



DARE TO MOVE

By Adam Membrey PHOTOS BY CLARA LINK



He was already five years old, and yet he could only speak a few words. There was concern – how would he communicate?

Would he ever begin to express himself? But in drawing a picture of St. Francis, Dylan showed everyone that he could speak just as much as anyone his age – just in a different way. The first steps in the remarkable journey came in June of 1983, when Dylan was born at home in Olympia, WA. His mother, Terri Rose, noticed something different about her child. A blood test eventually revealed her newborn child had Down syndrome. It didn't matter; she was determined to help her son make the most of his life.

It is with this mother's love that pushes Dylan through his journey. From the time he was ten months old, Dylan was attending speech and physical therapy appointments. But without a car the first two years of her new son's life, Terri took a total of six buses a day to assure he attended therapy and other early intervention classes, a trip that happened rain or shine.

From the age of 5 to 10, the weather grew especially rough for Dylan; he was unfortunately physically

and emotionally abused. The last straw came when Dylan had a door slammed in his face, leaving him with a broken wrist and intense emotions. Changes were made in the household that removed the cause of the pain, and Terri began to work with Dylan on mending the wounds. It was not an easy transition. Dylan would, at times, get in touch with his anger and hit others. For the first time, Terri actually feared her own son.

Yet Terri didn't want her son to go to a residential school for children with behavioral challenges. She ultimately decided to purchase Dylan a full-sized drum set, enroll him in the martial arts, and find a person who could do art and movement with him.

This is where Marian Lancaster came in. Nearly 11 years old, Dylan was in a dark place, a place intense enough that it carried over into his art, where he painted with an abundance of browns and blacks. He felt his body and boundaries had been violated; he wouldn't let anyone watch him dance or even let them in the room. But dancing at Dylan's house 2-3 times a month, Marian taught him how to trust his freedom and the healing powers of movement. She showed him how to move fluidly with his emotions; she taught him to dance along imaginary living



Above, Dylan's "Colored Hills", watercolor on paper

Right, "St. Francis" by Dylan Klein, age 5



Dylan and his mom, Terri Rose.

humor. His job allows her son to be rewarded for his confidence with people and candidness with his experiences. In addition to Dylan's considerable talent, DK Arts came to life with the help from several agencies, but the primary health and growth of DK Arts has come from Dylan's mother, Terri Rose.

The extraordinary talent of Dylan is still the heart of the company. Dylan is already an international award-winning poet and artist, having won an award for his watercolor, "Colored Hills" from Art Ability, an organization featuring artists with disabilities. The International Society of Poetry recognized his poem, "Faces" with a certificate of honor and published his poem in a compilation book of poetry titled, "Timeless Voices" and later recorded by a professional reading on a 3-CD box set titled "The Sound of Poetry"

As of right now, Dylan is attending his fourth year of school at the South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) in Olympia, WA. He will be taking classes in adult basic education, marketing, dance, pastel painting, tai chi, and American Sign Language. In addition to his classes, he has started a new dance company, "Heavenly Dance Company", which features dancers with mixed abilities. The debut performance titled, "The Dancing Stars" is scheduled for the October Arts Walk in Olympia. His future ambitions include starting a Talking Heads cover band, as well as a band that plays children's music. He also hopes to record his own music to create his own unique dance and performance tracks.

His message today is deceptively simple: "It's about ability, not disability."

Anyone who's seen his "St. Francis" picture from nearly 20 years ago can see that, just as Dylan, his ability and talent has grown and flourished. And for someone who has endured so much darkness, the future appears to be brighter than ever. ✨

room campfires. Dylan eventually started choosing brighter colors and allowing others to see him. His confidence began to grow as he learned to trust himself and others.

"I'm not sure if I would have pursued art, movement, music, or martial arts with such passion had Dylan's life not been filled with pain and suffering," his mother wrote. "From the dark he found light."

When it came to the workplace, traditional jobs didn't fit Dylan's personality and skills. While on the job, Dylan would talk to people causing production to slow down. His strength became viewed as a weakness. All the efforts Terri made to help Dylan develop his articulateness were no longer appreciated. Dylan needed to find a job that allowed him to embrace his love for language and communication.

Instead of trying more traditional jobs Terri helped her son create his very own company, DK Arts. He has produced 22 designs that are sold as bookmarks, postcards, greeting cards, and prints, and in addition to that, he gives motivational speeches, dances, recites poetry, and displays a witty sense of



Dylan created this logo for DK Arts

Resources:

Enterprise For Equity

www.enterpriseforequity.org
A community nonprofit that helps people with limited incomes start and sustain small businesses.

Making Self-employment Work for People with Disabilities

By Cary Giffin and David Hammis, Brooks publishing

Washington Initiative for Supported Employment

www.theinitiative.ws/newhome.asp

Morningside Supported Employment Agency

www.morningsideservices.com/disability.htm

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr/index.htm

Successful Entrepreneurs with Disabilities:

www.p2ppower.org/clara/intex.htm
Clara Link – photographer

www.designsbylupita.netfirm.com
Lupita Cano – artist

www.decoloresbooks.com
Simon Perretz-Rosales – bookstore proprietor



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