

**iCanConnect Helps Nashville Man Read the Newspaper for the First Time in 15 Years**

Perry “Woody” Neal loves to tell stories and jokes. But what he loves most in life is his wife, Charlotte, of 53 years. The soon-to-be 75-year old knew she was the one after just two dates.

In his 40’s, the Nashville man lost his hearing completely. Neal says he thought he’d be okay because he could read lips. But in his 60’s, doctors diagnosed him with age-related macular degeneration; first, in one eye; then a month later, in the other. Today Neal is legally blind.

He recently received a DaVinci magnifier, an iPad and a wireless keyboard from 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).

After 15 years, he’s reading the newspaper again! “That is one of the big things – that I am able to keep up with news,” says a delighted Neal. But it’s the iPad that he’s really is looking forward to mastering because that will enable him to communicate with family, send and receive pictures and truly feel like he is connected.

Sharon Giovinazzo, who provided one-on-one training for Neal as part of the iCanConnect program, says, “Woody is the epitome of what the program is all about. You’re never too old to start a new adventure.”

Monique Brazelton of the [Tennessee Regulatory Authority](http://www.state.tn.us/tra/), which administers the program for the state, says iCanConnect “is affording our consumers an opportunity to connect with people on a daily basis.”

iCanConnect offers a wide range of technology and training to people with combined hearing and vision loss. Familiar equipment such as smartphones and tablets, as well as specialized adaptive software, phone amplifiers and braille displays, are available at no cost to people who meet income guidelines.

The technology is a great help to Neal’s wife. Until now, she’d help him communicate by writing him notes. “He had to ask me for everything. Now, he has these machines.”

A determined Neal hopes to accomplish quite a bit. “Using all this equipment is like learning to ride a bicycle. Right now, I’m on training wheels. When I get the training wheels off, I think I will be able to master the system to help me communicate with my children and my grandchildren.”

iCanConnect is changing lives across the United States. The program is available in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. You can learn more at http://www.iCanConnect.org: click on “State Partners” to find each state’s contacts. The website accommodates users with low vision, people who use screen readers and features video that is both audio-described and closed captioned. Information about iCanConnect is also available by calling 1-800.825-4595 | TTY: 1-888-320-2656.

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