

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS



Bryson May

From the moment he was born, Bryson May's family knew he would face some serious challenges in his life.

Bryson was born at just 26 weeks. He didn't take his first independent steps until he was 5 years old. Now a student at Brown Elementary in the Hazelwood School District, Bryson has cerebral palsy and wears cochlear devices.

Yet, Bryson approaches each challenge with an infectious smile and energy that can't be matched.

"He has a can-do attitude," said Amanda Howell, an SSD teacher at Brown Elementary. "All of the staff and teachers love him, and he's always encouraging his peers," she said.

Bryson has already made a huge impact at Brown Elementary. He's a recipient of the Best of Brown character awards, has been selected for special projects like the school's STEM garden and has even thrown out a first pitch at a Cardinals game.

Over the course of the last year Bryson has made up nearly two years of growth in reading comprehension. He participates in the Tri My Best Triathlon, Camp Independence and St. Louis Challenger Baseball.



Ameer Alzahabi

Ameer Alzahabi is a standout student, who has shown great progress in gaining skills as a student at South Technical High School and Parkway West High School. But along with giving his best inside the classroom to maintain his high GPA, he gives even more outside of the classroom in his community.

Ameer was born in the United States, but frequently travels to Syria where some of his close relatives reside. The conditions he has encountered there have impacted him deeply. As a result, he has volunteered much of his time to improving the situation for orphans from Syria.

He has also helped refugees by traveling to refugee camps and working with the children there. At home, Ameer has made a difference by assisting with resource drives to help send medicine, furniture, blankets and other supplies to those who need them overseas.

In his Design and Entrepreneur class, Ameer has worked on a project to reach out to those who are adversely affected by war. Further, he has spoken publicly to groups about the effects of war on those he knows—particularly the effects war has had on children.



Caitlyn Kuntz

Caitlyn Kuntz has worked hard to become an engaged, flexible and happy student who is always smiling, greeting students and offering help.

Caitlyn attends Barretts Elementary in Parkway Schools and receives services from SSD. She has shown significant progress in communications, and participates in community service and extracurricular activities.

SSD occupational therapist Mary Hackworth said Caitlyn is kind to everyone and helps younger students and those with different abilities become comfortable in the Barretts community.

"Caitlyn is a member of the Student Action Leadership Team. One morning there were a number of activities taking place," said Hackworth. "Caitlyn greeted students and guests at the door and guided people to their destinations. Her sunny face and engaging attitude brightened the morning for many people."

Additionally, Caitlyn researched, planned and raised funds for a calming corner for students who would benefit from a space to regroup in order to return to learning.