



Indiana Student and Graduate Profile

According to Joe Miller, a Cisco® Networking Academy® student from Fort Wayne, living with a visual disability can be hard, especially if you are pursuing a career in the information technology (IT) field. “Throughout my life, people have thought of me as being less capable of doing certain things. This misunderstanding has caused me problems with getting jobs. One potential employer even thought I couldn’t use a computer.” Although Joe has faced many challenges, he says he has never let any of them stop him from pursuing the things that he wanted to do.

In the fall of 2006, Joe began the Networking Academy at Anthis Career Center where he is currently pursuing an associate’s degree in computer information systems networking. In addition to his Cisco studies, Joe actively participates and has placed in the SkillsUSA internetworking competitions. His future goals include becoming Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA®) certified and competing at the SkillsUSA national competition.

Joe attended nationals as an observer, not just to cheer on his friends but also to learn about other successful SkillsUSA chapters so he could develop an even stronger chapter back home. Having observed the national internetworking competition, Joe is now more determined than ever to earn first place at the 2008 state competitions and return to nationals, this time as a competitor.

Joe, who was born visually impaired, says he has always been interested in computers. He recalls being four years old when his mother bought their first home computer and that he was intrigued from the first time he used it. His mother further encouraged Joe by providing resources on DOS commands and BASIC programming. From there Joe developed his interest in IT and began learning as much as he could about computers and technology.

Since Joe has such low vision, some administrators at Anthis were uncertain of his ability to meet some of the basic Networking Academy course requirements such as terminating cables and troubleshooting cabling problems; but, Joe remained positive and was determined to prove that he could be successful. A perfect example of his ability to succeed came during spring 2007 when Joe placed second in the state-level SkillsUSA internetworking competition. That year, when four of his peers were selected to compete in the national championship, Joe attended nationals as an observer, not just to cheer on his friends but also to learn about other successful SkillsUSA chapters so he could develop an even stronger chapter back home. Having observed the national internetworking competition, Joe is now more determined than ever to earn first place at the 2008 state competitions and return to nationals, this time as a competitor.



Joe with Area Academy Manager Clydene Stangvik and Cisco SkillsUSA liaison Bob Schoenherr at the SkillsUSA championship.

Today, Joe continues his Cisco education at Anthis Career Center where he is one of the officers in the local SkillsUSA chapter. He plans to earn his Cisco CCNA, CompTIA A+, and Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator (MCSA) certifications by the end of 2008. “I feel that Cisco works well with people with visual impairments. I found the large print option on the Networking Academy Website for tests and curriculum extremely helpful. The CCNA Exploration curriculum is

a great asset for every student, including those like me with visual impairments. I am excited to continue my journey through the Networking Academy.”

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Joe Miller

For more information on the Networking Academy at Anthis Career Center, visit: <http://anthis.fwcs.k12.in.us/>



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