanConnect Helps Pennsylvania College Student Stay in Touch with Family Back Home**

Hunter McGowan has been a participant of iCanConnect, the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, since its inception as a pilot program six years ago. The 22-year-old Pennsylvania native was first contacted by an iCanConnect representative in 2013, when he was in high school.

Hunter, who was diagnosed with Usher syndrome type 2 when he was five years old, received an assessment through iCanConnect and was provided with the equipment and technology that best met his communication needs at the time, which included a desktop computer, screen reader and magnification software.

In 2016, Hunter applied for a reassessment of the equipment and technology he received through iCanConnect when he transferred to Edinburgh University in western Pennsylvania at the start of his sophomore year.

Based on his reassessment, Hunter received updated equipment and training, including an iPad and an iPhone to meet his distance communication needs as he adjusted to life three hours from home.

“It’s critically important for me to have a support network I can connect with, especially living away from home for the first time,” says Hunter. “I use my iPhone and iPad to make phone calls, FaceTime with my family and friends, and message my classmates.”

Hunter also uses his equipment to keep in touch with professional acquaintances he meets through [DeafBlind Citizens in Action](https://dbcitizens.org/) (DBCA), a disability rights organization where he is a member.

“I’ve been involved with DeafBlind Citizens in Action for three years and I use diverse methods of communication within the organization,” Hunter says. “Thanks to iCanConnect, I have the technology and training to help me dial into conference calls, respond to emails from the executive team, review different documents, and communicate with board members via voice calls and text messages.”

“I’m extremely grateful I can stay in touch with my family and friends back home while I’m away at school, as well as communicate with my fellow classmates and professional acquaintances,” concludes Hunter. “iCanConnect has supported my distance communication needs from the start.”