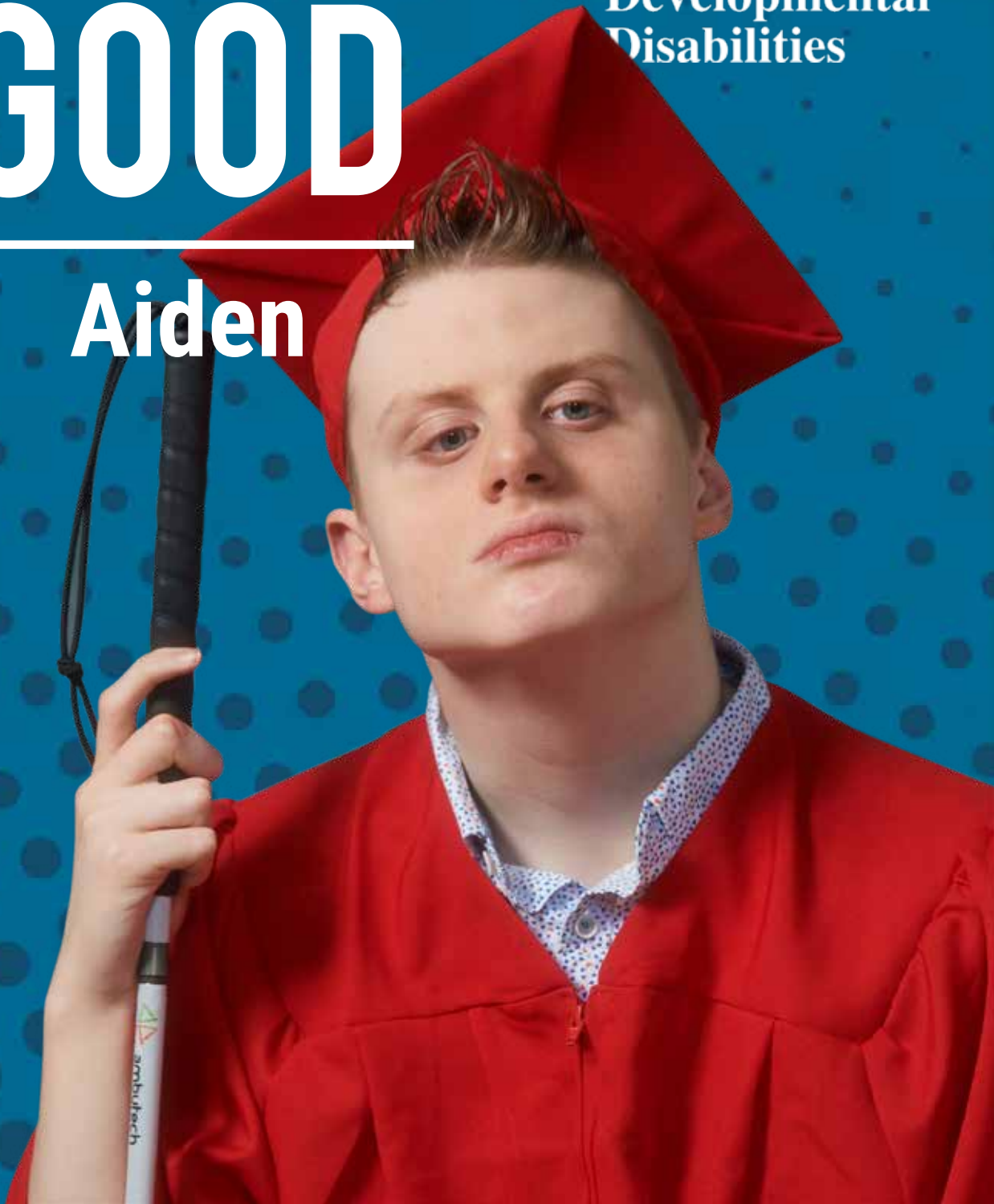


HELP FOR GOOD

Aiden



Stark County
Board of
Developmental
Disabilities



Aiden

Meet 18-year-old Aiden Perkins, a graduate in the Rebecca Stallman Southgate School Class of 2022. He is the son of Brett and Hattie Perkins.

According to his mom, Aiden was diagnosed with [optic nerve hypoplasia](#) and adrenal insufficiency when he was 5 months old. He had to have surgery at that time to put a shunt in his head to get rid of the cyst that was on his optic nerves.

"We moved to Washington state from Michigan when he was 3 years old because his dad joined the army. When he started to attend school there that is when we found out he was on the autism spectrum," said Hattie.

"He has had many stays in hospitals because of his adrenal insufficiencies. Through it all though Aiden has been a very happy loving kid.

Aiden loves listening to music, being in the water, jumping on his trampoline, and swinging. He loves climbing on things," said Hattie. "He has no fear sometimes." Aiden also loved being with his Grandpas, but, sadly, they both passed away.

When the Perkins family moved to Ohio in 2015, Aiden started attending Southgate School. "He has grown so much since starting there," said Hattie. "Aiden has had different therapies over time, so he knows some signs to let us know what he wants; but at school they started teaching him to talk through a communication device. The first time they showed me Aiden using the communication device, he said 'Hi mom.' That brought tears instantly."



Kara Mendoza Rodriguez, Stark DD Intervention Specialist, agrees that Aiden has thrived during his years at RS Southgate School.

“Aiden is such a joyful person who adds so much fun to the classroom! He loves listening to music and will sway to the rhythm of songs that he enjoys! Aiden has many talents. With support, he has learned how to successfully navigate throughout the school building with the use of his cane.”

“Aiden has also been working hard on learning how to use an auditory output device to communicate his wants and needs. He also utilizes Tangible Output Cards (TOCs) to answer comprehension questions within the classroom setting. In addition, Aiden has learned how to perform many vocational tasks here at school, which include him helping package breakfast bags. It has been incredible to see Aiden participate inside and outside the classroom setting. With the additional support of Stark DD school speech, occupational and physical therapies, Aiden had been provided great resources to help him thrive here at school and further succeed as he exits the school age programs.”

Aiden’s mom hopes he will continue to get better on the new device since it has more things for him to say on it. “Aiden is so bright and I know he has things to say,” said Hattie.



**CONGRATULATIONS
AIDEN!**

**CLASS
OF
2022**

