


Life without limits





*To go where they want.
To speak for themselves.
To make their own way.*

*For people with disabilities,
this is the dream...
life without limits.*

In 1952, United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Chicago opened its doors to address the needs of children and adults with cerebral palsy. We've been opening doors ever since.

Over the past two decades, UCP has harnessed the power of emerging technologies and leveraged a growing network of relationships to create an evolving platform known as Infnitec. With a vision of "infinite potential through technology," Infnitec programs and services help people with disabilities not only survive but thrive, through assistive technologies, training and support.

Today, UCP helps people with a variety of physical, mental and economic disabilities enjoy richer, more independent lives. We help a child with cerebral palsy use technology that lets her speak for the first time. We help a man unable to use his hands or arms learn to do his own laundry and prepare his own meals. We help a woman in a wheelchair roll down her new ramp and back into the community.

*Life is full of possibilities.
UCP helps make them
more than a dream.*

I am Willie.



Life With Choices

To hear Meredith tell it, she only wants what most 12-year-old girls want: to go where she chooses, do what she pleases, and let everyone know exactly what she's thinking. But Meredith has cerebral palsy so severe it keeps her from talking, walking or even operating a manual wheelchair. Her disability could have been the end of the story. Instead, it's just the beginning.

UCP's Durable Medical Equipment Exchange helped Meredith's family overcome obstacles to mobility. A portable ramp lets her parents move her heavy motorized wheelchair indoors or into their mini-van. Now Meredith has the mobility she's always wanted and the freedom to take an active role in her family's everyday life.

And today, Meredith can speak for herself. Aided by a Dynavox, she finally has a voice. That's big news — especially to hear Meredith tell it.

UCP connects people with the equipment they need to live fuller, more independent lives. The Durable Medical Equipment Exchange — DME — gives people with temporary or permanent disabilities free access to equipment others no longer require, while the Assistive Technology Exchange Network — ATEN — collects, refurbishes and distributes computers as tools for better living.

I am Meredith.



Since its inception in 1995, ATEN has donated more than 30,000 computers to improve the lives of children with disabilities.

Linda



Liann



John

Life With Independence

Joe's cerebral palsy keeps him from using his hands and arms. But with equipment and training from UCP's assistive technology programming, he's doing the impossible — tackling the day-to-day tasks that will help him live independently. From folding his laundry to typing a message to sliding a letter into an envelope, each accomplishment brings him one step closer to the self-sufficiency he seeks.

John's cerebral palsy might have held him speechless. But through UCP, he has learned to talk using an infrared laser sensor that activates a Dynavox computer-generated voice. Now he's irrepressible, swapping jokes with his friends and rooting for his beloved Cubs.

Twin sisters Linda and Liann didn't let cerebral palsy stand between them and a paycheck. Both are hard at work, thanks to UCP training programs. Shipping and fulfillment jobs at UCP's Trutter Center offer Linda and Liann a consistent, supportive work environment — and the satisfaction of a job well done.

For children with disabilities, support services are plentiful. These programs stop once participants reach age 22 — but for adults with disabilities, the needs continue.

UCP's Adult Services bridge the gap, helping adults with disabilities live life as fully and independently as possible. At UCP's Trutter Center in Cicero, Levinson Center in Oak Park and Arthur & Mary Rubloff Center in Tinley Park, people like Joe, John, Linda and Liann gain the self-sufficiency, social life and productivity they want, along with the support services they need.



I am Joe.



Life With Mobility

A UCP volunteer for more than a decade, Regina never dreamed she would someday need our services herself. But a severe leg injury, requiring more than 30 surgeries in three years, left this once-active woman housebound.

For nearly a year, a flight of steps stood between Regina and the outside world, while mounting medical bills put construction of a ramp beyond her means. Determined to end her isolation, she was poring over the yellow pages looking for help when she found the listing for UCP.

Thanks to UCP's Ramp Up Foundation, a wheelchair-ready ramp now connects her house to the community, and Regina is on the move again.

UCP's Ramp Up Foundation believes that no one should ever be just a few steps away from independence. Since its inception in 2001, the foundation has constructed ramps across the Chicago area. In the future, grants from state and local government agencies, along with private philanthropy, will help Ramp Up expand its geographic scope and its services. Ultimately, the foundation plans to transform Ramp Up into a complete home modification program.

