

# Bobby Lyones



Our next recipient is a beautiful example of what it means to live kindness while beating the odds. It is my honor to introduce our next Courage Award recipient, Bobby Lyones.

Bobby was born in Chicago, and his early childhood was not so simple. Bobby was born with disabilities that required hospital stays and corrective surgery. His family was told he would not be able to walk. In addition, Bobby's parents were unable to care for him at the time of his birth. Eventually, Bobby's aunt Lorraine stepped in gaining legal guardianship and moved him to Arizona where he would be able to receive the proper follow up care he required.

While Bobby describes a significant portion of his childhood as, "scary" and "hopeless", he was ultimately guided and comforted by many people he was surrounded with. Bobby credits members of his church, his teachers, and his aunt as mentors that allowed him to keep a positive spirit and "keep on trying".

Bobby is now a senior at Desert Vista High School. His teacher, Ms. Mael comments on the positivity he brings to class, even while learning is distanced, stating, "Bobby helped me with learning how to use many new online technologies. Bobby was a class leader; he would always take over and assist any of the students in his virtual class to the best of his ability." Recently, Bobby also served as a teacher's assistant in a freshman level course. In doing this, Ms. Mael noted what an extraordinary help this was to the incoming freshman class as they transitioned to not only to high school but

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also to online learning. When asked what his favorite part of school is, Bobby simply states, “the community”.

Outside of school, Bobby is an active participant in his church. From his leadership with the children’s ministry group and learning to operate the soundboard and lighting equipment, Bobby is always ready to help. Bobby says it makes him happy to serve others and participating in service work makes him feel like “I’m actually doing something!” Bobby recalls one young student telling him, “I want to be like you when I grow up.” When asked how this made him feel Bobby says, “It shocked me because I never thought of myself as a role model.”

Nowadays, home life may be considered hectic at times, as Bobby lives with his aunt, uncle, great grandmother, and several foster children. The ‘natural leader role’ applies to his home life as well as he assists with the at-home care of his great grandmother and the care of the other children living at home. About his great grandmother, Bobby says, “Helping her, helps me.” Bobby also acknowledges the difficulties each child might face in their own story, which is telling of his character and his ability to understand. He notes, “The only thing we can do is show kindness.”

Bobby is always willing to assist at home, school, and church - but another facet of his life that grants great meaning and purpose has been his experience working on his aunt’s ranch. Some tasks Bobby participates in on the ranch include preparing the land for use, and taking care of the pigs and piglets, as well as the horses. What

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accomplishments for someone who was told they would never walk. Bobby also loves spending time with his two boxer dogs, Sadie and Princess, who he says are “uplifting”.

Bobby’s work on the ranch fuels his dream of becoming a veterinary technician. Bobby notes that his favorite thing about working with animals is the sense of freedom he feels while being in their presence and in the great outdoors saying, “It helps my mood. It makes me happy.” While Bobby would love to work with animals, he will be attending Mesa Community College soon and he has dreams of becoming a barber, as well.

Bobby’s spirit is one of resilience and positivity regardless of adversities. While adverse experiences may impact one in negative lights, Bobby is forward thinking. On the topic of living with exceptionalities and having a disability, Bobby wants everyone to know, “Don’t let any label put any limitations on you. Don’t let any label define you.”

When asked if Bobby had any words to share with anyone who might be experiencing a similar situation Bobby says, “Don’t give up. No matter how hopeless, always always look to the horizon. Even if you have a small percentage of hope, that’s all it takes.”

Bobby would like to thank his aunt Lorraine for all she has done and continues to do. “I wouldn’t be here without her,” he says. Bobby Lyones, thank you for sharing your story with us. On behalf of the city of Tempe, and in recognition of your outstanding perseverance, please accept this 2021 Courage Award.