

From the moment you meet Brendon, you quickly notice his deep passion for and knowledge about animals. This interest started as a young child when on a visit to a local zoo with his family, he was amazed by the size of the elephants. From an early age Brendon always wanted to be a zookeeper and going to college has helped move this dream closer to reality.

Brendon is a friendly, helpful, dependable and hardworking man – all qualities that enabled him to get the most out of his time at Bridgewater State University (BSU), located in southeastern Massachusetts. He enrolled in the Excel Partnership Program at BSU, a fully inclusive postsecondary program for young adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Through Excel, Brendon focused his coursework on broadening his knowledge of animals and animal behavior. During two of his three years at BSU, he lived on campus. This made it easier to make new friends and become more independent.

## PLAN

At the start of his first year, Brendon met with Excel staff to help develop his short-term and long-term academic, social, and career goals. He was clear that his vision included obtaining a job working with animals at a zoo or aquarium.

Brendon periodically reviewed his goals with Excel staff during his weekly check-in meetings and at the start of each semester developed new short-term goals. At the end of each year Brendon prepared a PowerPoint presentation that summarized the progress he had made during the year. On one occasion, 28 people came to his meeting. Even though he felt nervous, Brendon kept calm and spoke with confidence.

## LEARN

At BSU, Brendon took full advantage of the academic opportunities available to him. He applied himself in his studies with enthusiasm and commitment and focused on taking courses that would support his dream of becoming a zookeeper.

Brendon took a wide range of classes including biology, anthropology, and public speaking, but was particularly interested in courses that focused on animals. In his first year he took the “Monkeys, Apes and Us” class and hit it off with the instructor during his first semester.

# SUPPORT

Through the partnership between BSU and his local school

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