

V. Marchese's 'Banana Jack' Inspires Young Man to Overcome Odds and Achieve His Academic Goals

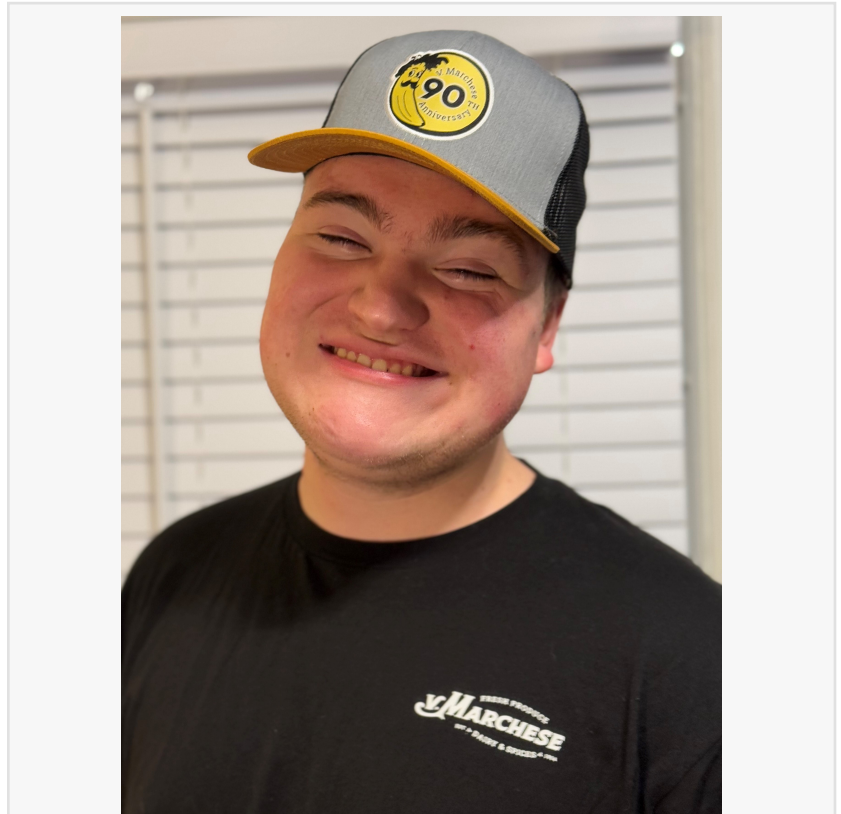
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EINPresswire.com/ -- V. Marchese, a family-owned wholesaler offering fresh produce, dairy and spices throughout the Midwest recently encountered a young man who due to an illness has struggled to meet his academic goals and listened to his story about how V. Marchese helped to inspire him to persevere. The following is the story of Eddie Osborn who embraced V. Marchese's long-time icon "Banana Jack" to give him strength through hard times:

Finding Joy in the Journey: Eddie Osborn's Inspiring Story and 'Banana Jack's' Role in It

In the metropolitan Milwaukee area, the whimsical image of Banana Jack on V. Marchese's delivery trucks has sparked laughter and joy for many. But for one young man, seeing that quirky human-like banana figure was more than just a moment of amusement; it became a symbol of hope during a challenging time.

Meet Edison "Eddie" Osborn, a determined young man whose journey took a serious turn while in high school



when he was diagnosed with a rare brain tumor, known scientifically as a DGONC. With only 31 known cases worldwide, Eddie faced a battle that even some of the best medical institutions in the world struggled to identify. It wasn't until Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (Children's Wisconsin), working with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, allowed him to receive the specialized care he desperately needed.

At Children's Wisconsin, Eddie's treatment included a complex surgery to remove a part of his right temporal lobe of the brain. St. Jude's then diagnosed the pathology of the tumor to determine Eddie's disease. This procedure reduced his seizures to 20 a day down from as many as 60 a day. This was a significant improvement and helped to put him on a path to getting better.

While the procedure was successful, it also meant that Eddie had to miss a third of his sophomore year and most of his junior and senior years for recovery, putting at risk his dream of graduating on time from Lake Country Lutheran High School and attending the Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) after graduating.

