**Ashley Bruno consumer success story write up**

***Virginia Woman Strengthens Friendships and Gains Independence***

***through iCanConnect***

**May 2015**

Ashley Bruno is a young woman who exudes independence and confidence. The 21-year-old resident of Virginia Beach loves to cook, play games with friends and explore new places with her GPS.

But it wasn’t always that way. Ashley has CHARGE syndrome, a genetic disorder that often results in combined hearing and vision loss. Happily, when Ashley discovered the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, otherwise known as iCanConnect, in 2013, it radically transformed her life in a short period of time. “I love texting and FaceTiming with my family and friends,” Ashley says.“Being able to see who I’m talking to makes me feel connected.”

Ashley’s mother, Carolyn Bruno, says that the communication technology and training offered by iCanConnect has provided her daughter with an important new sense of independence.

“Having the phone immediately bonds her to other young adults,” says Carolyn. “Her eyes light up and a big smile comes across her face when her friends ask to put their numbers in her phone so they can stay connected.”

Before learning about iCanConnect, Ashley had a mobile phone, but its lack of adaptive features greatly restricted her ability to use it. The volume control and speakerphone were both insufficient for her needs. Her inability to communicate freely and independently left her feeling isolated from her family - including her two sisters, who lived away from home - and her friends.

Through iCanConnect, Ashley received an iPhone, iPad and a wireless amplifier.

After learning to use her new adaptive equipment with the help of an iCanConnect trainer, Ashley is able to keep connected and communicate with others in ways that she couldn’t have imagined before. By using FaceTime on her new iPhone, for example, Ashley is now able to see to whom she is speaking.

“Everything Ashley does on the iPhone is independent. She really picked it up quickly,” says Carolyn. “It demonstrates how smart and technically savvy she is.”

Not only has iCanConnect helped Ashley’s family discover a whole new side of this vibrant young woman, it’s also led them to think about her in a whole new way.

“Through iCanConnect and the technology she received, Ashley can communicate with others -- and it made us realize how smart she is,” says Carolyn. “We realized we were underestimating her.”

About iCanConnect: Also known as the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, iCanConnect provides distance communications technologies, training and resources to limited-income people of all backgrounds and ages with significant combined hearing and vision loss, empowering them to connect and engage with their family, friends and community. To find the iCanConnect representative in your state, visit <http://www.icanconnect.org/state-partners> or call 800.825.4595 | TTY: 888.320.2656.