



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 9, 2009

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Commack High School Students Create Accessibility

Hauppauge, NY - - Under the supervision of teacher Richard Kurtz, students in the Commack High School Engineering Club have embarked upon a unique learning experience. As participants in a national competition, they are working to design a piece of adapted technology, which will enable a person with a disability to improve his/her job performance, increase productivity, and perhaps obtain a position that was previously unattainable.



Jerina Porterfield

The students contacted United Cerebral Palsy of Suffolk to identify a person with a physical disability, with whom they could work. Jerina Porterfield, a Receptionist at UCP Suffolk's Hauppauge office, who has Cerebral Palsy and uses a wheelchair, volunteered to be that person. She spoke with the students about her disability and explained how her limited range of motion can cause her frustration on the job by restricting access to deep or high cabinets, low desk drawers and standard office copiers.

The students considered the information Jerina had offered and came up with a way to address her needs while completing their project. They adapted standard office furniture and created mobile equipment to enhance Jerina's workplace mobility and efficiency and aid her with her daily office tasks. After submitting their initial designs and an accompanying video, the Commack HS students were selected as one of 25 semi-final teams from across the country. They installed the new accommodations at Jerina's workplace this week and the results are outstanding.

According to Jerina, "The best thing about the office enhancements these kids created is that I can now do things with my right hand! Before I was limited to using my left hand for everything at work. I also expend less energy and feel better about my ability to do my job." She continued, "With competitions like this inspiring kids to think out of the box, and youngsters anxious to take on such challenges, I can definitely see the future being universally accessible."

"Whether or not the Commack students win the national competition, they are thought of as winners at UCP Suffolk! We can't wait to see what they come up with next year," raved Marsha Gittleman, Director of Development.

About United Cerebral Palsy: UCP Suffolk, based in Hauppauge, NY, provides services to 4,000 children and adults with disabilities annually throughout Suffolk county, sixty five percent of whom have a disability other than cerebral palsy. The Children's Center offers early intervention, preschool and school age educational programs. Programs for adults include adult day services, job training and placement and residential opportunities. UCP also operates a comprehensive Health Center. For information, visit www.ucp-suffolk.org or call 631-232-0011.

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