

John Warren

Not Letting Your Background Be Your Future



About Our Certified Cisco Professional

IT Professional

[John Warren](#)

Job title

Service Desk Analyst II

Industry

Healthcare IT - Networking and Security

Certifications

- CCENT
- CCNA Routing & Switching
- CCNA Security
- CCDA
- CCNA

Some stories not only inspire, but also leave you feeling immense respect. So, it is with John Warren's story.

Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) in 2014, John struggles with an inconsistent memory, hand spasms, delayed nerve responses and frequent debilitating exhaustion. John was also born to a poor family in rural Tennessee with limited resources to help fund his journey into a better way of life. For most, this one-two punch would leave them pre-destined to drift in their lives.

But John is not like most. This is the story about how John never gave up on his dreams, and how Cisco certifications played a key role in helping him become the guy a multinational behavioral healthcare provider relies on at night to ensure their critical networks stay running.

It All Starts at Age Two

At two, John told his family he was going to work on computers when he grew up, having become enamored playing on an Atari. At age eight, John was given two broken computers from the dump and he somehow figured out how to get them working.

During his senior-year of high school, John took a computer science class that offered the CompTIA certification exam. But John couldn't afford the fee. Knowing this, John's teacher paid the bill. This act of generosity planted a seed of change in John's life.

Medical Setbacks Don't Detour His Passion

After graduating high school, John was sidelined for four years with a separate medical condition from MS. He had a rare genetic defect that caused an abnormal bone growth on his left hip. For two years he saw countless doctors before finally meeting a surgeon that successfully operated to correct the problem.

After taking time to heal, John went job hunting, taking whatever he could get—first as a grocery store meat clerk and then as a general warehouse laborer for a major online retailer. But his passion for IT never dimmed. Wherever he was employed, he always asked if they needed any IT help.

Meanwhile, his MS symptoms began to set in, making it harder for him to work and make plans.

In 2015, John received free college tuition through the Tennessee Reconnect Act. He enrolled in a two-year program, but unfortunately the program offered certifications that were outdated and of limited value. John felt his journey was hitting roadblocks at every turn.

Clearing Hurdles and Staying Focused

But after some inquiry, John was allowed to apply his financial aid toward his preferred certifications. Among other certifications, John studied for his CCENT certification, which helped him land his first IT job at a managed service provider. In this job, John designed and deployed customer wireless networks. But another hurdle came when the company was purchased, and his position was eliminated. John found himself out of work and back at square one.

John knew his lack of real-world experience was a major stumbling block to finding a sustainable job in technology. But his dilemma was he couldn't get the real-world experience without first having a sustained IT-related job.

Adding a Focus on Cisco Certifications

But John didn't give up. He went back to school to get his bachelor's degree, leveraging a financial hardship scholarship program. He also focused on completing a number of Cisco certifications, including the CCENT, CCNA and CCDA. John understood these certifications would signal to employers of his technology training and skills.

And it worked. John landed an entry level job with a behavioral healthcare provider. Today, John works on the critical outages team. He's relied upon to work independently, single handedly responding to and mitigating issues. His managers consistently compliment his ability to use deductive reasoning—as well as his networking and security skills—to independently solve problems.

The Value of Cisco Certifications

When asked about the value of his Cisco certifications, John immediately points to how they not only brand him as knowing his stuff, but also helped to build his problem-solving skills. Cisco certifications also gave John confidence to accept positions with higher levels of responsibility, knowing that even with his illness, he has the skills to be successful.

And through it all—financial hardships, roadblocks, and illnesses—John maintained a winner's mindset, as he continues to tell a winner's story.

Keep Pace with the New Network

Let Cisco help prepare you for a dynamic career in networking. Get yourself job-ready with real-world, hands-on training and certifications. Start today at [cisco.com](https://www.cisco.com)

Advice from a Cisco Certified Professional

When asked what advice he would give to others seeking a career in IT, John said, "Don't let your background be your future. There was a point in time when I wondered and doubted if my life was ever going to change." Growing up poor and living with early-onset MS, there were times when John wasn't sure he would ever make anything of himself.

Today, he hopes that anyone else enduring similar hardships hears these words of perseverance, words that helped him to keep moving forward. Whenever it feels like there's no hope and that all is lost, there's always a way. For John, it was a high school teacher that believed in him and state programs that helped pay for college. And, of course, there were invaluable Cisco certifications that helped him translate his passion for networking and security into employable job skills.

Cisco Certifications Additional Resources

[CCNA Essentials](#)

[CCNA Prep Program](#)

[Cisco Learning Network \(CLN\)](#)

[CLN Store](#)