

Foundation Recipient

Tyler Schrenk



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Tyler's Story

Tyler Schrenk of Seattle, Washington decided college was not for him. He had worked in his stepfather's roofing company during summers in high school since he was 16 years old. After high school, he went to work full-time for them, (Morgan Construction) and continued to work there until he was 26 years old.

On February 12, 2012, Tyler dove off a boat dock to a lake, breaking his neck!

As it turned out, the lake was shallow and Tyler incurred a C1-C3 spinal cord injury. For the next three years, Tyler was on a ventilator. Worse than that, he was confined to a bed in his parents living room, and his day consisted of watching television. He was determined to get off the ventilator however, and he finally

achieved that when he could breathe through a tracheotomy. He was on a trach for the next two years, but graduated to breathing on his own by 2017. He spent hours every day working on the skills to be able to do this, and it was one of the hardest things he had ever done. Fortunately, he had a very supportive family that helped him get through this, and was able to survive financially through their support, SSDI, and a long-term private disability insurance policy that he carried while at Morgan Construction. With his newfound independence, Tyler was determined to do more – and he did. A deacon from Tyler’s church introduced him to a Microsoft Surface tablet, and a mouth operated sip/puff joystick control that allowed him to use it. That changed everything.

Initially using the tablet to read and follow his favorite sport of baseball, Tyler started to realize that technology would allow him to do much more. He found an affinity for adaptive technology, and he discovered he had a natural skill for it as well. With the help of his dad, a retired police officer and now a business owner, Tyler was introduced to a number of individuals who had a passion for assistive technology. Assistive technology consists of software or equipment that helps typically elderly or disabled individuals work around their challenges. For example, I am writing this article using Dragon Naturally Speaking software, which is a form of assistive technology. With these individuals, Tyler started the Tyler Schrenk Foundation, which is dedicated to improving lives through the promotion and distribution of assistive technologies. Meanwhile, Tyler’s parents found a property that had a “mother-in-law” type cottage next door, and Tyler moved with them into this expanded home. Tyler worked on his foundation in the bedroom of his cottage, which was the only living space he had access to besides the accessible bath (which came with the cottage) and the entryway. The cottage had a back porch, which he wanted to turn into an office. With the help of Morgan Construction, he is in the process of doing that. One of the assistive technology items Tyler needed to make that happen was a Gogogate door opening device, along with an Open Sesame door controller interface that he could operate through his Alexa speaker. He found our foundation through a Google search, and petitioned for a grant for those items.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the foundation was able to fulfill this request!

After receiving his assistive technology, Tyler was anxious to get it installed. That would allow him, for the first time in years, to have another room to live in besides his bedroom! You can go to the Facebook link for the Joseph Groh Foundation, (shown below) and watch a YouTube video of Tyler as he uses this same system to exit through the front door of his home. **While you are there, like our page!**

<https://www.facebook.com/JosephGrohFoundation/>