Joe Carr attended a transition program for 18 to 21-year-olds. He learned life skills and strategies to help him find a job and live more independently.
four of his limbs are affected and he has difficulty speaking. He uses a power wheelchair and an augmentative and alternative communication device that runs on his iPad.

His family credits the expert medical care Joe has received at Gillette as the key to his success as a high school student and active citizen. “The people at Gillette are always looking for ways to make Joe’s life even better,” his mother, Kristi, explains. “Having a power chair, a tray, iPad mount and chair standing pieces helps Joe be independent at school,” she adds.

"Put yourself out there."

Joe’s independence, irrepressible smile and positive spirit leave a lasting impression wherever he goes. His sense of humor helps him build relationships. “Everywhere we go people are happy to see Joe and often comment on his sense of humor,” Kristi says.

One of Joe’s main tips for being happy in high school is to “get involved.” Joe is a busy volunteer, is on adaptive sports teams and attends class plays. “Put yourself out there,” Joe advises. “It will pay off with friendships and new experiences.”

Joe is known for his devotion to Richfield High School sports. In fact, his nickname at school is “Super Fan.” “He really got interested in high school sports when his older sister, Eleanor, played on the girls volleyball team,” Kristi says. “Joe liked to cheer for his sister’s team. He then became a fan of the school’s football team and basketball team.”

He attended every Richfield boys’ basketball game his senior year—both home and away games. In fact, Joe’s last event before the COVID-19 lockdown in March of 2020 was the team’s playoff game to go to the Minnesota state high school tournament. “That was the night before everything ‘stopped,’” Kristi recalls. “The team won the game and would have gone to state. Joe got a medal and part of the net from the team because they consider him to be part of the team and family.”

Joe Carr is crowned “Fire and Ice” King at Richfield High School. (Photo courtesy of the Carr family.)
A Social Media Influencer and Philanthropist

Joe is very savvy with technology and uses a computer with a specialized keyboard to connect with people. “During the COVID-19 lockdown fans could not really attend the high school basketball games in person so Joe made game day videos letting people know they can watch the games virtually,” Kristi recalls.

He also uses his technology and media skills to help Gillette Children’s. For the past five years Joe, his mom, Kristi, and their friend, Bill Aberg, have held a Lemonade Stand Fundraiser for Gillette.

“Joe loves to give back to others,” says Gillette Foundation executive vice president and chief development officer, Stephen Bariteau. “Nothing shows this value more than his annual lemonade stand and his devotion to raising funds to support Gillette Children's patients and families.”

In the past, the money Joe raised was used to buy gas cards for families who needed to travel far to get care at Gillette. Recently, the money was used to support Gillette’s adaptive technology and sports fund. Joe and Kristi thought patients and families might enjoy the opportunity to get some needed exercise on specially adapted bicycles.

Joe rides a Freedom Concept Adult Trike and enjoys the freedom it gives him.

Life After High School

After graduating from high school Joe attended a transition program for 18 to 21-year-olds. He learned life skills and strategies to help him find a job and live more independently.

Joe would like to have a career covering sports in the Twin Cities metro area. One of his biggest role models is Chicago White Sox announcer Jason Benetti, who was born prematurely and also has cerebral palsy. Joe says Benetti represents one of his own life mottos: “Never give up on your dreams.”

Right now, Joe’s Fire and Ice crown sits in a place of honor on a
shelf in his bedroom. It’s a reminder of how he followed his own advice and “put himself out there.” His parents joke that Joe hasn’t let his royal title go to his head and he’s still the same loveable teenager.

When asked for a parting comment “King Joe” replied with his characteristic humor and Super Fan personality; “Go Spartans!”

Joe and his mother, Kristi, take their dog Lucy for a walk.