



LIVING

Daniel Dintzner's film memorializes relationship with late Perkins School friend

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for Perkins School for the Blind Daniel Dintzner, above left, of Agawam, paid tribute to the memory of his late friend Jesse Isabelle, whom he met at the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, with a video he created in a Perkins film workshop conducted by "Friends" executive producer Kevin Bright, above right. Dintzner and Bright are pictured at the 2011 Perkins Possibilities Gala in May where the film, "Dedicated to Jesse Isabelle," was first shown.

[AGAWAM](#) – Daniel H. Dintzner met Jesse Isabelle six years ago at [Perkins School for the Blind](#). Daniel, who is both blind and hearing impaired, had lunch with Jesse after being interviewed to be accepted at the Watertown school.

Daniel was in the process of transferring out of the Agawam public school system. He has Alstrom syndrome, a rare genetic disorder responsible for his blindness and hearing impairment as well as some other health problems.

Daniel ended up enrolling in sixth grade at the world renowned school for the blind. For about a year, the two previously friendless 13-year-old boys hung out, talking about everything from girls to the Red Sox.

"We would always spend time together," Daniel recalled of Jesse. "We could communicate together. He was just so laid back. He didn't push to do anything."

The two boys would listen to Red Sox baseball games and Bruins hockey games. Through Jesse, Daniel joined the swim team and that became another thing the two boys could do together.

Like Daniel, Jesse had multiple health problems, having had many operations. Then one day in June of 2006 Jesse went to bed one night as normal, but woke up feeling bad and then died after having a seizure.

"It was the worst feeling ever. It was one of the worst days of my life," Daniel said during a recent interview at his home on Springfield Street in Agawam.

Daniel, now 20 and in his senior year at Perkins, said he has not yet had another friend as good as Jesse. For Jesse, the months the boys spent together were also special.

Jesse's mother has described that time as the best year of her son's life, according to Daniel's grandmother Dora M. Birchall.

Daniel is close to Jesse's mother, Carol Sheehan, and visits her family in Manchester, N.H., where they live. While there, Daniel sleeps in Jesse's old bedroom, which still has Red Sox memorabilia on the walls.

Recently, Daniel found another way to remember Jesse. He has made a short film about Jesse with Kevin S. Bright, the executive producer of the hit television series "Friends."

Daniel made "Dedicated to Jesse Isabelle" through a film workshop Bright conducted at Perkins. The film took second place at the Cinema Touching Disability Film Festival in Austin, Texas on Oct. 22. It was also the favorite film of festival-goers.

"It was sad during the making of it, reliving all the events, but at the same time I am glad I made it," Daniel said of the film.

Bright said when he read Daniel's two-paragraph film treatment he knew it was definitely a project he wanted to do.

"I was very moved by it," Bright said of Daniel's proposal.

"He is a phenomenal young man. He really had a message and a story he wanted to tell. His determination in getting that story told was inspirational," Bright said of the Agawam resident.

Daniel was at every shoot for the project and is acting as a consultant on another project Bright said he is working on at Perkins.

Source:

https://www.masslive.com/living/2012/01/blind_agawam_man_tells_tale_of_close_relationship_with_his_friend.html