

Aggie Hero Becca Johnson Inspires

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ITLS Master's student Becca Johnson was honored as an Aggie Hero for overcoming personal tragedy to embrace a new way of life.

Becca Johnson, a graduate student in the Instructional Technology and Learning Science department, was honored as one of four Aggie Heroes in 2019.

The ultimate goal of Aggie Heroes is to share stories of everyday people overcoming personal battles so that those listening become inspired to do the same.

In Johnson's "[Speaker Biography](#)" video, recently published by the USU Student Association, Johnson described the unforeseen tragedies that she has had to overcome in recent years.

A mother of four (John Jr., Christopher, Barbie, and Wolfgang), Johnson was suddenly widowed when her husband Jon suffered a fatal heart attack the day before their 23rd anniversary. Their youngest child, who was three years old at that time, struggles with challenges such as ADHD and autism.

The struggles and grief resulting from these heartbreaking events were challenges that eventually led Johnson back to Utah State University to seek a bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies: Psychology and Art.

"The psychology degree is incredibly helpful to me as a mother," she said.

Johnson decided to pursue a master's degree in Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences after learning the benefits of this field of study from mentors with the same degree, including her aunt and the learning specialist she met at Student Support Services.

"They both encouraged me to look into it and when I did, it seemed the perfect fit," Johnson said. "Coming to school is what really helped me to start finding happiness and contentment in my new life."

Having survived some of life's most difficult challenges, Johnson shares her story in order to help others deal with their own loss and grief. She recommends counselling, grief support, art therapy and other available resources.

"Healing is not a passive process," Johnson said in an [interview](#) in the USU Statesman newspaper. "A lot of people say time heals all wounds and it is true that it takes time to heal, but you can't wait your way through it. You actually have to work to heal. But ultimately, broken hearts can heal and you can find happiness again."

Viewers with an Aggie number can log in and read the full story about USUSU's 2019 Aggie Heroes and watch all of their video talks at <https://thinkcareact.usu.edu/aggieheroes/index>.