

Enderlin Alumni Shares His Life Through Book of Poems

If you knew Joey Wells, even as a young child, you knew that in spite of his physical disabilities, he was determined to live to the fullest wherever life led him.

Joey and his Mom, Cindy Wells, were back in the area, assisting Barb Howse (Grandmother/Mom) get ready for an auction sale in Nome, ND.

Joey was born with Myotubular Myopathy, one of the many forms of Muscular Dystrophy on August 8, 1987 in Goliad, Texas. At the age of seven, he moved with his family to North Dakota where he attended school at Enderlin until his sophomore year. Fellow students remember Joey as the kid who just fit in no matter what the activity in spite of being in a wheelchair.

His sophomore year he ended up in the hospital where it necessitated having a trach installed, to assist his breathing and keeping him alive.

He attempted to attend school for his junior year but opted to drop out. He later got his GED. At this time it was decided that he and his Mom should move to California where more opportunities would be available for Joey.

The Wells made contact with the Muscular Dystrophy Association and in 2008 things turned around for Joey. He was named Los Angeles County Goodwill Ambassador for the MDA. He was also awarded the Robert Ross MDA Personal Achievement Award for his outstanding achievements and demonstration of success in overcoming the challenges of neuromuscular disease.

In 2008 Joey started to attend Glendale Community College to get a business degree. This was where Joey was introduced to wheelchair soccer. Always working to be active, Joey found this sport just what the doctor ordered. He joined Glendale Roughriders, a power wheelchair soccer team, becoming the youngest member to be elected captain of the team.

In August, 2008, the year of his 21st birthday, Joey was confined to bedrest for a month. It was at this time that he began writing poems, each one signifying a year in his life.... twenty-one poems, twenty-one years.

Joey corresponded with friends who were also artists and Chloe Blohm, Son Pham, and Tara Wilkening submitted artwork to go along with each of his poems. On May 22, 2009, Joey and Wafa Kanan came to an agreement to publish his poems and the title was Through My Eyes Verse 8.8.08. Kanan was a publisher for Unique Imaging Inc.

Joey says the reason he wrote the book was he felt that his people needed a voice. He was not just talking about people with disabilities, but about everybody that wants to better themselves, accomplish their goals, and to capture their dreams.

Joey said that “Having my family and friends support me through my ups and downs with MD, has allowed me to go after my dreams. As you can see”, said Joey, “having a disability has not hampered my ability to attain my goals.... from hospital stays to playing tee ball, to working with MDA, to attending college, the journey of my life has taught me a lot. I am blessed to live the life that I live. Having a disability has shown me the true beauty of life. That is what I want to share with you.”

Joey has a busy schedule ahead of him. He will be attending the MTM-CNM Family Conference in Houston, TX from July 24th to the 26th. He will be speaking at the conference on the 25th and selling his book. On September 2nd he will be doing a Soccer Clinic at the MDA Camp.