

Fighting for Inclusion!

Learn the history of the first Deafblind Person and Person with Hydrocephalus and Rare Disease to finish a post graduation degree at a Brazilian university.

Alex Garcia, who is currently 45, has proven to be an example in the struggle for inclusion of deafblind person in Brazil.

Born in the city of Santa Rosa, in Rio Grande do Sul, Garcia early learned to be independent and have his own ideas.

"My childhood was a mix of living as a child and learning a lot for life that was to come. I had to learn as much as possible, because soon I would need to be apart from my mother and my father. I was raised and educated to be free," he says.

Alex was born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a disease known as "Glass bones disease". As a result, he gradually lost his sight and hearing during childhood. However, he attended elementary and secondary education in regular schools.

"In elementary school stage I really did not suffer prejudice. During High school, I suffered some prejudiced attitudes from teachers, But they did not happen because of the disability itself, but because I was a disabled person with my own opinions", Alex explains.

The difficulties, however, seemed to strengthen Alex Garcia, who became the first Deafblind Person and Person with Hydrocephalus and Rare Disease to enter the course of Special Education at the, Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM).

"The University, without a doubt, is the most hostile environment to face, but I was in the right place to do what I like most: challenge an operating system and break paradigms".

This desire for change led Alex to found the Gaucha Association of Parents and Friends of Deafblind persons and persons with multiple disabilities – AGAPASM, in order to assist in the full development of the Deafblind person in the society. Despite failing to achieve all the objectives, AGAPASM continues to work with the support of friends, volunteers and family members of people with Deafblindness. Besides the association, Garcia is the author of three books: 'Besides existing, we must be!', 'Deafblind: Empirical and Scientific' and 'The Great Revolution', and he lectures to raise awareness of the issue.

"The contact with the audience during the lectures is required and excellent. He has already spoken in Brazil and in more than 30 countries. People who are there want to develop a deep reflection and that's what I do".

For the future, Alex Garcia intends to keep fighting and seeking changes to the Deafblind people. "I learned to be strong so that nothing can beat me. I learned to be myself so no one can forget me", he concludes.

You have just read the interview with Alex Garcia to the Brazilian magazine World of Inclusion.

All the best! Alex Garcia - Brazil

www.agapasm.com.br

agapasm@agapasm.com.br