

NEXUS CHAMPION

STEVEN GERWIN



Steven Gerwin participated in the Changes Health & Wellness program for children and adolescents with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS), a rare genetic disorder that affects learning, behavior, and weight gain.

"Because of Steven's level of PWS and his inability to control himself, he can't have a lot of the same freedoms that most people have," explained Karen Gerwin, Steven's mother.

The year before Steven admitted to Nexus Children's Hospital, he was around 320 pounds and suffered a terrible broken ankle. His father, Adam, explained the lengthy healing process hindered Steven's ability to exercise and make progress. That, coupled with his food seeking behavior, caused him to gain another 155 pounds. The Gerwin's explained that they felt they couldn't keep up with Steven as he was getting more out of control.

"Steven was and still is very intelligent when it comes to breaking into cabinets and the refrigerator to get food," explained Adam.

His mother echoed a similar description, saying, **"He learned to pick and pry open the locks and yank doors off their hinges, even though we superglued and caulked things. Every time we tried to upgrade our security system, he always outsmarted us."**

The Gerwin family previously admitted Steven to a different facility when he was younger. While there, they heard about Nexus' program. When the need came for him to go back to an inpatient program, the Gerwin's searched for Nexus, and by spring, Steven was participating in the program.

"His doctors had him on a strict diet limited to 900 calories and he was in physical and occupational therapy," explained Adam. **"He used a stationary bike and treadmill and they encouraged him to take walks outside. He enjoyed physical therapy and really got into the walking and he still loves to do that today."**

"Considering he was in a hospital unit, his spirits were high, and he made friends with some of the other kids who he still talks to," said Karen. **"He participated in different activities the staff put together and in total lost 181 pounds. Since he's been home, he's lost about another five. We really believe the program helped him lose the weight he needed. We felt Nexus was as good a place as he could be. We had input on what they were doing with Steven and they never talked down to us or over our heads."**

Karen also explained that now Steven is home, she feels he is more remorseful for his actions. **"He actually wrote an apology letter after he tore a door down. I know he can't help it and control it and doesn't want to do those kinds of things."**

This spring, Steven will turn 18. The Gerwin's main goals for him are to keep his weight off and help him finish high school in the next year or two.

"He loves school, so keeping him going is not a problem," said Karen. **"We're going to try to get a new door and upgrade our food security so we can have him with us as long we can. We're also looking into day camps and programs for him after high school."**

While Steven is not high functioning enough to handle various aspects of life himself, like money management and driving himself around, he does love to draw, and his parents wanted to share about his amazing talent.

"He's really good at looking at something and transposing it," said Karen. **"He'll sit there and draw anything, and that makes him happy."**

Steven's family looks forward to the milestones ahead for him. They are thankful for the help and support they received at Nexus, which has helped him progress to where he is today.

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MENDING MINDS.

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