**Zayne Harshaw Biography**

“It takes a village to raise a child.” This old African proverb not only expresses a wise belief but also reflects the reality of raising a child as special as Zayne. Diagnosed with autism at the age of four, Zayne’s village included speech therapists, a behavioral pediatrician, and some wonderful teachers. Occupational therapists would eventually be needed for almost eight years to address Zayne’s severe dexterity issues.

But at the age of 14, Zayne expressed interest in playing the guitar. He went into his room and emerged two years later as a guitarist. This self-taught musician soon discovered he had “perfect pitch,” which means he could hear notes and automatically know their musical keys.

Jam sessions around town became his training ground to further develop his own style of playing and entertaining. He would watch veteran musicians play and then go home to practice what he had just witnessed. This constant honing helped Zayne develop into quite the showman.

His musical abilities have been featured in various local and national media outlets: NBC4’s Autism Puzzle, the Associated Press, the Lancaster Eagle Gazette, the Youngstown Vindicator, the Columbus Dispatch, Bounce TV, and Telemundo to name a few. He has played all over Central Ohio and the surrounding cities and counties.

Zayne’s accomplishments include:

* In 2016, he was chosen by the Columbus Blues Alliance to represent Columbus in the Youth Showcase of the 2016 International Blues Challenge in Memphis, TN.
* In 2017, an Ohio organization sponsored Zayne to perform at their national conference held in San Antonio, TX.
* This was followed up with performances in Ohio cities such as Cincinnati, Cambridge, Dayton, London, Sandusky and Cleveland.
* Zayne was awarded the 2017 Community Star Award from the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities.
* 2018 provided opportunities to play the African-American Cultural Festival; headline the Gahanna Creekside Blues & Jazz Festival; return engagements to ComFest, the Hot Times Festival, the PAR Conference in Harrisburg, PA and the ARC of Montgomery County in Bethesda, MD.
* May 2019, Zayne performed as an opening act at the B.B. King Blues Club in Orlando, FL.
* July 2019, Zayne performed at the closing of the keynote address (which was provided by his mother, Gwendolyn Harshaw) at the Autism Society of America National Conference in Bethesda, MD.
* The balance of 2019 concluded with performances at conferences in Sandusky, OH; Springfield, PA; Harrisburg, PA; and El Paso, TX.

Blue Spectrum, the band he formed in 2013, is Zayne’s primary love. The members of Blue Spectrum love performing together and living the words of their impassioned motto:

"Life is not to be viewed through the single lens of a diagnosis but to be lived through the Spectrum of potential, promise and purpose."