



October 2023

Junior Sotelo



Believe In Yourself

My name is Jorge Sotelo but I go by Junior. I'm 18 years old and from the West Allis area. I am on the Autism Spectrum and while my journey growing up and learning to advocate for myself has been hard, I'm glad that I learned to speak for myself and let people know what I need and want. People with disabilities should be treated with dignity, honor, and respect. We deserve to be included in everything throughout our lives.

My experience in school was overall great. I made lots of friends and had many helpful teachers and administrators in high school and all along the way which is why I had such a great experience during high school. My special education teacher and case manager was Ms. Rucka who always made me feel supported. Even when I was struggling, she was there to help me get through it. During high school I had the opportunity to be the student manager for the boys basketball team, I did the daily morning announcements (all four years) and was in the marching band. I was also in the National Honors Society and was chosen as the most spirited student my senior year. In my senior year I was elected as Homecoming King which was a huge surprise to me. Trying your best is the only way to get through high school, so that is what I did and after four long years I finally graduated!

My favorite things to do for fun are watching sports and attending sporting events. I'm a huge fan of all the Wisconsin sporting teams. I've been playing sports with Special Olympics since 2014. I play bowling, basketball and flag football. I also enjoy swimming at the YMCA, playing board games and ping pong. For the last two years I have been announcing games at the Miracle League of Milwaukee. My goal in my adult life is to become a sports broadcaster. My

love for sports and hearing broadcasters like Bob Uecker and Kevin Holden has made me want to become a sports broadcaster.

I just started my first semester as a student at UW Milwaukee. My confidence and motivation has inspired me to be the first person in my family to go to college so I can achieve my dream of becoming a sports broadcaster. Going to college is a significant accomplishment for my family and myself. Just being in classes is a huge achievement in my life. It's pretty early on in the semester but so far I have been on time for all my classes and I have been getting all my homework done. Before the semester started, I was nervous about being in a bigger environment, finding my classes and getting there on time. The Accessibility Resource Center at UW-Milwaukee has been very helpful in my transition. They help me with my accommodations for each class and find the resources.

I'm a full-time student and have several volunteer positions so I am not currently working. I love Wisconsin sports, but I think that after I graduate I'd like to pursue my goal of becoming a sports broadcaster somewhere out of state. On my 15th birthday I went to New York for my birthday with my family and I fell in love with it. We took a ferry to see the Statue of Liberty and went to Times Square. The best part of my birthday was when we went to Yankee Stadium, and I was able to tour the stadium! I had toured Lambeau field in the past, but it was nothing like this experience. I've been getting experience broadcasting by job shadowing Kevin Holden who works for CBS 58.

Several of my volunteer positions revolve around advocacy. Advocacy is important to me because it means to stand up for yourself, your rights, and being involved when decisions are made about your life. My parents raised me well and have always encouraged and supported me ever since I was a little kid. They told me to never give up on anything and to believe in myself and that one day all of my hard work would pay off. I'm a current member for the Center on Youth Voice and Youth Choice or CYVYC. As a member we are helping to lead efforts in Wisconsin to promote Supported Decision Making. When I found out about this group, I was excited to be part of it because it's important to me to help people keep their rights. All of these activities are helping me to improve my communication skills. I want people to know that now is their time and that you can do anything if you put your mind to it. I'm also a big advocate for inclusion. When people are included, their worth is recognized and respected. I hope to motivate other individuals to follow their passion.