



## Spencer Buttram

Spencer is almost 20 years old and a graduate of Willard High School. He has developed a love for art during his lifetime because of all the wonderful teachers he has had in Willard Public School (Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Thatcher) as well as thru Art Inspired Academy (Richard White). These teachers saw a talent and encouraged him to his potential. They never once questioned his ability to do whatever his peers were doing and included him in all projects. He has worked in quite a few different mediums (watercolor, acrylics, charcoal, pen and ink, photography, and pottery just to name a few). He enjoys drawing, cartooning and photography the most. Through his last years of High School he has grown as an artist and now wants to pursue his talents by using what he has learned into making a living for himself thru his art and working in the art field.

Spencer also has dreams of starting his own movie blog, advocating for others, work a job he enjoys, getting a place of his own and marrying the love of his life (Laura) in his future. His future is very bright and he asks that people not judge others by their diagnosis, but by getting to know the person who just happens to have a diagnosis. You will be pleasantly surprised to find out that you are more alike than different.

## Carrie Pike

Carrie Pike has lived a very good thirty-nine years. She has had the opportunity to live in four different states and has visited at least twenty-five other states. She has had many great experiences. Carrie is an athlete and loves to participate in a variety of sports but especially loves running, weightlifting, bowling and basketball. She was able to complete in five events in track and fields at the Special Olympics World Summer Games and was selected to carry the torch for the World Winter Games in Alaska. Carrie was employed for Kohl's Department Store for eighteen years but decided to "retire" in order to devote more time to volunteer at the Art Inspired Academy and the Art Inspired Boutique. Carries real passion is in helping others, especially children with developmental disabilities. While Carrie has a developmental disability she uses that to relate to others, and kids seem to relate to her in a special way. She volunteers in the Art Inspired Academy's theater classes and helps kids learn what they are supposed to do. Carrie is also a special help at her church where she is the greeter in the Special Friends Adult Disables class. Carrie is also a big help at home doing many chores and she watches over her dog and three cats. Carrie is especially thankful to all of the people who help her do the things she loves to do.



## **April Ballenger**

April began her employment at the Springfield sheltered workshop about 7 years ago and is still technically their employee. At the sheltered workshop April was given an opportunity to work in the administrative area and she demonstrated outstanding work skills. When the workshop was given an opportunity to place one of their employees at the Abilities First, First Step office April was the first consideration. April was relocated to the First Step office and has been working there for about 10 months now. She also works in the Inspired Boutique a couple days a week. She has continued to demonstrate strong work skills and is now considered one of the Abilities First family.



## Jordan Davidson

Jordan started having seizures at 9 months old. After countless doctors appointments he was diagnosed with Tuberous Sclerosis. It is a genetic disorder which causes seizures, ADD, autistic tendencies, learning disabilities, and tumors on multiple organs. We felt like this was a death sentence for Jordan. Jordan does have a lot of these issues with this disease but he has been a fighter from the beginning. He now has a VNS implant that helps with the seizures. He falls in the middle of the spectrum. In school he was in special education classes. Nixa was fabulous to Jordan through all his years of schooling.

Now as an adult, Jordan is mentally at a middle school level. We have been so lucky with all the years of seizures that Jordan was still able to function so well with God on Jordan's side he is a happy boy. After graduation we were able to find Art Inspired. It has been our God send. He is able to pursue his passion thru singing, acting and drawing. He now also gets to work for Art Inspired which is a dream come true.

Jordan has been blessed throughout his life with Champions Committed to Kids which instilled some lifelong friends. So what once we thought was a death sentence for Jordan with Tuberous Sclerosis we now know has been our blessing. Jordan teaches us every day about the simple things in life and how truly special life can be.

