

“A Young Man of Accomplishments”

This is the story of William “Forrest” Terry. At birth, Forrest was diagnosed with Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS), a rare genetic disorder that causes a range of physical, cognitive and medical challenges. Some of the characteristics of this syndrome are small stature, mental delays, and speech is affected as well. Muscle issues related to his diagnosis requires that Forrest needs physical activity to prevent deterioration. Exercise, social and physical activities help Forrest to be healthier than other individuals who have this syndrome.

Forrest is close to his family. Before living on his grandparents’ farm (in 2005), Forrest and his mother, Jane, lived in Louisiana where Forrest’s name remained on a waitlist for supports for several years. Forrest finally did begin to receive some respite and personal care services in Louisiana, but when his parents divorced, Forrest and his mother moved from Louisiana to a rural community in Missouri. Forrest’s grandparents have helped care for Forrest while his mother worked, but they are no longer able to provide for all of his needs.

In spite of living in a community with limited resources for individuals with developmental disabilities, Forrest has had and still has an active lifestyle. With assistance from his support staff, who also is a family friend, Forrest helps with chores around the farm and feeds the animals. Forrest and his staff socialize in the nearby, small community. Forrest helps with the grocery shopping. He meets and greets everyone with a smile. Forrest is an affectionate, sweet, social individual.

Forrest, now, 24 years old, was an active and popular student at his High School. Forrest participated in Future Farmers of America, Regional Art Contest for which he was given honorable mention for his basket weaving. Forrest was also voted the “Most Friendly” student and during his senior year, he was voted as Prom King.

Gifted with computers, Forrest was employed while in high school at Versacourt, where he “burned” marketing DVDs, then assembled marketing packets for world-wide distribution.

At the heart of Forrest’s story is the fact that Forrest is a horseman. He loves horses and has been riding horses since he was 5 years old, becoming a very accomplished rider. He is involved with Horses of Hope Riding Centers, a therapeutic riding program, which is located in Baxter Springs, Kansas and in Buffalo, Missouri. He is on the Horses of Hope Show Team which allows him to compete at American Quarter Horse Association competitions in the Equestrian with Disabilities Division. A wonderful accomplishment as a result of his riding program was winning awards from the American Quarter Horse Association as a Year End High Point winner. He won for Showmanship at Halter and Trail (both national awards) with his equine partner, Kuhuna Lady (“Lady”), who is a Congress Champion, Reserve Congress Champion and multiple World Show Top 10 winner. “When Forrest puts on his chocolate brown suit and leads Lady into the show pen, it is hard not to fall in love with them both.



Lady has given him the confidence to really step up and excel in this event,” says one of the founders of his riding program.

Earlier this year, Forrest and his mother, Jane, made the trip to the American Quarter Horse Association Convention in Las Vegas to pick up his awards. His mother says of the trip to Las Vegas: “It was our first trip to Las Vegas. Forrest had never seen a show girl before or that many lights, but he loved it. He loves his belt buckles. He was grinning ear to ear when he got his awards. All the quarter horse people were so nice to him and came up to congratulate him.” In April/2012 publication of the American Quarter Horse Association Journal, there are pictures of Forrest with all of the statistics of his winnings.

It has also been said that “Forrest has a great personality and everyone loves him. He has a great sense of humor and he has a victory dance he will often do after riding in a class. He also knows his patterns for his classes better than anyone else. He will often watch the other riders in class go, and he always can tell me if they have made an error, even if it is a small thing like backing too many steps—he catches it.” His mother says that Forrest doesn’t care much about the color of ribbon that he wins but that she better have a Dr. Pepper waiting for him when he comes out of the arena as he loves Dr. Pepper!

Not the ending, just the beginning. . . .

Forrest’s Story written by Wanda Lefler as told by Jane Porter, Forrest’s Mother

A footnote to the above story of Forrest: Forrest, along with his family, is just one of the 100+ amazing individuals in the Joplin region that has chosen to self-direct the services that he receives. This service option allows the individual to choose the people that they want helping with the care they receive. In reference to the story of Forrest, this option allows his grandparents to be “grandparents” and his mother to have a job outside of the home, knowing all the while that Forrest is with someone that they know, trust and feel comfortable with. It is an honor and privilege for me to serve and support the individuals, along with their families, in the Joplin region that have chosen to self-direct their services—they are all amazing people!

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