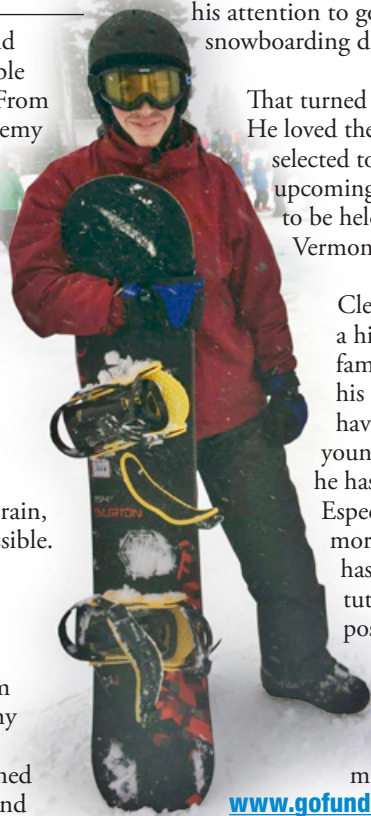


A Proud Tualatin Grandpa

BY DOUG WATSON

We built our Tualatin home in 1979 and here we raised the mother of the remarkable young man who is the hero of this story. From earliest childhood it was apparent that Jeremy was not developing as other children his age. He could not articulate words, and soon manifested learning difficulties. He even exhibited lack of coordination in sports, and was designated as a special needs child. His inability to express himself made him the butt of derision and ostracism from his peers as early as grade school. He was taken to speech therapy and was ultimately diagnosed as having dyspraxia, a condition in which the larynx, the tongue, lips and the jaws cannot respond to stimulation from the brain, making intelligible speech virtually impossible.

The gap between Jeremy and his peers intellectually and socially continued to widen as he grew older. His high school years were painful as he was excluded from many of the joys which accompany healthy adolescence – dating, team sports and so on. He took up javelin throwing, he learned to play the bagpipes, he became a polite and caring young man. But it was not until he was introduced to Special Olympics that he began to find a social niche. He became involved in Washington County Special Olympics basketball and excelled. That period of mini triumph became lost when his parents divorced and his mother moved. That move meant that Jeremy would be playing against his friends and former teammates. He then turned



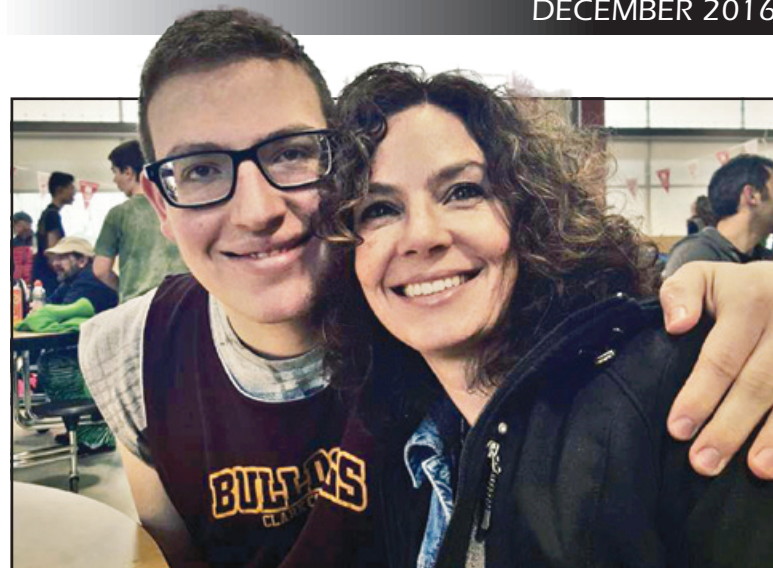
his attention to golf until he was introduced to snowboarding during his final year of high school.

That turned out to be a real blessing for Jeremy. He loved the sport and was good at it. He was selected to represent the United States in the upcoming 2017 Special Olympics World Games to be held in Austria in March. He will go to Vermont for special training in December.

Clearly this great accomplishment is a highlight in Jeremy's life and fills his family with great pride and delight in his attaining this honor. All of us who have witnessed the struggles of this young man and have seen the obstacles he has overcome are moved by his success. Especially is this true of his mother who has sacrificed, supported, encouraged, tutored, chauffeured to make this dream possible. Simply put, she would dearly love to accompany him to Austria and see him compete on the world stage, but does not have the financial means to do so. Those interested in more information can go to www.gofundme.com/help4motherswish.



Doug Watson retired from Landmark Ford in 2004 and has been a Tualatin resident for over 38 years. You can reach Doug at thenansim@comcast.net.



Jeremy Beckham and his mother Deborah (Beckham) Smith at a Special Olympics Regional Basketball Tournament in January 2016.



Jeremy Beckham, age 20, at the Special Olympics snowboarding competition at Mission Ridge, Kennewick, WA, which led to his selection for the 2017 World Games team.