



SUMMIT ASSISTANCE DOGS

Empowering people with disabilities to greater heights



Summit in Sixty Seconds

September, 2015

Summit applicant moved west for his dream job

When James Abernathy heard about what he just knew would be his “dream job,” working as general counsel for an Olympia-based non-profit organization, he was hesitant to apply. It meant a big move from his home state of Ohio, leaving behind a well-established care and support network of family, friends, and caregivers. But he took the plunge, got the job and moved to Olympia in September 2014.

“It meant I had to arrange a whole new care network, but it came together within two months,” he said. “It was the first time I moved on my own. So far, so good! I miss my family and friends, but I love the adventure I’m on out here.”

A native of Cincinnati, James grew up loving and playing sports. Baseball was his favorite, and he had dreams of pursuing a baseball career. That dream ended abruptly when he was sidelined by a spinal cord injury his sophomore year in high school.

“My athletic career was over, and I had to significantly change my perspective on life, as well as my goals and priorities,” he said.

James missed nearly a year of high school, but he was able to catch up and graduate on time with his class. He then attended Miami University in Ohio, followed by graduate school at a theological seminary in California. After returning to Ohio, he had several jobs but didn’t feel fulfilled. So law school came next, and that’s where he found the work he really likes. His first law job was as in-house counsel for a business in Ohio, but then the Olympia job beckoned.

“I love my job, and I work very hard. It’s great to be able to combine my passion with my job,” James said. “I also love the people I work with, which makes a huge difference.”

James needs a personal care aide every morning to get him up, dressed and ready for work, and another aide to help in the evening. But during the day, he is on his own, and that’s where a mobility dog would really help him, especially opening doors and picking up things he drops.

Although James misses family and friends back in Ohio, he’s making new friends in Olympia and enjoys going with them to sporting events, movies, plays, museums, parks, restaurants, or having them over to his place for board games and poker.

“I definitely love road trips, and I look forward to exploring Washington when I get the opportunity to take weekend trips with friends,” he said.

In addition to family and friends, James says his faith has sustained him through the toughest times in life. He mostly manages to maintain a very positive outlook and looks forward to having a service dog as a constant companion and helper.

October is workplace-giving month – please think of us!

Summit is the happy beneficiary of many donations made through annual workplace-giving campaigns. Some of the larger businesses that have supported Summit through their campaigns include Microsoft, Symetra, the University of Washington and federal & state agencies. But, you don’t have to work for a large employer to donate to Summit. If your workplace does an annual campaign in other ways, such as through United Way, you can designate Summit for your gift. Or you might consider holding a workplace fundraiser to collect donations from fellow employees to send directly to us. Any level of giving is greatly appreciated and helps us work toward our mission of creating life-changing partnerships between highly-skilled service dogs and people living with disabilities.

Our non-profit tax ID number is 91-2048706, and our mailing address is P.O. Box 699, Anacortes, WA 98221.

Please visit our website at www.summitdogs.org.
Donate to our cause at www.summitdogs.org/donate.
Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/summitdogs.