"I'm so glad I can go out in my wheelchair and smell the fresh air. My spirits have soared more than I can say. UCP changed my life."

I am Regina.

Life With Possibilities

Marquis learned something about technology today: When he clicks the button on the classroom's laptop, he starts music that sends his class into fits of dancing and hysterical laughter.

His new discovery came courtesy of UCP. Partnering with toy developer Lekotek, UCP created programs like ToyLend and CompuPlay that open new horizons for disabled and disadvantaged children. In opening the world of toys and technology, UCP makes learning child's play.

UCP gives children an early start toward a life full of possibilities. At-risk children face challenges that can severely limit their options later in life. But early exposure to technologies, support systems and socialization can open doors that might otherwise remain closed forever. Whether bridging the digital divide among low-income youth or providing technologies that help youngsters with disabilities interact with their peers, UCP helps put life's possibilities within reach.

To give children the very best start possible, UCP's First Tech Touch introduces parents and caregivers to the ever-evolving technologies available to help infants and toddlers reach their full potential.

I am Marquis.



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The story of United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Chicago is the story of people — people who embrace the challenge of life without limits. People with disabilities confront that challenge every day, and they look to UCP to help them meet it. We, in turn, look to our powerful partnership with generous, dedicated and enthusiastic donors and volunteers who, together, help us transform possibilities into reality, one life at a time.

Based on a vision of “infinite potential through technology,” Infinitec is a platform of programs and services that harness technology and leverage relationships to open a world of possibilities for people with disabilities.

Adult Services help people with multiple and significant challenges connect to the world around them through job training, skill-building for daily tasks, social and recreational opportunities, and access to assistive technology.

Assistive Technology Exchange Network (ATEN) is a program for refurbishing and recycling computers donated by corporations and individuals for distribution to children with disabilities. Each year ATEN distributes more than 4,000 computers — and diverts nearly 300 tons of e-waste from Illinois landfills.

Child and Family Services help children and their families live life to the fullest through the Infinitec North Early Education Center, which blends progressive childcare practices and inclusive special education services with innovative assistive technology resources. Parents and caregivers enjoy a much-needed, much-appreciated chance for rest and renewal through UCP's Respite Program, while toys and clothes distributed through the Holiday Fund bring joy and hope to more than 1,500 children and adults with disabilities.

Durable Medical Exchange is a searchable Web site where people with temporary or permanent disabilities can secure durable medical equipment — including hospital beds, motorized/manual wheelchairs, pediatric therapy equipment, canes and walkers — free of charge.

Early Intervention Training (EI) educates about 8,000 providers annually. Through the EI Training Web-site, UCP provides links to videos for online viewing, sends frequent updates on available training and handles an average of 100,000 requests monthly.

First Tech Touch introduces parents, caregivers and children to technologies that help infants and toddlers with disabilities develop fine motor, language, literacy and recreation skills through specially designed assistive technology, modified input devices and software.

Home-based Services help people with developmental disabilities thrive in their own communities, homes or small-group settings. In providing these services, UCP acts as a facilitator for Illinois' Home-based Support Program.

Infinitec Assistive Technology Coalitions is a grassroots effort to address the assistive technology needs of students, consumers, staff, families and leaders in more than 400 Illinois school districts comprising nearly 1 million young learners.

Information, Training and Education Services provide state-of-the-art multimedia education programs for professionals, families, children and adults with disabilities. To extend the reach of these services, programs are provided through seminars, manuals, CDs, DVDs, VHS tapes and online sources.

Ramp Up Foundation paves the way to greater mobility and independence for adults and children with disabilities. By overcoming obstacles as simple — and insurmountable — as a few steps, UCP helps reconnect people with the community. Plans to expand the program's focus include complete home modification for people with disabilities.

ToyLend/CompuPlay brings the world of play and toys to children with disabilities and their families in underserved areas of Chicago. These Lekotek programs provide families, their caregivers and professionals with resources and skills to help children with disabilities develop through play.

UCP also offers a range of job training and employment services, including:

Illinois CareerPath Institute, which helps people with disabilities gain valuable skills to succeed in the workplace. The program provides hands-on training for specific occupations, including office and industrial jobs.

UCPA Employment & Training, which offers career and employment placement services, including assistance with resume preparation, job search strategies and personalized career plans.