Jan Attridge profile

Minnesota

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**Minnesota Artist Keeps in Touch with Family & Friends Through iCanConnect**

Jan Attridge is an 81-year-old artist who lives in Grand Marais, Minnesota, a quaint tourist town four hours north of Minneapolis. “I love the peacefulness up here,” she says.

When Jan began losing her hearing and vision a few years ago as a result of chemotherapy, she found it increasingly difficult to keep in touch with her friends and family, most importantly, her son Mark. “I was having trouble hearing on my landline phone and I was having difficulty understanding the messages that were being left on my answering system,” she says. “I was also having more and more difficulty delineating what was just said during a conversation.”

Jan was referred to iCanConnect, also known as the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, through the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. An iCanConnect representative visited Jan in her home and conducted an assessment of her distance communication needs and goals. Once she was accepted into the program, Jan received a Clarity desk phone, a CapTel phone, and an iPhone.

An iCanConnect trainer visited Jan and showed her how to use her new equipment. “My trainer, Heather (Anderson), is a prize!” she says. “Her creativity and patience allowed me to begin to understand how to use the tools I received through the program.”

Now, to keep in touch with her son Mark and the rest of her family and friends, she relies on the equipment she received through iCanConnect. “I love that I can boost-up the sound manually on my Clarity phone, and the CapTel phone is great because I can set it to answer after four rings and the message is written on the screen,” she says. “Additionally, when I physically answer the phone, after waiting until it ‘clicks’, this machine will write out what is being said by the caller, so I always have the right facts!”

With her iPhone, Jan enjoys taking photos of her surroundings and sends them to her son and her many friends. She also uses the photos in some of her paintings. “The equipment helps me stay connected with my family, friends and business acquaintances,” says Jan. “iCanConnect has been a godsend.”