

# Channing Seideman

Very little in Channing Seideman's life has been "normal." Diagnosed with a severe form of epilepsy when she was 10, Seideman essentially missed middle school and has never attended high school like other kids. Though she takes three types of medication, she still suffers from regular seizures; at least one each month leaves her unconscious.

"Well, it's definitely helped me mature a lot," says Seideman. "But it's also made things a little different for me."

For example, her health makes attending school in the morning nearly impossible. She often has to take tests differently. Her friends, she says, are mostly adults because she can relate better to them.

"Channing's world is definitely different than most of our kids," says Aspen High School Principal Art Abelmann. "But she's done an amazing job of adapting and succeeding."

ELOs, even before they were a formal part of the AHS curriculum, have played a huge part in Seideman's success.

"The Aspen School District has been great in working with me," says Seideman, who will graduate in May. "We've been able to create ways for me to learn and move ahead, without having to just be in a classroom, because that really doesn't work for me."

Among the myriad ways Seideman has achieved her diploma are by taking CMC courses for high school credit and by working for credit with animals.

Long a fan of horses, Seideman has always ridden. Now she's taking that passion to another level by working at the Cozy Point Barn for credit. As someone with a disability, she knows and appreciates what animals can do for a person's health.

To that point, Seideman also has a service dog. She recently spent several weeks at "boot camp" learning how to work with her Golden-doodle, Georgie. The experience turned into a school project when her film teacher asked her to make a documentary about her experience.

"Georgie is so important to me. She allows me to be more independent, and I have learned so much from her," says Seideman. "I have learned so much from all of my experiences with animals; they are lessons I will use forever."

Abelmann agrees.

"I would have to say that Channing has probably learned more from working Georgie than she would ever have learned in school," he says. "And that's what matters sometimes. It's not necessarily where you are learning, it's what you are learning."