His mother, Kate Osborn, recalls the heartache of watching her son grapple with the challenges of his illness while still holding onto his dreams. "Eddie was a really good student," she said. "It was difficult seeing him struggle when he wanted to graduate with his classmates."

Good student indeed -- a highly sought after and regarded student with a 4.0 grade point average, who had been recruited to Lake Country Lutheran for the FIRST Tech Challenge robotics team, eventually becoming the engineering captain of the team. But still, the illness made it look like he would not graduate on time with the requirements needed to apply to MSOE.

Determined to support him, Kate sought help from various institutions, including Pittsburgh Children's Hospital, where they are working to implant a responsive neuro stimulation device (RNS) in his brain to monitor and manage his seizures caused by the illness. With this support, Eddie could begin to reclaim his academic path.

The Lake Country Lutheran school community rallied around him, working together to create a plan that would allow him to graduate on time. "We met with his school to see what we could do," Kate said. "They were great and worked with us every step of the way to help with graduating on time." Lake Country Lutheran helped with workload, switched classes, and



allowed him to do more class work at home. He also took some online high school classes at Liberty University to meet requirements. It all made a significant difference as Eddie graduated with a 3.7 grade point average and was in good standing with the school.

“The hard work paid off,” Kate said. “He was able to meet all the high school requirements to graduate and to better position himself for acceptance at MSOE. It was remarkable but we all pulled together and he made it. With his diploma in hand, he still plans to apply to MSOE once his brain function improves and he feels ready.”

As Eddie continued to improve, physically and mentally, his family and friends decided to hold a celebratory dinner in his honor. They wanted to present him with meaningful gifts that would symbolize resilience and positivity as he embarked on this new chapter in his life.

One standout item in the gift pack was an antique wooden bench vice, a reminder that everyone has vices to overcome. Alongside it was a golden kazoo, which Eddie cannot play, but symbolizes the importance of embracing one’s limitations and finding joy in life’s quirks. Also included was a pair of safety goggles representing the importance of choosing what to focus on as one moves through life. Then, there was a light bulb to remind him that his family would always leave the front porch light on, welcoming him home after pursuing life ambitions.

And, of course, there was the V. Marchese t-shirt and hat—a playful nod to the fun that helped Eddie and his mother bond during difficult days. “We live in Johnson Creek, Wisconsin, west of Milwaukee so we drove a lot back and forth to the city,” Kate said. “We would see V. Marchese trucks with the funny banana man on the side quite often, as many as eight times a day. We would make up stories behind Banana Jack, and even to this day text one another pictures and call when we see a truck. It created some funny and enjoyable moments for us to bond even more. Banana Jack made us laugh a lot and helped everything in life be a little more fun.”

Since the experiences with Banana Jack were so meaningful to Kate and Eddie, it was important to contact V. Marchese for the t-shirt and hat to make it part of the gift bag. “I wanted something to remind him of how important it is to laugh even in the middle of hard times,” Kate said. “That night at the gathering when he got the t-shirt and hat, he laughed very hard. It reminded him to always look for the funny side of life.”

Eddie’s story is a testament to resilience, the power of community, and the little joys that help everyone through life’s toughest challenges. As he continues to make progress, both with his health and in his academics, Eddie embodies the idea that laughter, support, and a positive outlook can illuminate even the darkest paths.

In a world that often feels overwhelming, Eddie’s journey reminds all of us to find those special moments—those little bursts of joy that help everyone navigate life’s challenges with a smile. V. Marchese’s 50-year-old iconic symbol of fun and joy, Banana Jack, helped one promising young soul find his.

About V. Marchese

V. Marchese, Inc. is a family-owned wholesaler providing fresh produce, dairy and spices to food suppliers in convenient stores, education, food service, grocery, hospitality, restaurant, and other industries in the food supply chain throughout the Midwest. For over 90 years, V. Marchese has prided itself on customer service, food safety, innovation, operational efficiency, and quality products with a deep-rooted local commitment to the Greater Milwaukee area. Extending across Wisconsin and throughout the Midwest, including Illinois and Minnesota, V. Marchese proudly serves over 2,000 customers in 10 states. Learn more at <https://www.vmarchese.com/>

Randolph Pitzer

Pitzer Relations

rpitzer@pitzerrelations.com

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