**Lisa Downey consumer success story**

***iCanConnect Helps New Jersey Mom Conquer the Smartphone***

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Lisa Downey’s introduction to iCanConnect was random good luck.

The 52-year-old Bayonne, New Jersey mother of four happened to have the television on as she worked around the house back in 2013. It was then she heard an iCanConnect representative from New Jersey talking about the program.

“It was pure chance,” she said. “That was a very lucky day for me.”

Lisa was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa as a teenager and gradually lost most of her sight. She still has some vision, and uses a cane to get around. She began wearing hearing aids in both ears three years ago as a result of hearing loss due to Usher syndrome.

After hearing about iCanConnect, also known as the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, Lisa and her son went to [www.icanconnect.org](http://www.icanconnect.org) to find her local contact. From their research, they learned that iCanConnect provides free distance communications equipment and training to people with significant combined vision and hearing loss who meet federal disability and income guidelines. After qualifying for the program, Lisa received her equipment, including an iPhone, iPad and a new laptop with ZoomText.

At first, she was skeptical about her ability to master the new technology.

“I was still using a flip phone because I was intimidated by the iPhone,” she said. “But after the training I received through iCanConnect, I was like, ‘how did I ever not have this?’”

Now, she texts her kids and husband all the time. She keeps up with email on her phone, and she uses Facebook to keep in touch with friends and family across the country.

“I used to joke that I was going to be expelled from Facebook due to inactivity,” she said. “Now, I know when it’s everyone’s birthdays, like my cousin who lives in Las Vegas.”

The equipment and training Lisa received through iCanConnect have changed her life, she said. “It’s night and day. Before iCanConnect, I had a constant reminder that I had this disability and I couldn’t function as most sighted people could. Now, I might use these tools a bit differently than most others, but I can do almost everything thanks to the equipment and training I received through iCanConnect.”