December 2014

Dear Friend,

Christmas has come early for Richard, a long-time SHARE client who has cerebral palsy and is quadriplegic. For some time, Richard has been hoping to gain the ability to independently control his electric bed—that is, to adjust it up and down at the head and foot levels.

Thanks to the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering and its funder, SHARE, Richard’s wish has come true. You can hardly imagine what other things SHARE has made it possible for him to do. Read on.

For the past 7 years, Richard has been living on his own in an apartment complex. He uses several special systems adapted by Center engineers and operates them with help of a sip and puff tube, vocal commands and adaptive software.

One voice-activated controller allows him to run any device that responds to an infrared signal. By means of an X-10 interface, Richard can control his TV, air conditioner, radio, lights, CD player and more as well as a buzzer system to open the door to his apartment.

Richard controls his computer using a “QuadJoy” mouse that enables him to use a computer very effectively despite his inability to use his hands. This $850 mouse works in conjunction with an on-screen keyboard. Unlike many of our clients with cerebral palsy, Richard can speak and he can control the movement of his head. He grips the arm of the QuadJoy between his teeth and positions the cursor by moving his head. The QuadJoy has a sip and puff tube in the center of its control arm for clicking so this one device becomes both his keyboard and his mouse. He can do everything with his computer that you and I can do with ours. Without the technology that the Center has provided, Richard would have to rely upon others for every task and a computer would not be a part of his life.

Center staff members report that he is one of SHARE’s most technology-savvy clients. Richard accesses the Internet, does shopping online, writes e-mails, watches movies and more using a combination of his onscreen keyboard and a Dragon speech recognition program.

He enjoys an active life that absolutely would not have been possible without SHARE and its supporters like you.

I am writing you today on behalf of Richard and others like him. Since its inception in 1981, SHARE has made it possible for literally thousands of people like Richard to experience more fulfilling and independent lives. Dozens more are on our waiting list today. I would love to make it possible for these people to enjoy the same level of independence and productivity that Richard enjoys.
But I need your help. I would really like to make a better life possible for each of them. We have the experience and the expertise – we just don’t have all the resources we need. Our goal is simply to improve the quality of life of people with severe disabilities through the creative application of modern technology. Won’t you join us in that effort? The dollars you share will help change the life of a child, an adult or a senior. Need help with your holiday shopping? Your gift can be designated in honor of a friend or family member and we will send them a note telling of your generosity. If you want to make your donation in lieu of a gift to someone, just let us know and we will send them a nice letter. Here’s a case when one size does fit all and the color is perfect.

During this holiday season and other times of year, SHARE wants to make wishes come true for as many people as possible. There is no time more appropriate than now to think about others and do what you can to make their days brighter.

On behalf of the people who will benefit from your contribution, thank you! And I wish you the joys of the holiday season and a healthy and Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Lester W. Cory

President, SHARE Foundation

PS

If you are a recent donor, I hope you enjoyed reading about what you donation has made it possible for us to do for Richard and for many, many others. Your support is all that keeps us going. Thank you for all you make it possible for us to do. Les