

**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO HELP MORE PEOPLE!**

This year, The Eric Fund received more than 25 applications from extremely deserving candidates throughout the Washington-DC metro area. As you can imagine, narrowing the application pool down to three candidates was difficult, and left many very worthy candidates without the funding they need to lead independent lives in the community.

Your generous donations will help us continue to change lives, by putting equipment in the hands of people who desperately need it. Help us expand our reach. More donations means more grants and fewer people we need to turn away each year. We will continue to put every dollar to work!

*The Eric Fund*

**Support the Eric Fund**

Help us make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities with a gift to The Eric Fund. We put your donation to work by providing much-needed equipment and assistive technology to children and adults with disabilities in the Washington, D.C. area. We are an all-volunteer organization, so your donation goes to programs, not overhead.

**Your contribution could make a significant difference in someone's life!**

YES! I want to help provide much-needed technology to people with disabilities

Donation Amount:  \$25  \$50  \$100  \$500 Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to The Eric Fund and mail to:  
**The Eric Fund, P.O. Box 65188, Washington, D.C. 20035-5188**  
[www.ericfund.org](http://www.ericfund.org)

**And don't forget to keep a record of your donation. It's tax deductible!**

**The Eric Fund Flyer is produced by The Eric C. Savader Memorial Disabilities Fund (d/b/a The Eric Fund), a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to assisting persons with disabilities in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area to be more independent.**

**The Eric Fund Board: Honorary Chairman: John D. Kemp; President & Treasurer: Mary F. Hanley; Vice President & Secretary: Lisa Stockmann Karp; Directors: Matthew Bailey, Marthena Cowart, Caroline Daggitt, Heidi Kurtz, D. Michael Murray, Bill Reese, Susan Reese, Ruth Rodgers, Barbara S. Savader, Barbara L. Savader, M.D., Scott J. Savader, M.D.**

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**Where Are They Now?**

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**Gus Estrella**

In 2004 Gus Estrella, a life-long disability advocate with cerebral palsy, received his now beloved service dog, Yukon, from The Eric Fund. Yukon has become his traveling companion, near and far. Most recently, Gus and Yukon traveled to Montreal to attend an international ACC (Augmentative & Alternative Communication) conference where Gus included The Eric Fund in his presentation and also had Yukon demonstrate some of the commands Gus uses to facilitate his mobility and independence. Gus, who uses a power wheelchair and voice output device to communicate, is hoping to take Yukon with him to Australia in May where he will be the keynote speaker at a conference sponsored by an organization that represents people with complex communication needs in Australia. They also live with Boz, the retired service dog that Yukon replaced. Gus reports that his retired service dog and senior citizen Boz still tolerates Yukon's youthful exuberance with great patience.

**We're on the Web!**

[www.ericfund.org](http://www.ericfund.org)

A very special thank you to Seong Kwak for designing our newsletter pro bono!

*The Eric Fund*

Celebrating More than 10 Years of Helping Children and Adults with Disabilities Lead More Independent Lives

**Dear Friends of The Eric Fund:**

Another year of generous Eric Fund donors has allowed us to award three more people the equipment and devices that will advance their ability to live independent lives.

In our tenth anniversary year, The Eric Fund Awardees, Laura, Dezmond and Francisco, will receive equipment to enhance communication and cognitive skills that could bring dramatic and positive change to their lives. Each of their stories is compelling and should bring great satisfaction to you, our donors, because you have made a true difference in peoples' lives.

This year's awards will mean that The Eric Fund has brought positive change to the lives of 38 people in its 10 years of existence. And it's your generosity that has made this possible. What's especially gratifying is the impact these devices have beyond the awardees because their families share the dream that their loved ones will live full and independent lives. In so many cases, the benefits are multiplied when the devices allow them to integrate more fully into their communities where they can make a true difference.

This year's awards total \$8,250 which means The Eric Fund has distributed over \$93,000 worth of assistive technology and equipment in the 10 years of our existence. As delighted as we are with this record of giving, you can't imagine how difficult it is select only three out of so many compelling applications we receive each year. This process makes it clear to us that way too many people continue to fall into the gap created when insurance and other funding streams run dry for the essential, life-changing equipment for people with disabilities.

This small band of Eric Fund volunteers continues to be heartened and motivated by your generosity. We promise to stay true to our mission to put every dollar to work to advance independence in the lives of people with disabilities. And we remain deeply grateful for your continued support.

From all of us at The Eric Fund, please enjoy a wonderful holiday season.

