



Matt Maag experiences another special life moment with LCCC graduation, looks to future

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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GODFREY - Alton's Matt Maag has had a lot of special moments in his young life, but he experienced another one this past week with Lewis and Clark Community College's graduation.

Matt proudly wore the Phi Theta Kappa white cord with his cap and gown. He graduated with an associate's degree in computer graphics. Matt, a soft-spoken, but engaging and positive personality, has been a standout in multiple sports over the years in Special Olympics. Matt is also a talented percussionist and was a member of the Alton Marching 100 in high school.

Matt is the son of Greg and Lisa Maag. Matt has never let an autism diagnosis stop him. He has used what he has learned through the process to help many others in similar situations. He is an ambassador for Special Olympics and has won state championships in multiple sports. He participates in swimming, track, basketball, and bowling.

Matt described the graduation as "a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

"I was proud of my achievements and I also wore the Phi Theta Kappa white cord, which represents graduating with honors. I like to do the special activity events and hang out with my friends."

Matt said he couldn't even put into words how much Special Olympics competition has meant to his life, with the number of friendships he has made and how it has helped his confidence.

"It changes the way I live my everyday life," he said. "I work out at Nautilus Fitness Center and it helps give me the energy to conduct my workouts and live my life."

No one was more proud of Matt than his mother, Lisa, and father, Greg, at the LCCC graduation.

Lisa Maag smiled the entire graduation, Matt and his sister, Madelyne, said.

"My mom has supported me ever since day one," Matt said. "She has always wanted me to be as successful as possible. She hugged me very tightly after the graduation; that meant a lot to me. She was very proud."

Matt is currently in an internship position with Logo It, taking his classroom training and putting it into a real world, fast-paced setting.

Once he finishes his time this summer there, he will be doing his second internship in Washington, D.C.

"Matt applied to a division in the government called WRP," his mom said. "Workforce Recruitment Program for students with disabilities. He has successfully interviewed with the Navy and will be placed in the Graphic design department for the EEOC

website and publications. This internship will be located in Washington D.C. This is a program open to all students with disabilities who are working on a degree or looking for employment."

Matt has received three scholarships from Lindenwood in St. Charles, Mo. One is an academic scholarship, another a music scholarship and the other a Phi Theta Kappa scholarship to continue his education focusing on graphic design with animation and web design.

Matt said his ultimate goal as a graphic designer is to own his own graphic design business and continue to learn and grow.

Madelyne said there was not a limit of how proud she was of Matt's accomplishments and the kind of person he has become.

"It is out of the galaxy and solar system," she said of her pride about her brother.