**iCanConnect Participant Profile**

**Diane Graves, Indiana**

**iCanConnect Helps Indiana Woman Stay in Touch with Family and Friends**

**During COVID-19**

Diane Graves has always been a social person. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the 57-year-old Indianapolis, Indiana woman attended church and other social gatherings regularly. Once the pandemic hit, the in-person gatherings stopped for health and safety reasons. However, thanks to the equipment and training Diane received through iCanConnect, also known as the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, she stays in touch with friends and family, and keeps in contactwith church members from home using the equipment she received through the program.

Diane lost her vision by the time she was two years old as a result of retinoblastoma. Hearing loss due to radiation treatments progressed over the years making it difficult for her to communicate in certain situations.

Through her job, Diane learned about iCanConnect. After she applied and was accepted into the program, Diane had an assessment by the local iCanConnect Indiana representative to determine the best equipment to meet her distance communication goals. Through iCanConnect, Diane received a braille notetaker, smartphone, and a portable braille display.

“In places such as large meetings, crowds, and other areas where there is a lot of background noise, it’s not easy to hear conversations. That is where the isolation comes in,” said Diane. “Loud environments make it nearly impossible to hear the screen reader on my smartphone as clearly as I need to in order to send a text message or email that makes sense. This is where my portable braille display comes in handy for text messages and emails.”

“My equipment has been a blessing,” she continued. “I’m so thankful to have been introduced to the iCanConnect program and have this technology at my fingertips. The application process was painless and now I’m able to communicate with my family and friends in any situation. I’m really glad this program is available to those who need it!”

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