

Success Story

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Things have never been what you would call easy for me. There have been huge obstacles in my life that some people, and even I, didn't think I could overcome. The purpose of this paper is to briefly tell about my disability, and the successes I have achieved.

When I was three years old, I had difficulty talking. I knew what I wanted to say, but my tongue wouldn't help me make the words. Even my hands seemed like they belonged to someone else. I couldn't use scissors, color a page, or put puzzles together like other kids my age could do. That was a scary and sad time for my parents and me.

My mother and father worked with and helped me learn some things, but when I was four, they enrolled me in pre-k, where I started getting speech and occupational therapy. Through my school years, different therapists have helped me speak better and make my hands do what I want them to do.

When I was a freshman in high school, I started taking pictures of things I liked. People always told me they were good, but I didn't believe it until I started winning photography contests in 4H. Who would have thought that someone who couldn't use their hands very well as a kid could be a photographer?

Because of my speech delay, I have always been a very shy person. I stutter when I get nervous, and I'm afraid people will make fun of me. My parents encouraged me to take Jr. ROTC my freshman year of high school, because they thought it would help me build confidence and leadership qualities. My commanding officer took special interest in me,

and because of his encouragement, my sophomore year I became a member of the "Kitty Hawk Society," an academic honor society for cadets, treasurer for our rocketry club, and organized a group to participate in Relay for Life. My senior year, I achieved the rank of major, and won the Bronze ROTC medal from the "Sons of the American Revolution.

My life changed again when my younger brother was diagnosed with autism. My brother can't speak very well, and I decided to be his, and other people with disabilities, voices. I also felt I needed to make a difference in the community.

Since my freshman year, I have been involved in:

Brown Santa

Volunteering at CTMC (Central Texas Medical Center)

Kiwanas (Key Club)

Nosotros La Gente

TYLF (Texas Youth Leadership Forum)

Camp mentor at Texas 4H "Mission Possible"

Youth mentor for Texas Parent to Parent

I never do things to get recognition, but I received an award from the Daughters of the American Revolution for my involvement in the community in February 2012. I also received an award from the Kiwanas for my community involvement.

For most people, what I've accomplished is "small potatoes", but for me, a kid who couldn't speak or hold a pencil, my successes are watermelons.