**Nolan Beavers consumer success story**

***Michigan teen stays in touch with friends around the country through iCanConnect***

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When 13-year-old Nolan Beavers left the International CHARGE Syndrome Conference in Chicago this summer, he had a powerful new way to stay connected with old friends: Facebook.

The Shepherd, Michigan, teen has profound hearing loss as a result of being born with CHARGE, a genetic condition that causes complex birth defects. His speech can be difficult to understand and he has colobomas (gaps in the structure of his eye), which are corrected by glasses.

In June, Nolan received an iPad and iPhone 6 Plus with communication software through the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, known as iCanConnect.

By the end of July, he was introducing a speaker at the CHARGE conference, using a combination of speech, sign language and his new devices.

“I think I was more nervous than he was,” said his mom, Jodie Beavers.

Nolan’s tablet and phone, along with its TouchChat and Glide apps, now allow the teen to stay in touch with friends all over the country – kids he’s seen at CHARGE conferences since he was 3 years old. “He loves going because he has so many friends like him,” Jodie said.

Nolan’s 16-year-old sister Mallory helped him set up his Facebook account, which he uses to share videos, pictures and messages with his friends. He even sends videos back and forth with his siblings and grandparents. He plans to use his new equipment to Skype with his big brother when 19-year-old Ethan goes to college this fall.

Nolan’s family learned about iCanConnect at school through his intervener, a person specially trained to work with people who are deafblind. He got his first chance to try out his new equipment when he attended speech camp in July at Central Michigan University.

He picked up the technology very quickly, Jodie said. “I think he figured it out before his clinician did.”

Jodie said her family feels Nolan’s new equipment is a “game changer” for him, allowing him to communicate more clearly and stay in touch with his family members and friends around the country.

“We are grateful, all of us, for iCanConnect,” she said. “We think it’s going to open up a whole new world for Nolan.”