

UW Oshkosh alumnus gets nonprofit up and running

by Alyssa Kadansky - Wednesday, July 09, 2014

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/34417/uw-oshkosh-alumnus-gets-nonprofit-up-and-running/>

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh alumnus Christian Jensen '07, of Green Bay, has made a career out of making a difference in the lives of others.

He combined his passion for athletics and his devotion to the mentally and physically challenged to start a nonprofit organization that gets everybody moving.

Jensen's key role in the founding of myTEAM TRIUMPH-Wisconsin inspired the Alumni Association to name him one of this year's Outstanding Young Alumni Award winners.

After dealing with the death of his father in high school, Jensen went into his freshman year at UW Oshkosh with the mindset that he would give everything he could to reach his full potential.

"As an athlete, I came to UWO with potential but I had to work very hard to accomplish what I did," Jensen said.

Jensen gave it his all and was a national champion and three-time, All-American track and field runner. Off the track, he excelled in the classroom and made the dean's list while pursuing a degree in history.

However, tragedy struck once again as Jensen's family home was taken by a fire, while he was home from school for the summer.

"After this, I looked hard at the direction I was going at UWO and made a switch," Jensen said. "I added a completely different major, focusing on exercise science."

After seven years at UW Oshkosh, Jensen graduated with two majors and two minors.

"The duration and intensity of the challenge is one which stretched me as a person and taught me more about myself than I ever realized," Jensen said.

After graduation, Jensen moved to Green Bay to start his career at Bellin Health as a personal trainer. He is responsible for training clients with a variety of needs, teaching classes, administering fitness assessments, giving group presentations and planning and implementing new programs.

The summer after starting at Bellin Health, Jensen met and began training with a woman named Mary Cox to help her improve functioning that was limited due to muscular dystrophy.

"I started training Mary to slow the progression of the disease, however, the truth is that she was training me with her positive attitude," Jensen said.

Jensen and his wife accompanied Cox for runs on the Fox River Trail as part of her therapy by pushing her in a racing chair. They also began participating in a number of local races, pushing Cox with them so that she could experience the thrill of the race.

“In 2009, we helped her complete her first marathon,” Jensen said. “Upon crossing the finish line, Mary gave us the spark to start something that we believed would change our community when she said, ‘I feel free when we run!’”

The following year, myTEAM TRIUMPH, a nonprofit athletic mentoring program for challenged athletes, was launched in Wisconsin, with Jensen taking the lead to get it started. Jensen became the executive director of myTEAM TRIUMPH-Wisconsin and has been responsible for its operations, growth and development since its initiation.

“Christian has taken myTEAM TRIUMPH-Wisconsin from its inception to now being the leading chapter of myTEAM TRIUMPH overall,” Bellin Health team leader and myTEAM TRIUMPH-Wisconsin vice president Becki Detaege said.

“He is a very caring and compassionate man who truly cares about people and helping them reach goals that they otherwise could not have dreamed possible.”

The myTEAM TRIUMPH “captains” are challenged athletes who inspire the team and have the chance to participate in road races or triathlons with the help of “angels,” able-bodied athletes who use special racing equipment to help the captains participate in the race.

“Christian’s commitment to improving the health of a population of people has grown from taking a few individuals confined to strollers for a run, to an army of angels that now take hundreds of captains for runs,” myTEAM TRIUMPH-Wisconsin Board President Timothy Felmer said.

Recently, Jensen developed a program for individuals with mild disabilities who are able to walk and run. He trains these individuals for their own endurance race.

“Through Christian’s strong leadership ... myTEAM TRIUMPH impacts thousands of individuals in many communities in Wisconsin,” Felmer said.

Jensen’s wife, Tiffany, believes that his commitment to others and his leadership make him the perfect candidate for the Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

“When I look at my husband and all he has done and continues to do for others, I can’t help but think of the quote ‘A great leader’s courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position.’ This truly exemplifies the leadership Christian displays,” she said.

Jensen’s desire to reach his full potential started at UW Oshkosh and continued after graduation. He still looks back on the relationships he formed and the lessons he learned as he strives to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

Jensen and nine other award winners will be recognized at the Alumni Awards Celebration as part of Homecoming 2014 on Friday, Oct.17.

On Saturday, Oct. 18, Jensen and a contingent of captains and angels from myTEAM TRIUMPH will lead the family-friendly Tour de Titan Bike Ride on campus.

For more information about the alumni awards dinner or the Tour de Titan, please contact the Alumni Relations office at (920) 424-3449 or email alumni@uwosh.edu.

Learn more:

- [A Triumphant Tale](#)
- [VIDEO: myTEAM TRIUMPH Wisconsin in action](#)
- [UW Oshkosh Alumni Relations](#)