

Eager to lend a hand

Ginger Holm, The Republican Eagle Published Friday, January 23, 2009

"This device is going to change lives," said Sue Seeger, who suffered a stroke 15 years ago, just before her 21st birthday.

Seeger is referring to Lend-A-Hand, an assistive device inventor and entrepreneur Michael Duncan created especially for physically challenged individuals. He owns Even Par Enterprises.

Seeger said she always wanted to learn to play golf. Knowing Duncan was an inventor and golf enthusiast, Seeger asked him if he could invent a device that would allow her to play.



Lake City's Michael Duncan created the Lend-a-Hand to help his friend Sue Seeger play golf. - Photo by Ginger Holm.

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maneuver heavy objects and, when accessorized, easier manipulation of smaller tools.

Inventors, Duncan said, naturally try to keep their designs secret -- at least until they have applied for a patent to prevent others from stealing their ideas. Among the physically challenged, Lend-A-Hand may be the worst kept secret in the history of Minnesota.

While he was still in the design stages, Duncan began receiving calls from individuals asking if the device might help them do everything from raking leaves to hunting. His answer was a resounding yes.

What started as a desire to help a friend soon grew into a versatile tool that Duncan expects will eventually aid millions of individuals around the world.

Through the development process, Duncan and Seeger discovered countless ways people with disabilities can use Lend-A-Hand in daily activities.

"Little things that most people take for granted, like tying your shoes or washing dishes, become difficult chores when you lose the use of a hand or arm," Duncan said.

"Lend-A-Hand is a product that fills a variety of needs. There is nothing else on the market like this," he said. "This product can assist the arthritic, stroke survivors, cerebral palsy, and amputees in living a fuller life -- it even makes everyday activities easier for people who have no disabilities."

He designed Lend-A-Hand to give the user a high level of control when using another tool, whether it is fork, a screwdriver or a rifle. The design provides leverage to

"Lend-A-Hand will give the physically challenged a new lease on life. It will allow people to do things they couldn't do before without assistance," said Duncan, who made it device "public" today. "It is so versatile. Every time I show this product to someone they find a new way to use it.

"We have already received a great deal of interest in our product from several medical companies and also the National Amputee Association in New Hampshire. They are very eager for this product to come on the market," he said.

"The thing I have been looking most forward to is being able to use both arms," Seeger said. "When I put Lend-A-Hand on with the right accessories I am able to use both hands. Lend-A-Hand makes me feel like a whole person again."

Lend-A-Hand is scheduled to go on the market in spring 2009.



Sue Seeger is able to sweep and do other chores with the help of Lend-a-Hand.