

Know Me

NAME **Lucas**

PASSION **Helping Others**

My Story

Meet 19 year-old Lucas Murphy, a proud Canton South Wildcat. Diagnosed with cerebral palsy and a seizure disorder, Lucas does not let his disabilities keep him from doing things he loves. His dad, Mike, mom Lisa, stepdad, Lynn, and younger sister, Amber, always encourage and challenge him to do better.

A life-long resident of Canton Local Schools, Lucas began preschool at Prairie College Grade School at age three. "During preschool we got Lucas connected to Stark DD services," said Lisa. In high school, Lucas self-advocated to participate in the Career Tech Culinary Program with Canton Local School District and has since received his ServSafe Certification, Ohio's food safety license. Now, Lucas is preparing to finish high school this spring; he socially graduated in 2020.

With a diagnosis of cerebral palsy, (right side hemiparesis due to CP) Lucas has stayed active to keep his left and right sides as functional as possible. From age nine months through age 4, Lucas took swimming lessons.

At age 4, he participated in the Learn to Ice Skate program, run by the school physical therapy team. One volunteer was a hockey coach, who invited Lucas to be a

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LUCAS



Penguin at the facility (Center Ice). Lucas played on the team until he was 7 years old.

Then Lucas tried mixed martial arts class. Thanks to the encouragement of Mr. Rex, his sister, and our sitter's family, Lucas obtained his brown belt at age 12. Just as Lucas was celebrating his brown belt, epilepsy slammed into his life.

At age 16, when most kids are getting their license, Lucas was having a lifesaving surgery. Dr Gwyneth Hughes, Akron Children's Hospital, performed his hemispherectomy on Feb 23, 2018, and he has been seizure free for over three years. Lucas missed a good portion of his sophomore year, but upon return, he flourished.

Lucas loves to help others. He loves volunteering Aultman Hospital Tuscarawas Therapy facility, where he restocks supplies for the Occupational and Physical therapists. This has been a natural place to volunteer his time since he has been in OT/PT since he was 5 months old. *(Thank you, Grandma, for pushing to get me a PT/OT appointment at Akron Children's Hospital).*

His other favorite consistent volunteering opportunity is at the Canton South Band concession stand, where he is an order fulfillment runner for Sherrie (she will not share him with other order takers). His other activities include bowling on the Canton South Wildcats team, swimming, shooting hoops, hiking, trains, maps and traveling to Florida. He thinks the greatest human was President Abraham Lincoln.

Lucas is also involved in church activities, especially potluck lunches. "Each fall the youth group makes apple butter where we cut up the apples and cook them down on Saturday then on Sunday after church, everyone takes turns 'stirring the pot' (copper kettles) of apple butter," explained Lisa.



Lucas with Dr Gwyneth Hughes, Akron Children's Hospital

Helping Lucas with the transition from school to adulthood has been Julie Willis, Stark DD Service and Support Administrator - Transition Specialist. "Lucas has participated in a variety of work experiences through Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD); these were at House of Loreto, Kremeland and Marcs where he did well at both," said Julie. "Lucas has a good work ethic and a positive work attitude." Recently, his hard work has paid off when Winking Lizard hired Lucas as a prep cook.

Lucas uses the SARTA Proline thanks to support from Stark DD. "Miss Nina, SARTA Proline Travel Trainer, came to our house in Fall 2018 to explain the in's and out's of using the Proline, how easy it was to call and make your scheduled rides, and that you could use the computer, as well," said Lisa. "People are ALWAYS helpful when any of us call." Lucas schedules his own rides and uses SARTA every week for getting to OT/PT, other appointments and work. He has helped many at CSHS learn to use SARTA to enable them so they also have more freedom.

Lucas has definite dreams for the future. "I would like to move up in the culinary area at work, move out on my own with a roommate, and find a bowling team to participate with," said Lucas. "I want to continue helping others along life's path and travel, or maybe live in Florida where it is warm year round."

Lucas' strengths include "always being on time," and he is a hard worker at whatever he tries to do. He is dedicated to his close family, friends; for anyone who needs help at school, he is there. It is obvious that "helping others" is his passion.



Know

Stark DD



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