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It’s hard to believe that when twenty-two-year-old Leo Pluhacek was born doctors were not sure if he’d ever sit up, walk, or even talk. He had a rare condition called hydrocephalus which is a buildup of fluid inside the skull that leads to brain swelling. When Leo was just three months old, he had surgery to fix this disorder. Thanks to the hard work of Leo and his family, he surpassed the doctors’ expectations and was able to go to school with his friends and live a normal life.

Around age eleven, Leo suffered a minor head injury while playing basketball. Three months later, he started having full blown seizures. “Epilepsy hit me hard, just about the time I started junior high, which was really difficult,” Leo shared. He hoped the problem would go away but the seizures kept getting worse. Unwilling to let them get the best of him, Leo took charge by trying different medications, avoiding stressful situations, monitoring his diet, and getting sufficient sleep.

*Inspiring
your way
to care...*





Leo's seizures affect every part of his life from his relationships with others, to the activities he can do and even the careers he can consider. For example, he likes working outside and working with children, but a career in either of these areas can prove especially challenging to someone with seizures. However, with his service dog by his side, Leo graduated from college and holds a job.

While he still has seizures, experience has taught him how to cope with them. "I still have episodes, but I feel like I've got a little bit of control over my life and can start to make decisions and move forward into independence," Leo said.

Leo's current goals are to move out of his parents' house, meet new people, and start a life of his own. Having a trained seizure response dog by his side will help make those things possible.

Leo's story is just one of the lives where Domesti-PUPS service dogs create opportunities for independence.

*Your gift will
make a difference
in the lives of
people like Leo*

“ My family and friends have always encouraged me to try and do my very best, to push myself to go further than I thought that I could, and to ask for help when I need it.

