

Know Me

NAME

James

PASSION

Dancing

My Story

James Waller brings people together.

From the moment he was born, James has become a friend to everyone he meets. With a magnetic personality and care free attitude, James serves as an inspiration to everyone in his life. His mother, Deb, shares that raising James has taught her to live in the moment. It's not uncommon for him to randomly break out in dance or reenact something he thinks is funny.

What makes James unique is how he communicates with his friends. James utilizes a communication device to express himself and converse with others. Through use of his communication device, James has developed impressive technology skills. Soon after receiving his device, James taught himself how to program it. From there he expanded his technology skills by learning how to navigate his computer with ease, and even how to download his favorite music to his mp4 player.



YouTube

The success James has experienced would not have been possible without support from his family and Stark DD. The resources provided by Stark DD have not only changed James' life, but also the lives of the entire Waller family. Through Stark DD, the Wallers were introduced to TWi. Deb, James' mother, often jokes about the first time she met with TWi staff to discuss home provider care for James. She, like any mother would, asked every question she could think of- ensuring that she could trust staff to properly care for James. What she didn't expect was to leave the meeting with a job offer from TWi. TWi staff was so impressed by her questions and attention to care and detail that they knew she would make an incredible addition to the team. Deb accepted and is currently a Group Employment Supervisor with TWi.

Stark DD Service and Support Administrator Katie Ferguson began working with James in August 2018 to help him get enrolled on a SELF waiver.

"I went to James' home to meet with him and the family. James was not interested in having me there. He chose to stay in his bedroom in the basement after his mom made him come and say 'hi' to me, said Katie. "I completed my usual assessment and gathered information about James' abilities and areas that he needs help. I authorized staff to come and help him with his needs in the home and get him out in the community. Over time, I monitored services to ensure that James was getting what he needed. It has been extremely neat watching him grow and be comfortable with who he is. I went from meeting a kid that wasn't interested in associating with me to a kid that could NOT wait to teach me the cupid shuffle at his most recent ISP meeting."



Know Stark DD



**Stark County Board of
Developmental Disabilities**

Supporting People with Disabilities & Their Families

In April, James will graduate from TransitionU, a collaborative continuing education program between North Canton Schools and Walsh University. TransitionU has been essential in helping James mature and adjust to independent living. While in the program, James has consistently worked two days a week developing a variety of work skills.

Following graduation, James plans to fill his days with services offered by TWi. James is most excited to begin attending TWi's ForTWissimo program. ForTWissimo is a unique music education and enrichment program that allows participants the opportunity to explore their vocal and instrumental musical interests. When asked what he is most excited to do at ForTWissimo, James instantly expresses that he wants to participate in cardio drumming taught by Phil DuBose. James also gets Homemaker Personal Care (HPC) services from Ryan Casto, TWi.

In addition to the ForTWissimo program, James plans to utilize TWi's group employment services to secure a job in the community working alongside his peers. Working for TWi has been a goal for James for years. When asked why, James expresses that everyone he loves works for TWi and he wants to be with the people he loves.

In addition to school and work goals, James has many passions. James LOVES anything Toy Story!! He likes to help cook and he loves to line up and organize things. James' favorite vacation spot is the Smoky Mountains. He enjoys swimming, bowling, dancing (especially the the Cupid Shuffle and Dab) with his girlfriend. James was one of the models for the 2019 GiGi's Playhouse calendar. James and his mom also presented to Walsh University students working on their Special Education degrees.

James' SSA Katie agrees that James brings people together.

"What I found out about James is that everywhere he goes, people know him and love him. James is silly, laughs a lot, and likes to have fun. James also is capable and independent. His progress in school and what he has learned over the years is inspiring. His love for life is unique. He gives the BEST hugs and dabs like the best of them! James is amazing! I see how much his mom, Deb, loves and embraces everything that is James. She is so proud of him and has worked really hard to give him a good shot at this thing we call life," said Katie.

