Up to 3 Graduate Returns to USU

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Jordan Snell and Amy Henningson remain close friends

Jordan Snell is a 21-year-old mechanical engineering student at Utah State University, but his connection to the university started long before he arrived on campus last fall.

Snell has cerebral palsy due to complications at birth. He enrolled in the Up to 3 Early Intervention program at USU’s Center for Persons with Disabilities at the age of two months, and received many services including occupational therapy with Amy Henningson, who over the years has become a close family friend.

When Snell was about two years old, his father was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor, and six months later, his mother developed a brain cyst, which robbed her of her short-term memory.

“If you can imagine having three children, plus a 2-year-old with special needs, a husband who was terminally ill, and not be able to remember what happened 15 minutes ago—this was the situation my mother found herself in,” Snell wrote in a CPD blog post three years ago.

Snell’s aunt from Mesa, AZ, began making regular trips to Logan to try to help her family. He moved to Mesa temporarily to live with his aunt and uncle, then moved back to be with his family in North Logan. After his father’s death in 2001, Snell and the rest of his family moved to Mesa.

Snell earned an Eagle Scout Award, graduated with honors from high school, and loves to work on mechanical things.

“I’ve always had mechanical ability, but with my CP, I knew I couldn’t be a mechanic,” he said. “I had an epiphany in an eighth-grade English class, of all places, doing a ‘what should I do with the rest of my life’ test. I thought, why not get a Ph.D. and teach it? Those who can’t do, teach, right? So that’s my plan.”

He served a two-year mission for the LDS church before coming to Logan last fall, and plans to volunteer at church headquarters in Salt Lake City this summer. The future includes more classes, living off-campus with a few hand-picked roommates, and involvement in the local ham radio club.

And, no doubt, regular visits to the CPD.