

**Mom Make-Over**

***iCanConnect Powers Transformation for South Carolina Woman***

Call it the iPad make over.

42-year-old Renae Addison of St. George, South Carolina – a mother of two teen-agers - has no hearing and very little vision; access to technology has changed almost every aspect of her life, even her appearance.

“There’s been a physical transformation,” explains Sharon Giovinazzo, who works as a trainer with the [National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program](http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/national-deaf-blind-equipment-distribution-program), which is promoted as [iCanConnect](http://www.icanconnect.org). “I have seen Renae go from a person who was in the house all the time wearing a pair of shorts and a man’s white t-shirt to a person who gets her hair done and gets dressed up.”

Addison, who a year ago knew virtually nothing about Facebook, now maintains a nearly constant presence on social media. With her new technological tools, it’s easy to connect with family and friends and share her passion for football and other things. Through this new connectivity, she has also landed a job selling nutrition and weight loss products online.

“I can talk to people about anything I want,” she says. “There are so many options on Facebook. You get to meet people, it’s really cool. I don’t feel as isolated.”

Along with the indispensable iPad, Addison also received other communications technology through iCanConnect, including a MacBook Pro laptop computer, a video magnifier and an Apple TV, which provides extra large closed captioning. The equipment – and the individual training sessions with Giovinazzo – were provided at no cost.

Her newfound access to technology has transformed Renae Addison’s life. She has a new job, a new look, and she is about to take on another new challenge: becoming a trainer for the iCanConnect program.

“I am so excited, I want to show the world,” says the enthusiastic mom from rural Saint George. “I’m proud to share this technology with people who are deaf-blind as I am. I feel like it’s opened doors for me.”

“Renae is such a natural with technology and has such a passion for it,” explains Giovinazzo. “She will mentor somebody else and will be able to help break someone else out of isolation and despair.”

iCanConnect provides a wide array of communications technology and training to individuals with significant combined vision and hearing loss, who meet income guidelines. Consumers are assessed to determine what equipment - iPads, phone amplifiers, screen-reading software, and other tools – will best help them stay connected. The program is available in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Learn more at [www.iCanConnect.org](http://www.iCanConnect.org). The website is accessible to users with low vision and those who use screen readers, and it features video that is both audio described and captioned. Information about iCanConnect is also available by calling 1-800-825-4595 | TTY 1-888-320-2656.

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