**Massachusetts Woman Reconnects with Family Through iCanConnect**

Lori Siedman knows the pain of not being able to communicate freely. For years, Lori had little to no communication with her family. She was born deaf and became legally blind at age 11 as a result of Usher syndrome, a condition characterized by hearing loss and progressive vision loss. Lori Siedman knows the pain of not being able to communicate freely. For years, Lori had little to no communication with her family. She was born deaf and became legally blind at age 11 as a result of Usher syndrome, a condition characterized by hearing loss and progressive vision loss.

“I would sit in a room with my family and not be able to communicate with them. I’d have no idea what was going on. My parents would try to summarize what was happening, but I always felt very alone,” said Lori. Those communication barriers and Lori’s sense of isolation during her youth led to her feeling that she was living in a separate world from her family and friends.

Those challenges were not limited to family life. Staying in touch with friends through email proved just as difficult due to Lori’s struggle to read type on a computer screen.

That all changed when she was deemed eligible for the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, also known as iCanConnect, and received free equipment and technology for long distance communication. “The technology and equipment I received through iCanConnect makes it easy for me to communicate with others,” she said. “I feel more equal, more independent. It changed my life.”

Today, Lori uses a Macbook Pro laptop with ZoomText and a large monitor, which enables her to read and respond to emails from family and friends. Her iPhone has also opened new lines of communication with the family members she longed to connect with years ago. “Now that I’ve been able to reconnect with them, we text back and forth all the time,” she said.

“I’m really grateful for iCanConnect,” said Lori. “If I didn’t have my laptop, phone and tablet, I wouldn’t be able to do the things I can do now - like text my family and use email and Facebook to stay in touch. I wouldn’t be able to enjoy my life like I do now. It would be completely different.”

**Learn more about iCanConnect**

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