Sincerely,

*Mary*  
**Mary F. Hanley**  
 President  
 The Eric Fund



Francisco Cabrera

**2008 Grants To Help Winners In School and On The Job**

*Thanks to the support of individual and corporate donors like you,* The Eric Fund has continued its 10th year of service in 2008 by helping a child, a student and an adult with disabilities in the Washington, DC-area to get the voice devices and assistive technology to lead more independent lives.

The Eric Fund – a Washington, DC-based nonprofit organization that purchases needed but often expensive assistive technology and equipment to help children and adults with disabilities live on their own terms in the community – granted more than \$8,000 to help three award winners achieve their goals. The winners are using the equipment to help them in school and on the job and to continue to live independently on their own terms.

"The Eric Fund has been around for 10 years now and we couldn't be more proud to continue our work to help our grant winners pursue their dreams and continue to offer their passions and expertise to the community," said Mary Hanley, President of The Eric Fund. "We're dedicated to continue our work to provide grants to help people maximize their independence by filling in the gaps where other funding streams fall miserably short and make a tangible difference, one child and one adult at a time."

Founded in memory of Eric Savader, who died in 1997 from cancer and who worked on behalf of several disability causes, The Eric Fund has help 38 winners to date by granting more than \$93,000 since it began in 1998.

Read on to meet our 2008 Eric Fund Grant Award winners and get an update on some of our previous winners who are living life on their own terms thanks to your donations.

## Computer Device to Help Woman with Blindness Excel On the Job and Pursue Her Dreams

*Laura-Sun Cefaratti is a bright, enthusiastic 22-year-old young woman from Annapolis, Maryland, who happens to be blind. The Eric Fund awarded Laura a Braille Note device to enable her to continue to excel at her job and to pursue her love of writing.*

Upon hearing the good news, Laura threw her hands in the air as if in victory and announced to all who were in the room, "I won the Eric Fund!"

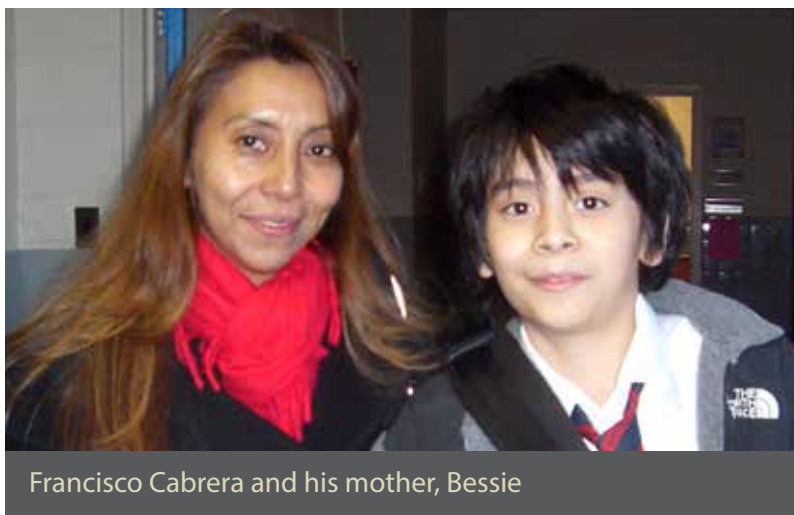
While attending the Maryland School of the Blind, Laura was able to use a BrailleSpeak device, which eventually stopped working and is now an outdated form of technology. As with most devices provided by the school system, Laura had to return the device upon graduation, leaving her without the device she had used to communicate with and explore the world for so long. Laura said losing the use of the communication device, "left an enormous void in my life in which I am no longer able to express myself through writing."

Since graduating from the Maryland School of the Blind in 2007, Laura has been employed at a workshop and has had trouble finding more meaningful work. She said, "I was surprised to hear back from The Eric Fund because so many times it seemed doors were being slammed in my face." Ideally, Laura would like to be an activity coordinator at a nursing home or similar facility where she could utilize her musical keyboard playing and songwriting abilities. The BrailleNote device will better allow her to express those talents, keep a calendar for appointments, record audio, listen to music, read electronic books as well as word processing and hopefully get that job she dreams of.



Laura-Sun Cefaratti

## Audio Books to Help 11-Year-Old Student Learn More Effectively



Francisco Cabrera and his mother, Bessie

*Since he was a young boy, 11-year-old*

*Francisco Cabrera* has always been a great student and has loved reading books. But these days, Francisco has an easier time reading with his ears instead of his eyes.

