**iCanConnect Helps Texas Man Stay in Touch with Family Near and Far**

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Carlos Ramos was desperate to reach his family when Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico last September. When power was finally restored, Mr. Ramos was able to successfully contact his family members via text message and learned they made it through the storm.

This communication would have been nearly impossible under the best of circumstances before the Houston man learned about iCanConnect, The National DeafBlind Equipment Distribution Program. Through a support group for individuals who are blind, he met iCanConnect trainer Eduardo Rangel, who reviewed the equipment and training available through the program for qualified individuals.

In his 79 years, Mr. Ramos has never been intimidated by technology, and he was eager to learn about a program that could help him reconnect with his family. His hearing declined progressively over the years, and in 1990, he lost his vision entirely due to complications related to diabetes. Mr. Ramos’ hearing and vision loss made it very difficult for him to connect with his family and friends. His only way to stay in touch with his daughter and two sons was through the use of a landline phone that was programmed by one of his sons. To say the least, communication was arduous and he was left feeling isolated.

With his love of technology and sheer determination, Mr. Ramos is now able to use the equipment and apply the training he received through iCanConnect - including an iPhone, desktop computer with JAWS screen reader, keyboard and speakers - to communicate with his family and friends.

Mr. Ramos uses his desktop computer with large screen monitor to email his daughter in Georgia and he uses his iPhone to send text messages to his sons who live nearby. “My children have busy lives and being able to send them an email or text message to check in on them gives me peace of mind,” he said.

Although his relatives in Puerto Rico still don’t have electricity consistently, he can send a text message to them and he knows he’ll receive one in return once the power comes back on. “I worry a lot about my family in Puerto Rico, and when I receive a text message from them, it lets me know they are okay,” said Mr. Ramos. “Being able to send and receive text messages has made a huge impact on my life.”

In fact, Mr. Ramos says the technology he received through iCanConnect has changed his life completely. “I’ve been blind for so long that I have no idea what a computer or an iPhone look like. But because of the great training I received, it’s easy for me to use the technology to communicate with my family and friends. I’m a totally different person. I can connect!”