

Success Stories: Vocational Rehabilitation



Sidney Smith



OCCUPATION:
Hotel Manager / Triathlete

VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Individualized Plan for Employment
- Assistance with physical therapy and transportation
- Prosthetic devices for mobility

In 2015, Sidney Smith became a double amputee from his battle with Charcot-Marie-Tooth, a disease that damaged nerves in his legs. A lot of fear came over him when he was told his feet needed to be amputated below the knee. Not only was he worried about how his new disability would affect his job as a hotel manager, but he was also concerned about the financial burden of medical expenses.

Prior to the surgery, Sidney learned about Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) from an amputee he met at his doctor's office. He applied and was approved and was set up with his first VR counselor, Jason. After surgery, he received assistance with physical therapy and transportation to travel from his home in Vernal to Utah County to see his doctor and get fitted for prosthetic legs.

Another VR counselor, Sharon, continued Sidney's case and played a big part during the final stages of his prosthetic fittings. After he was denied by his insurance coverage for a vacuum suction he needed for limb suspension, Sharon worked to acquire the part for him to ensure he'd have the correct suspension in his prosthetics.

"I am truly grateful for the support of vocational rehabilitation in being a crucial moving part in the journey of getting my prosthetics and working as hotel manager," said Sidney. "I am so thankful for my excellent counselors and helping me not only financially, but being there emotionally as they were a huge motivation to getting back onto feet!"

Today, Sidney owns prosthetic running legs, walking legs, and cycling legs. He hikes mountains, does sprints and Olympic triathlons, and is currently training for an Ironman. In addition, he gained strength so he could continue working and perform his job duties well. At work, he can easily move around the lobby, go upstairs, in and out of rooms, and run around town to get supplies for the hotel without any issues.

"With my prosthetics I am able to do my job better physically than I could when I had my feet," said Sidney.

Through counseling and assistance, Vocational Rehabilitation is able to help clients such as Sidney alleviate the concerns that can come with a new disability and help them maintain independence.

