Jose Magallon consumer success story

***Georgia man regains communication, pursues education with iCanConnect***

June 2015

Six years ago, Jose Magallon was a married commercial roofer and mechanic with a young daughter, when a drunk driver crashed into him, destroying his sight.

The tragic accident left the 52-year-old Duluth, Georgia, man feeling like he’d entered a dark room. With little depth perception, objects became hard to reach, and he had to use a cane to get around. He also suffered debilitating hearing loss.

“My accident was very traumatic for me,” Jose remembers. “I lost my job, my income, my house, my marriage fell apart – and I lived on the street for two years.”

His family understandably worried about him. “They didn’t know what to do,” he says.

During the time Jose was homeless, he learned about HOPE Atlanta, a housing program that connected him with the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, known as iCanConnect.

When he was able to get his own apartment, iCanConnect provided him with a new Dell desktop computer, a 32-inch big screen monitor, ZoomText reader software and a portable electronic magnifier. He also received technical training on how to use the equipment.

“iCanConnect’s staff really knows what it feels like to have these disabilities,” he says. “They taught me how to connect everything. They really take care of you, they take the time. These people have the passion for helping people.”

Now, Jose is able to communicate, handle his medical and personal matters and care for himself again.

“iCanConnect changed my life,” he says. “My life has been brought back to almost like it was before. It gave me the will to go out and do things.

“I don’t feel embarrassed to go out. Before, I felt that people felt sorry for me. But with iCanConnect, I have been able to deal with that fear and feelings of embarrassment. It’s surprising how technology changes people’s lives!”

Jose now stays in touch his mother and brother in Mexico regularly via phone (using an amplifying headset) and Skype. They worry less, now they can see him, he says.

iCanConnect also inspired him to return to school for his GED at Gwinnett Technical College. He’s interested in criminal justice and in helping others like himself, Spanish-speakers with disabilities.

“In school, I bring a camera and put it on my desk to magnify what the teacher is writing on the blackboard,” he says. “I can record the images – so I can take notes. I don’t have to rush and worry I will miss something.”

He’s taking a break now from classes as he awaits eye surgery, but he plans to continue. “I am still dealing with managing everything every day,” Jose says. “But this technology has changed my life – the quality of my life.”