

# First Steps Services

Changing Lives for

# 30 Years

## Meet DJ Glander

As a baby, DJ experienced significant difficulties. He was diagnosed with cerebral palsy as a result of having had a stroke at birth. The stroke weakened his right side such that he could not use his right hand. The stroke also caused feeding difficulties that resulted in the use of a feeding tube for a couple of years. This was compounded by infantile spasms when he was 6 months old which was later diagnosed as epilepsy.

DJ's prognosis was not good. By all accounts, he should not have been able to walk, talk, eat, or learn like a typical baby. This rough start might have stopped the average person, but not DJ. His mom proudly states, "We forgot to tell him all of that." DJ was determined to press past physical limitations. He had a dream to attend Indiana University, the alma mater of several of his family members.

DJ went on to receive Physical, Occupational, Speech and Developmental therapies through Indiana's early intervention program, *First Steps*. Through *First Steps*, home based therapists partnered with DJ and his family to help increase his skills.

DJ's persevering spirit has helped him make amazing strides and reach his goals. In 2019, DJ completed his degree at Indiana University in Nonprofit Management through the School of Public and Environmental Affairs. His personal experiences motivated him to work for two nonprofit agencies that help adults with special needs. DJ has helped raise funds for Riley Hospital and other charities. He also speaks publicly about his experiences and his ability to overcome obstacles. He believes that public funds should be directed to programs that help individuals like him and that any child needing therapy services should have the opportunity to access them.

**DJ says, "The money that goes into [programs] can impact how a kid can develop and what treatment they can get to recover..."**

As a person of faith, DJ is eternally optimistic and has a heart of gratitude for the help and services he has received.



DJ receiving First Steps services as a toddler

