



Christopher Jenkins

Chris Jenkins is living proof that good things happen in small packages. He was born four months premature, and was extremely sick, weighing only one pound, 11 ounces. Everyday was a struggle for survival. He spent eight months in the neonatal intensive care unit. Chris persevered with the help of the Providence medical staff and his parents, and went home eight months later. The struggle didn't end there, however; he was housebound for the first year, and was Medevaced to Seattle multiple times to save his life. He is considered Providence's youngest heart and lung patient, and has been recognized numerous times in support of the hospital and staff by the hospital by the Providence Foundation.

Then when Chris was finishing elementary school, he learned that his beloved father was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Chris' father decided to take an early medical retirement when Chris was in seventh grade in order to spend quality time with his family. Fast forward several years and Chris is dealing with his dad's declining health during a time in his life when most teens are naturally self-absorbed, and their major interests lie outside the family. He has done this with sensitivity, a caring spirit, and a positive attitude.

Chris's home is located near the airport, and since he was a little boy, he heard and watched airplanes take off and land at Lake Hood. His dream is to learn to fly, and to take his father flying before his father passes away. In order to make this dream a reality, Chris began working part-time in high school, stashing all his money for flight lessons. He did his solo flight this summer and is now close to taking his check ride with the FAA.

Also when he was very young (around seven) Chris took up the violin. Ten years later he is jamming with bluegrass bands. He plays, when time allows, with a small group of friends.

Attending Steller Secondary School introduced Chris to the political world, and he became active in his school's student government in seventh grade. His attendance at school governance functions and service on committees is legendary. He volunteered with a class on several political campaigns, and then branched out by going to Juneau and working in the office of his local representative, Lindsey Holmes. On other trips to Juneau, he worked for Scott Kawasaki and Chris Tuck. This fall he worked for Chris Tuck's reelection campaign as well as Janet Reiser's senatorial bid. He estimates that he has volunteered more than 4,500 hours in politics and the community campaigns. He plans to get involved in local politics as a candidate someday, with the goal to reduce taxes and find long-term solutions to the state's energy crisis.

Chris's father's health has decreased rapidly in the last six months. He cannot feed himself, get out of bed, or to do anything that most of us take for granted. Chris has long helped to care for his father, but has managed to maintain his dream of flight and taking his father for one special flight together.

Chris is currently a flight student at Merrill Field and hopes to complete his final checkride soon. Throughout his ordeal with his father's illness, Chris's dream to go to flight school has never wavered. Needing to focus on his studies his senior year, he realized he did not have time to hold a steady job. Not one to be deterred by setbacks, Chris creatively held a fundraiser this fall and raised more than \$8,000 to complete flight school. His dream to take his father flying looks like it may indeed become a reality very soon.

Chris maintains a respectable academic record at Stellar and looks forward to college, where he plans to major in Political Science and Communications.