In 2007, Francisco suffered a seizure and was in a coma for a few days, when doctors discovered a brain tumor. After many treatments and surgeries, Francisco is back at his Catholic school in Washington, DC. He still loves books, but reading for even five minutes is now exhausting for the youngster. The Eric Fund is happy to provide Francisco with a special audio player and a subscription to Reading for the Blind and Dyslexic, so he can listen to his text books and any other reading material, thereby increasing his comprehension and continued success.

"When I received your phone call, I said 'This is another present from God'," said Francisco's mother, Bessie. As a single mom supporting Francisco and his older brother, Bessie said she knew the device and reading service would

help Francisco but it was financially out of reach.

"This will help me because right now, I can remember things better if I hear it. If I read it, I forget it," says Francisco, a 5th grader who enjoys history, music and drawing.

Francisco's resource teacher, Peggy Fleury, works with Francisco several hours a week. Peggy found out about The Eric Fund and worked with Bessie and encouraged her to apply for a grant for Francisco's device. "The ability to listen to his textbooks and trade books on tape will give him the greatest chance to succeed," Peggy says.

## WHERE Are They Now?



Regina Marie Jackson

In 2006, Regina Jackson was awarded a Deluxe Flash Kit Speech Generating Device (SGD). Regina has cerebral palsy and mild mental retardation that makes it difficult for her to speak on her own. Thanks to the device provided by The Eric Fund, 12-year-old Regina's non-mother, Collette, reports great progress at both home and school since Regina began working with the device. Collette says that Regina "has begun talking to the world." The device has provided some independence for Regina who is now able to make her own choices, including which dessert she prefers at meals! Collette expressed her deep gratitude to The Eric Fund supporters for providing her daughter with the tools she needed to better communicate.

Benjamin Glantz



Benjamin received a Dynavox augmentative communication device in 2006. Unable to communicate or interact socially without assistive technology, Ben, a 10th grader, uses the device in every class. His Mom, Linda, reports that communication is no longer as big an obstacle in learning and participation with others in a group. His teachers said they see a marked increase in Ben's ability to master material and communicate more effectively, including his higher level of use of standard computers. Ben attended a literacy camp this summer where the Dynavox allowed him to discuss literature he was reading and to directly input material into a computer. Ben also struck up a friendship with another young man who also relied on a communication device. Ben's mom said "we have no doubt that the compassion and generosity of The Eric Fund has been a major factor in Ben's progress and we are grateful."



Emilia Prokop

Emilia Prokop, a young woman from Virginia with speech and motor disabilities who received a laptop and speech software from The Eric Fund in 2007, has discovered her career choice after taking two courses at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, a resource available through Virginia's Department of Rehabilitative Services. This past year, Emilia took part in an independent living course, and a second one on career evaluation and it was while working at a local daycare center that she found her bliss. She reports that the children "love her and squeal with delight when she arrives." Emilia's mom, Martha, is very excited about an email service that sends a "voice message" through an 800 number. She sends Emilia reminders at school from time to time and enjoys hearing Emilia's voice when she responds.

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## Voice Device to Help Five-Year-Old Boy Communicate and Learn

*When five-year-old Dezmond Horton* was recently observed using a Springboard Light Augmentative Communication Device, the evaluator was struck by the "pleasure that [he] displayed while using the device."

Thanks to The Eric Fund, Dezmond, an awardee from Washington, DC, will get to experience that pleasure all the time when he receives his device and begins using it to communicate his needs independently in the classroom and as he goes about his daily routine. Dezmond has autism and his limited communication skills prevent him from fully participating in classroom activities with his peers at school. The Springboard Light Augmentative Communication Device will not only expand his ability to develop language and communication skills, but also enable him to make progress with his social development outside his immediate family and friends.

Dezmond's mother, Ozette, was both moved emotionally and extremely appreciative when she found out that Dezmond was an Eric Fund grant winner. A single parent who struggles to make ends meet each month, Ozette says it is hard enough to pay the bills let alone find the time or resources to explore funding options for assistive technology. "I am trying to do all that I can to make sure that my son can function in our society," Ozette said, "I am just not able to afford this wonderful device on my own at this time."

The Eric Fund is thrilled to be able to provide the equipment for Dezmond so he can be on his way to leading a fuller life. The equipment will make a huge difference for Dezmond at an early age when he can maximize its impact and effectiveness.



Dezmond Horton