



Learner's Name: Joshua Howard

Age: 8

Location: Stella, Wisconsin

Can you tell me what your home and family are like?

Well, I live with my grandma and grandpa. Our town is really small, but I like it that way. A lot of people know each other. There aren't a lot of buildings, but there's still a lot of stuff to do outside. I like to play in the creek behind our house or go for walks with my grandpa. Sometimes we go fishing. And I really like helping in the garden.

Can you tell me more about your family?

I really love my grandma and grandpa. I've lived with them since my parents died. I was four then. My grandma told me they died at work 'cause someone else didn't do their job. I guess a lot of people died when the grain storage place blew up. A lot of people in town were really sad and mad.

I was really sad, too. But then I found things that make me happy. Like playing outside. And I really like animals. There are lots of cows here, and I like to go see them. Sometimes I get to feed the baby cows out of a bottle. They're called calves. I really like that.

How do you like to learn?

I like to play outside and grow things and build things. I help my grandma grow things at the community garden, like different kinds of vegetables. One thing we planted was carrots. We had to thin them and I felt bad pulling them out, but then the rest grew bigger and they tasted a lot sweeter than the expensive ones that come in plastic bags. And my grandpa is teaching me how to build my first birdhouse. It's hard nailing everything straight, but I'm getting better at it. I really like doing stuff like that.

How would you describe your current learning experiences?

My academy is pretty neat, except I don't understand why we have to write so much. At least we get to tap it in instead of using pencils. Grandma says people used to have to practice writing out letters over and over again, not just in regular letters but in this thing she called "cursive" too. And she says that when she was in school, she had to sit still in the same desk for a long time. I wouldn't like that. I'd rather be outside or be learning how to make things. Or helping out on the farms! I love when we get to do that.

My grandma and grandpa heard about an academy where the kids got to grow their own food and then eat it for lunch or sell it so the school got money. I think that would be really cool. Maybe I'll ask my learning journey mentor if we can do that here.

What do you like best?

I like doing stuff with other people. Like making things with other people. And I like it when I get to see what we made and hold it and show other people.

What you want to do when you get older?

I might want to grow food and help people get better food. Maybe be a farmer like some of the people around here. Especially since I hear my grandma and grandpa talk about how it's a good thing we grow so much of our own food 'cause the food in the store keeps getting more and more expensive. But that's when I grow up. Grandpa says I don't have to know for a long time. But some of the older kids are going mainly to the farms for their learning. I really want to do that when I get older. I hope I get to help with the cows because the chickens kind of scare me a little.

And I want to be able to go the community garden on my own when I get older. Grandma says not until I'm eleven or maybe ten, the big kids aren't always very nice to kids my age. Maybe I can sell stuff from there if I can't do it in at the academy.

What worries you as you think about the future?

I worry about when my grandma and grandpa die or get too old to take care of me. I could wake up someday and they'd be gone, like with my mom and dad. Sometimes kids tell me they're already really old. And my personal education advisor scared me about how I don't like writing very much. He said I have to learn to read and write really good now or else I might get in trouble when I'm older.

But I really want to play football 'cause the guys who play football are nice to me. But I might not get big enough. I'm smaller than most of my friends and you have to be big to play football.