


Who am I



Q. Where were you born?

A. Anacortes

Q. How long have you lived on SJI?

A. 31 years.

Q. Tell us about your immediate family?

A. My family is everything, I love being able to go to them when I'm down, or happy, have a joke to tell, ect. My brother Britt is the oldest with two kids and lived up in Alaska where he works as a fisherman. Sam is the quietest. He's just two years younger than me. Sam is very kind hearted and very private. The funny thing about growing up with him was people would always come up to us and ask us if we were twins and still do to this day. Sam is my closest ally because he's the only person who understands what I go through, which makes life so much easier. Lindsey is the baby. She was the athletic one and very competitive. Watching her play sports was a highlight growing up. She has a baby of her own and another one on the way. Gavin, her husband, naturally became a part of our family and he's one of us now. He just became a Physician's Assistant. He is a remarkable man and a great dad. My parents were high school sweethearts and had four children at a young age. My dad, Gordy was the wrestling coach for many years here on San Juan Island. My mom, Deanna, is the strongest person I know. She was an EMT for years. If she's not working, she's in her garden. The thing about family is, even though you don't always get along they are always there when you need them.

Q. How long have you been involved with SJI EMS?

A. October 2012, before joining I would spend time at the building.

Q. What inspired you to become involved with SJI EMS?

A. I was 23 when this happened. My brother Sam, sister Lindsey, and a friend of ours took a day trip to the zoo in Seattle. Throughout the day I was having chest pain off and on. Which is not uncommon for me. When I got home that night it started getting worse. As time went on I decided to go lay down on the couch in my room to see if I could sleep it off. Because sometimes that helps, but after 20 minutes or so the pain was unbearable. It was hard to breath. My parents bedroom is next to the kitchen so I went through the kitchen to wake my mom up. She was an EMT and happened to get up to respond to a 911 call. She saw me in the kitchen and when she heard what was going on she called 911. I was having a heart attack. It's hard to put into words how I felt when the EMTs and medics showed up. Their skills and compassion made everything

better. They kept me alive. How grateful I was for a quick EMS response. It made me want to be a volunteer and help the same organization that saved my life.

Q. What is your current role & responsibility with SJI EMS?

A. As the Morale officer, I plan fun association events and coordinate monthly birthday recognition for each member.

Q. What is the most important thing you learned from the EMS dept?

A. I learned to trust people I work with, to trust they saw me for who I am and that I could do things. I was nervous about it and know they have my best interest at heart. I assisted teaching and spoke on topics receiving honest feedback. I learned we are all family.

Q. What do you want the public to know about SJI EMS?

A. The EMTs train twice a month. One of the training focuses on skills so that they can maintain standards and to be good at what they do. The other meeting is held with dr. Corsa, our medical director, holds us to high standards and reviews cases and focuses on quality improvement. Management works hard to keep the organization running smoothly. We all work hard at what we do.

Q. What do you want others to know about coping with physical challenges in life?

A. I was scared to accept the fact that I had a disability. All I wanted was to feel like a normal kid or what I thought was normal. It caused me to have depression. I have become the man I want to be because I now know there is so much more to me than my disability and disorder and I hope one day people can see that. I'm going to keep moving forward and live the life I know how.

Q. What advice do you have for us in these difficult and challenging times that we are in globally?

A. When I was in high school I had a Dr. appointment for an earache and when I got there we went to one of the back rooms. When the Dr. came in they sat down right next to me and instead of asking me questions, the doctor talked to my mom. My mom looked at me and then back at the doctor and said "ask him", so finally she did. But the questions were more about how she can help with my disorder instead of what I initially came in for. Perception is not always as it appears, but TOGETHER we can move forward. Just know there is always a light at the end of the tunnel.