

# Inspiring Lives

26 year old Drew Canada was born with Muscular Dystrophy and has been receiving services from MORC since he was a small child. In 2013, Drew followed in the footsteps of his father and grandparents and got into the University of Michigan. Through tremendous advocacy and supports coordination, Drew was able to live on campus and attend classes in person with supports.

Drew graduated from the University of Michigan in 2020 with a degree in Industrial and Operations Engineering. After graduation, he got a job working for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan as an Analyst supporting their call center. "I make sure all the customer service representatives have the software and access they need to do a great job!," he says.

Drew credits the opportunity he had to attend college and live on campus with supports in preparing him for his job. "One of the most important skills I learned in college, I didn't really learn in class," he says. "Being able to interact with people on campus and manage my supports on a day to day basis helped prepare me for my job. Now, I support our call center representatives in the same way that my staff support me."

Drew is thankful for the support he has received from MORC, and especially his Support Coordinator, Cheryl Gilson. "My situation is a little different from many of the individuals MORC serves," Drew says, "but what I appreciate about Cheryl is that she helped me see that my goals were realistic and supported and advocated for me in every way through graduation and in helping me get this job."

Outside of work, Drew closed on a new house in February of this year. After waiting for renovations to be complete to make it more accessible for him, he recently moved in full time. He is excited to embark on this new level of independence and managing his own household. What is he most looking forward to doing in his new home? "My parents bought me a pizza oven as a housewarming gift and I can't wait to use it!," he says.

One of most important lessons of Drew's story is that just because you have a disability doesn't mean that your opportunities or goals have to be limited. "I have a lot of support needs but Cheryl always makes sure I don't get discouraged and reminds me that just because something is hard, doesn't mean the goals I have for my life aren't doable or just as important as anyone else's goals," Drew says. "I'm grateful for all the support MORC has provided in helping me achieve my goals."

