



Mother helps son realize dream of joining marching band



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By Joseph Pleasant, Reporter - [bio](#) | [email](#)

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – A mother-son team at Blackman High School is inspiring marching band members and others.

Michael Stanaland is a freshman percussionist in the Blackman High School band. He has cerebral palsy and must use a wheelchair to get around.

Stanaland's twin sister encouraged him to join the high school band with her when they became freshman. He had played with the band at Stewart Creek Middle School.

"I love the Blackman High School band," Stanaland said. "Everyone is nice to me they treat me like a normal person."

In order to march with the band, Stanaland's mother Renae joined as well and pushes his wheelchair into position during the band's halftime show.

"It has been wonderful to get to be his arms and legs so to speak," she said. "I never did band in high school so this has been a huge experience."

Renae Stanaland is held to the same expectations as other band members. She attends all rehearsals, marches in all required performances and had to attend summer band camp before school started.

Brenda Monson is the Blackman High School head band director. She said the band immediately embraced having Michael march with them this year.

"I think its really good inspiration," she said. "Everyone is learning from them and the relationship they created among themselves."

Monson said the mother-son team "fits right in."

Renae Stanaland told Nashville's News 2 the experience is helping bring her family closer.

Michael's twin sister, Allie, is a trumpet player in the band and Michael's father volunteers with the band

"We are getting to meet their friends and we are getting to meet their teachers," she said.

The mother-son team hopes their story inspires other people to work for all of their goals.

"I hope they don't put limitations on themselves and they strive to do whatever they want to do," she



Michael Stanaland suffers from cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair.



said.

Michael also wants his time in band to help other people with disabilities to try things they think they may not be able to do.

"What I hope people learn from me is no matter what your situation is it can still be a good experience for you," Stanaland said.

Blackman defeated Oakland High School 42-28 Friday night.



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