

LSL Life - Zachary

Zach: My name is Zach. I live in Bethany, Oklahoma. I recently achieved my Eagle Scout ranking. To achieve that you have to complete a service project for the community. So in an Eagle project you have to have two main things. First of all you have to have leadership what you're doing to help guide your fellow scouts. The second thing is what can you do to help the community. And I really thought that redecking this bridge, making it safer for people to get across, that would really help.

Zach: It was in a really dangerous condition. Has needed to be done for ten years now. Everyone in the community that uses this lake benefit from this. Achieving my Eagle Scout actually has a lot of meaning to me. Even though I did my community service then, I'm not stopping. I want to keep helping the community, keep doing whatever I can to just help other people.

Dad: Zach has a big passion to make an impact. I know that just the service project he did as an Eagle Scout was over 700 hours when you combined all the different people that actually worked on that project. And he's just going to go forward and do more.

Dad: When we first got the diagnosis we didn't know what we were going to do.

Mom: The audiologist came in and said, "Zachary does have a severe to profound hearing loss." And he continued to talk but I didn't hear much after that. They said, "What are your goals for Zachary?" Immediately I said, "I want him to be able to talk. I want him to be able to listen to me tell him I love him. I want him to be able to listen to our family. I want him to be able to listen to music. I want him to learn to listen and talk."

Mom: If you can't get amplification on a baby as soon as possible the outcomes of them being able to learn to listen and talk are a hundred times greater than if you wait because every word that's spoken is more vocabulary to his brain.

8/2015

- Dad: Getting that message to the insurance company was difficult. I still remember the one lady on the phone saying, "You don't put hearing aids on a baby! What do you mean you need this paid for?"
- Mom: I knew that I needed to fight for what he needed. And I continued to be persistent and to talk and find just the right person that would actually hear what I was saying.
- Dad: His mom went to bat and fought and fought and fought for him. And look at what that hard work has paid off to.
- Mom: Everything I was fearful of, all those fears were gone. I don't have any fear that he can't step out into the world and do anything that he wants to do.
- Dad: With the help of Listening and Spoken Language, Zach has just far exceeded any plans we had for him.
- Zach: *Hands up, hands up.*
- Mom: Zachary has the opportunity to work at the YMCA. He is a sports official as well as a camp counselor. Since he is a teenager the kids look up to him a little bit. He's giving them instructions on what to do, what not to do.
- Zach: I want to be a good role model to younger kids that might think they don't have a bright future because they have hearing aids or because they're deaf or what people tell them. None of that matters. It shouldn't slow you down. It shouldn't stop you at all.