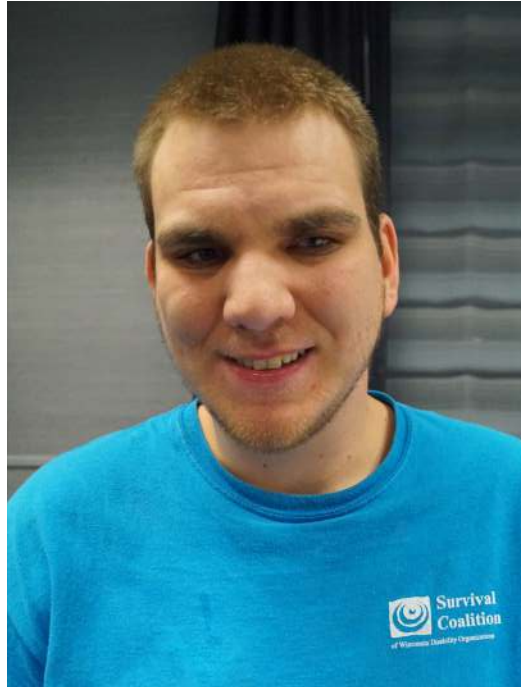


July 2020

Patrick Friedrich



*I've Got Your Back*

My name is Patrick Friedrich. I'm 27 years old and I live in Milwaukee. I'm a BPDD board member and have been since 2018! I grew up in San Jose California but moved to Wisconsin when I was 14 and attended Tremper High School in Kenosha. Most people think that moving to a new school would be scary, but I wasn't nervous because I knew I'd be able to meet new friends and start being more of an advocate for myself. I liked to learn and hang out with my friends. I have always wanted to show people that I can do anything, so going to a new school was a great chance to show people my abilities.

I enjoy playing baseball, soccer, basketball, and bowling really anything that keeps me active. I like dancing too but just for fun. I recently got my bike fixed so I am excited to be able to bike around again now that it's summer. I participate in Special Olympics on Team Milwaukee. We have lots of fun and after spending years learning to speak up for myself I have been learning how to help other people have their voices heard.

I've recently been working with a friend of mine as a caregiver and it's been a great experience. I can connect with people and even if it's hard to communicate by talking I can tell what people want or what they are trying to say. I know what it's like to need help sometimes and people aren't always patient or nice so I want to make sure that everyone is listened to and gets the help they need in a way that makes them happy. In the future I want to be a personal caregiver for people with disabilities while I continue to grow as an advocate for disability rights.

In 2018 I was diagnosed with brain cancer and I had to spend almost a year and a half going in and out of chemo treatments which means I had to miss Special Olympics and coming to Madison for BPDD stuff. I was about to start at a new job when I found out about my cancer and I wasn't able to start because I was sick. Once I found out I was cancer free I started looking for new jobs and pretty quickly got hired to work at Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee. I loved my job because it's such a cool building and I got to meet a whole bunch of new friends and coworkers. I started working there in February of 2020 and would still be working if it wasn't for coronavirus.

Earlier this year I was one of the people who got coronavirus and it was rough. I had to quarantine in a room for two weeks by myself which was so hard because I love being around people. Coronavirus can hurt anybody and after going through it, I just want everyone to wash their hands and wear a mask! Nobody wants to wear a mask but I can tell you that it's better to wear a mask than to give someone this virus. It was kind of like the flu but honestly it was way worse. Staying in your room watching movies seems alright but it's not worth it if you have to feel that sick!

I just want all people with disabilities to know that I have got your back and I'd be there for anyone in a heartbeat. I love helping people and anyway I can, I will!