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Changing Lives

EagleEyes is an innovative eye controlled technology that helps children and adults with profound physical disabilities interact and communicate with other people by using the computer. Electrodes are placed above and below the dominant eye and on both temples to magnify the electrical signal of the eye and convert it into the mouse cursor. EagleEyes is designed for individuals who have little or no facial movement. The less facial movement the individual has the better he or she can master EagleEyes.

Opportunity Foundation of America

Vision Statement: To improve the quality of life for children and adults with severe physical challenges

WHAT IS EagleEyes?

EagleEyes is an innovative eye-controlled technology developed at Boston College in 1994 by Computer Science Professor James Gips. The technology enables communication and learning primarily for individuals who have severe special needs. These individuals are most often non-verbal, paralyzed, and have at most a “Yes/NO” method of communicating or are completely locked-in.

HOW DOES EagleEyes WORK?

Basically, the mouse pointer follows the location that the user is looking at on the screen. Essentially, the eyes replace the mouse. Each selection is made by looking at a small area of the screen for a short period of time, which causes a mouse click. Usable with any commercial software, EagleEyes is a general mouse replacement that is based on measuring a user’s EOG or electro-oculographic potential which indicates the position of the eyes relative to the head.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED?

Since 1994 EagleEyes technology has been used at the Boston College Campus School to evaluate and teach students with severe physical disabilities. In 2005, the Opportunity Foundation of America began a partnership with the Boston College EagleEyes project and signed a formal license agreement to manufacture and distribute the technology. Together they are bringing EagleEyes to the forefront of the disabled community. The purpose of the EagleEyes project is to help children and adults with profound physical disabilities interact with the outside world and communicate with other people by using the computer. EagleEyes is used for entertainment, communication, and education, including gaining access to the Internet. EagleEyes is manufactured in Salt Lake City, Utah by Sanmina-SCI and Plastic Fabricating. Manufacturing costs are $1,200 per system.
WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR EagleEyes?
The Opportunity Foundation of America will continue to raise funds for manufacturing, distributing, training, plus on-going research and development of the EagleEyes technology.

To sponsor an EagleEyes system for an individual or to make a donation, go to www.ofoa.net and click on DONATE NOW.

HOW CAN MY ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATE?
We are eager to reach additional special needs schools, non-profit organizations, and rehab centers who will benefit from using EagleEyes.

Mirna’s Story

In 2005, Mirna Maria Guadalupe Ramos, who currently resides in Huehuetenango, Guatemala suffered a devastating stroke during what would have been a routine medical procedure. As a result, her cerebral cortex was damaged making her completely paraplegic and lacking any motor skills. Since that time, she has been completely paralyzed and is only able to move her eyes. A group of friends have been looking for any means and ways in which they might be able to improve her life condition, even if it is just marginally. As a result, they discovered the “Opportunity Foundation of America” (OFOA), a non-profit organization that manufactures and distributes an assistive technology called EagleEyes (www.eagleeyes.org). The technology was developed at Boston College and allows individuals with severe physical disabilities to move the mouse cursor with the simple movement of their eyes or other facial expressions.

During the month of June, a collection was conducted by ADTRAN, my employer, in Huntsville, Alabama. The response was overwhelming, with $1,200.00 donated to OFOA for the cost of the EagleEyes system. A laptop and a flat screen monitor were also donated.

In July, we traveled to Guatemala. EagleEyes was set up and we began training Mirna’s family on how to use the system. The family is hoping that the technology will represent a big improvement in the quality of Mirna’s life since it would allow her to express her needs and perhaps most importantly, her emotions. It would likewise help to relieve her family of a great burden on trying to interpret what she is trying to say. The doctors tell us that she is fully conscious and can hear, smell and see. However, she has been inside a physical prison ever since that fateful day back in 2005 and is not able to communicate in any way with her family.

Now, with the support of EagleEyes Mirna will have the opportunity to play simple games and learn how to communicate with her family and friends.

We all know this is just the beginning of a journey together and that with love, patience and effort, we will see even greater results from our friend Mirna Ramos. She is a fighter and we all pray that with very hard work, one day she will be able to post a little note on this blog to express her emotions and feelings towards all of you that have blessed us all with your generosity and make this endeavor a reality.

We will be updating Mirna’s blog http://mirna-ramos.blogspot.com as often as possible to keep you posted on her progress. May God bless you all!