

Meet Jacob Gapko

Jacob Gapko, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, gapkoja@yahoo.com

I have Duchenne muscular dystrophy, but I am considered an “outlier” case since I walked until age 14. I used a manual wheelchair during high school and got my first power chair at age 17. I have used a BiPAP AVAPS at night since age 22 and the LTV®950 (see Ask the Expert, p. 6) during the day for the past three years, beginning at age 32. Two agencies provide me a total of seven hours of personal care per day at home; my parents provide overnight care and fill in when agency workers are unavailable.



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In fall 1996, I entered the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, majoring in physics with minors in mathematics and library science. In summer 1999, sponsored by the EntryPoint program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, I served as an intern at the National Aeronautical and Space Administration’s (NASA) Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) Library in Greenbelt, Maryland. The EntryPoint program is designed for persons with disabilities studying in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields.

I created GSFC’s first web channel on Engineering and Technology, primarily for research scientists at GSFC. Aggregating resources from GSFC, NASA centers and other worldwide materials on engineering and technology, this single portal gives scientists and engineers at GSFC and elsewhere centralized access to information necessary for their projects.

During January 2000, I remotely created the Space Science web channel for the GSFC library on my home computer, again combining worldwide space science resources into a single accessible resource.

I graduated from UW–Eau Claire in May 2001 with my B.S. in physics and completed UW–Milwaukee’s online Master of Library and Information Science program in December 2002.

My first professional job was as the cataloger at the Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) library. While working at CVTC, I applied for and received a Carnegie–Whitney Award from the American Library Association to write *Children and Young Adults with Muscular Dystrophy: An Annotated Bibliography* (<http://quest.mda.org/article/children-and-young-adults-muscular-dystrophy-annotated-bibliography>). The bibliography provides a clearinghouse of books by and about young persons with muscular dystrophy for use by educational and health care professionals, family members and persons within the MD community.

I am currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program at UW–Madison in Library and Information Studies, minoring in Science and Technology Studies, and I am working on a literature review for my dissertation. I am indebted to my father who sacrificed three years of his retirement to commute with me to UW–Madison and care for me. ▲