

NEWS RELEASE

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Company that makes science more accessible to blind, low-vision students joins Purdue Research Park

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - A consulting company that is helping to develop software to make science more accessible to students affected by blindness and low vision (BLV) has become an affiliate of the Purdue Research Park of West Lafayette (<http://www.purdueresearchpark.com/>).

Independence Science LLC (<http://www.independencescience.com/>), founded by Purdue University (<http://www.purdue.edu/>) alumnus Cary Supalo, helps students with blindness and low vision to have more hands-on experiences in science laboratory classrooms and fully participate in learning science.

"People with blindness and visual impairments traditionally have been underrepresented both in classrooms and professions in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, often due to a lack of access to assistive technologies," said Supalo, a scientist and educator who also is blind. "Independence Science is making it possible for the wide array of access technologies that have been developed and tested over the past several years to be made available for use in mainstream science classrooms as well as residential schools for the blind."

Independence Science serves customers from across the United States, including school districts at the elementary and high school levels, colleges and universities, and state rehabilitation agencies, as well as parents of students with blindness and low vision and the students themselves. According to the U.S. Department of Education (<http://www.ed.gov/>), about 12,000 students ages 12-17 annually receive special education services due to visual impairment.

Supalo has extensively researched the use of assistive technologies in teaching science curricula to students with BLV and has been instrumental in developing various innovative laboratory tools and methodologies.

"I strive to mentor and encourage visually impaired students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics," he said. "I want educators and BLV

students to know that people with blindness or low vision can take a fully active role in science education and the science professions."

Supalo explained why the company became an affiliate of the Purdue Research Park of West Lafayette.

"My colleagues and I chose to locate at the Purdue Research Park because we knew we would receive a lot of support services - including human resources and Internet technology - to help grow our company," he said. "Additionally, we will benefit from the prestige associated with the Purdue name."

About Independence Science LLC

Officials at Independence Science are making their expertise available to help school districts, colleges and universities, and state rehabilitation agencies across the country meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements in the science curriculum. These technologies are being made available through Independent Sciences to further serve as a dissemination tool to benefit any blind and low-vision student in the United States.

About Purdue Research Park

The 725-acre Purdue Research Park (<http://www.purdueresearchpark.com>) has the largest university-affiliated business incubation complex in the country. The park is home to more than 160 companies. About 100 of these firms are technology-related and another 39 are incubator businesses. The park is owned and managed by the Purdue Research Foundation, a private, nonprofit foundation created to assist Purdue University in the area of economic development. In addition to the Purdue Research Park in West Lafayette, the foundation has established technology parks in other locations around Indiana including Indianapolis, Merrillville and New Albany.

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Related Web sites:

Independence Science LLC: <http://www.independencescience.com>

Purdue Research Park of West Lafayette: <http://www.purdueresearchpark.com>