

Company brightens picture for disabled victim

By LAUREL J. SWEET

The first thing Jose Lacen fired up on the gorgeous 37-inch flat-screen TV that DirectBuy of Boston South bestowed upon the wheelchair-bound housebreak victim yesterday was video he shot strolling through a 1990 street carnival in his native Puerto Rico.

Thanks to the evergreen compassion of Herald readers, Lacen is neither sad nor lonely anymore. And come Sunday, he'll be watching the Patriots whoop the Oakland Raiders in style.

"It's unfortunate what happened to you, but it's nice to see us all come together. We are all connected, Jose. I think you really brought back Christmas spirit," DirectBuy owner John Massaria told Lacen as he and the Rockland-based business' sales manager Marc Brennan replaced the TV a cold-



STAFF PHOTO BY ANGELA ROWLINGS

THANK YOU: Theft victim Jose Lacen, left, is extremely grateful John Massaria, right, of DirectBuy gave him a new television.

hearted creep stole from the father of two last Friday, along with other elec-

tronics, his grocery money and his daughters' Christmas presents.

Massaria and Brennan even hooked up the new DVD player a secret Santa

dropped off and arranged for Comcast to upgrade his wiring. More than two dozen DirectBuy employees signed a heart-warming Christmas card with messages like, "May this be the first of many positive things to happen in your life."

Lacen, 39, a former jet fueler at Logan Airport, has been unable to walk and relearning how to speak since illness plunged him into a coma in 2000. His Roslindale apartment was bereft of holiday hope a week ago today, but now Lacen's phone rings with well-wishes and his e-mail is brim-full with new pen-pals.

"So many people have been so kind," he said, excitedly describing the presents he's received. "They're helping you with their heart, and that's something I'll never take for granted. I've been blessed all over the place."

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