

2018 PACTESP LIFE/WORK CHALLENGE AWARD RECIPIENTS



Brandon Walter is enrolled in the Advertising Art and Design program at SUN Area Technical Institute. Brandon has Marfan's Syndrome which causes him to be extremely tall with a significant vision impairment. In some ways, standing out in a crowd fits with the rest of his personality. He is mature and independent and is well-liked by peers and adults alike. He listens attentively, accepts constructive criticism, suggestions and advice, but ultimately draws his own conclusions and can state exactly what he hopes to accomplish or plans to do.

He has been an active member of the National Art Honor Society, was chosen as the WVIA Art Student of the Month in July 2017, has worked on the Selinsgrove yearbook, presented at the Seal's Summer Camp and competed in Extemporaneous Speaking at the SkillsUSA Competition.

Brandon held part-time jobs since 2014 and has been actively involved in a variety of community and school activities throughout his high school years. He has attended the Summer Academy at Penn State University to learn about assistive technology that is available to him, and to meet other people with similar visual needs and conditions.

What is most notable about Brandon, and evidence of his own personal commitment to his future goals, is that he has become an excellent leader and self-advocate. He not only attends his IEP meetings independently and advocates for his needs, but he also asserts himself to obtain any accommodations he may need. He operates his own Bookshare account, uses technology that has been provided for him and seeks out additional supports, if needed. His goals for his future include working in the visual arts field, selling his creative work online, opening his own artist shop and living independently.

Brandon was nominated by Wendy Chalmers, Resource Specialist, SUN Area Technical Institute.