

YOU TOO CAN BE A BARRIER BREAKER!

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You Too Can be a Barrier Breaker! is told through his story of including Patrick Henry Hughes and his dad in the University of Louisville RED RAGE! Marching Band. Patrick is blind and crippled since birth. This story has been featured in publications and broadcasting media including Sports Illustrated, ABC World News Tonight with Charlie Gibson, Good Morning America, ESPN, ESPNU, ESPN2, College Sports Television, Fox Sports, Southern Living Magazine, National Public Radio, the Oprah Winfrey Show, and the Ellen DeGeneres show.

Patrick was announced as one of ABC's People of the Year, 2006 and he received the Disney's Wide world of Sports Spirit Award. The first time this award has been presented to a non-athlete. He was honored by CBS with the Arêtes Award. On November 7th, 2007 Ty Pennington and his team from Extreme Makeover: Home Edition knocked on his door and announced that the Hughes family was going to receive a new home. Later that month, Mr. Hughes was honored by Bands of America and Music for All by being the first recipient of the Patrick John Hughes Band Parent Award, an award given to honor an outstanding band parent. The release of Patrick's book "I am Potential" has launched a global speaking campaign, helping others see the world through his blind eyes.

Through this experience, Dr. Byrne has heard from many students who have had doors close on them because of their disabilities. Dr. Byrne's mission through this research is to provide compelling evidence of success for both individuals and ensembles by thinking beyond the disability. Since the Individuals with Disabilities Act 1975 (IDEA), schools are required to provide education for students with disabilities. However, there are various options for teachers and parents through this law which include, segregation, mainstreaming and inclusion. Dr. Byrne's hope is to set the stage for teachers to realize that mainstreaming and segregation is one thing, but integration is another. *"You can't fully experience a rollercoaster by sitting next to it. You have to ride it!"*, says Byrne.

Other Barrier Breakers include:

I. Ms. Michelle Harless, Former Director of Bands at Sheldon Clark High School in Kentucky. Her student, Kayla Freeman, suffers from Arthrogyrosis and is bound to a wheelchair. Kayla plays mallet instruments with her mouth and the entire school has made accommodations around Kayla's needs. This includes, but not limited to, building access ramps to the stadium, knocking down walls and building stages, re-routing student pathways and smoothing over thresholds. *"Once I got to know Kayla, I knew there was nothing she couldn't do."* – Michelle Harris

II. Mr. Zachary Cogdill, Director of Bands at South Cobb High School in Georgia. His student, Devin Robinson, is a medical research patient at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. Devin suffers from Leukodystrophy. This disease prevents him from moving his limbs properly even though his brain sends the proper signals. Mr. Cogdill's band participated in President Obama's Inaugural Parade. Devin participated in this parade by riding a Derby Car which was presented to the school by the community. Devin is not expected to live beyond his high school years, yet one of his lifelong goals is being achieved. *"I want to be in a marching band."* –Devin Robinson

III. Mr. Ken Sawyer, Director of Bands at Ralston Valley High School in Colorado. His student Derek Riemer is blind and marches with the band. The entire band assists Derek with his maneuvers on the field and help him learn his music. Mr. Sawyer devoted an entire practice room facility to assist in Derek's success. *"The easiest thing for us to have done I suppose was to have Derek stand on the sidelines, but that option never crossed my mind."* – Ken Sawyer

If you know of barriers that need breaking, musicians with disabilities that need an advocate, or other positive stories as described above, I would like to hear from you!