

# Testimonial



By Cindy Glenn, ClaroRead User

*"Just because we struggle does not mean we do not want to learn or have a successful future."*

Hello friends,

I am 24 years old and I will be accomplishing three of my many lifelong goals this spring, 2011. Graduating from seven years of college with a GPA well over 3.0! I will be wearing honor cords for graduation. It has been a long journey for me and I would not be here today without my goals, and some very important people who have supported and encouraged me through my academic career. I would like to thank my family and friends, and the help I have received from teachers /aides, Sylvan Learning Center, coaches, Central Washington University (CWU) the Center Disability Services (CDS), and Access Technology Resource Center (ATRC).

Background:

**Elementary and Middle school:** I have known of my learning disability (LD) since I was in third grade. It was not too big of an issue until I was in fifth grade and I could not read or write a three-letter word. In the fifth grade I made a goal for myself: to be out of special education classes by the time I was a freshman in high school. Most of middle school, I would be pulled from my normal classes and placed in the resource center for extra help. I worked very hard in hopes of overcoming my learning disability. I had many late nights with tea and early mornings with cups of coffee trying to get my homework done and get good grades. I was terrified to tell anyone about my struggles with learning. I worked especially hard to get good grades so no one would ever guess I struggled in school. After years of determination, the help of many teachers, aides, my parents and Sylvan

Learning Center, I finally got over the hump and on my way to really reading.

**High school:** High school was an amazing experience for me. I would read a text book and retain what it was saying for the first time. I also became very active in sports (Cross Country, Gymnastics, and Track and Field) in hopes of going to college on an athletic scholarship. I did, in fact, reach my goal of getting out of the resource classrooms my freshman year, with the exception of a study hall. I made another goal to graduate with honor cords from high school. My days in high school were very busy and I had only enough time for practice (four hours a day) and homework. Once again, staying up many late nights, 1:30am-2:00am, doing homework. I would then get up at 5:45am and start school by 7:30am. As my high school career went on, I would make the decision not to take the ACT or the SAT because I know I would not do well on them and it could go against me if I was going to apply to colleges. This gave me one choice. I would go to community college after high school. Throughout high school I would be voted most inspirational by my team mates in all three sports. In my senior year I would be voted team captain of the girls cross country and gymnastics teams. Graduation would come and I would graduate at the top of my class with honor cords in 2004. I still had the notion that I could beat my learning disability, but I was starting to share my struggles with other people. I was not so afraid of being judged.

**Community College:** I was a full time (Cross Country, Track and Field (Pole Vault)) student/athlete starting in the fall of 2004. At the

college level I was voted most inspirational team mate and most improved for Track and Field and Cross Country. For three years, I was going to practice for four hours a day, and doing about sixteen-eighteen hours of homework a **day**. I was still just barely getting C's in my classes. The goal was to graduate with my AA without my accommodations. **I would soon learn that the body can only function on so much stress and frustration.** I would reach my mental and physical breaking point in the fall of 2006. I had no choice but to file for accommodations or quit college. I had never been known to quit or give up on a goal. I would be re-evaluated and I would receive my accommodations in the spring of 2007. At first, I was very reluctant, trusting my accommodations. I did not know yet, that they would help me learn the material faster and more effective. In the fall of 2007 my life would change forever, for the better! I would use all of the accommodations possible for my classes, and it was amazing! I could actually be rested, and prepared for class instead of scrambling. A feeling I had never experienced before.

In the fall of 2007 I made the decision to transfer to CWU. I applied to CWU because I had heard that they were the best college when it came to accommodating for students with LDS. I would get accepted in December 2007. I would start at CWU in January in 2008.

**University:** Once at CWU, I would walk-on to their Cross Country, Track and Field (Pole Vault) teams. At the University level I was seen as an inspirational team mate and I would be placed third on the Top Ten women pole vaulters who attended CWU. As a LDS student, I would also learn that accommodations were handled completely different than they were at the community college. I would receive my materials on a computer CD instead of an audio CD. I would learn how to use a reader on my computer to read my materials. At first, I was not all that excited about having a computerized voice instead of a real person's voice, but I got use to it. By using a reader on my computer I could read and absorb the material faster. This reading program would not only read my books and give me the opportunity to read along with it, but would also read my typed papers to me that I had just

written. The reading program on my computer has helped me learn how to read, write, and type faster.

The help I have received from CDS and ATRC has helped me discover how much I love to learn! School has given me the opportunity to "Teach me, how I learn best", and describe it to others. Prior to receiving accommodations I was miserable in school. No matter how hard I tried, I could never be prepared for class. With the help I have received, I am not only prepared for class, but I have the confidence to participate in class discussions.

I learned an important lesson when I filed for my accommodations; my LD is a part of who I am. It has made me who I am today. It has taught me how to be organized, be punctual, communicate with others, be a hard worker, be kind to others, and in some cases I have used it as an ice breaker. It has helped me build goals for my life.

Sports have also contributed to my successes. Athletics helped give me a feeling of belonging, in times when I felt I had none academically. Being on a team built up my confidence, it helped relieve stress from school, and it motivated me to have excellent grades and lifelong friendships. Sports also taught me that goals can be achieved, and once they are, we need to make newer, harder goals to better ourselves even further. I do enjoy sharing my story, I have hopes that it will encourage others to work hard and believe there is no limit to what one can accomplish.

The next life goal I hope to achieve is to write a book about my experience in school and how these experiences changed my attitude, from hating school to really enjoying it.

Thanks for all of the support and help. I would not be here today without family, friends, Sylvan, teachers, aides, coaches, CDS, and the ATRC.

Sincerely,

Cindy Glenn