

CHAPTER

Get Busy Living

CHAPTER 1
Divider

TOP OF THE WORLD During an Educational Tours trip led by history teacher Hunter Davis, junior Briley Court stands on a mountain in Ireland. "Our group had just climbed up that mountain, and I thought 'I'm the king of the world, so I might as well do a king of the world pose,'" Briley said. "So I threw my foot up on a rock, and I looked out into the ocean as I stood on the edge of Ireland."



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During the school year, our schedules filled to the brim, so we didn't take the summer for granted. That's why we made the most of each moment.

It's why we watched more sunsets and caught up on episodes of "Riverdale." It's why we threw the littest Spinoff to raise money for StuCo. It's why we took every opportunity to travel across the world and spent countless hours working to save money for our futures. It's why our teachers went from New York to Nicaragua for experiences outside the classroom.

It's also why the maintenance staff busied themselves with renovating our courtyard, replacing the cafeteria floor and reconstructing our tower while the hallways were empty.

As much as we wished otherwise, the freedoms of summertime inevitably end, and we found ourselves easing back into old traditions like Watermelon Supper. A new experience greeted us on our first day back while we stood outside to watch the solar eclipse.

Although our lazy days ended, and we were back in the midst of the chaos, we continued to get busy living.

FOLDS OUT



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here are few moments in life where a person can feel like they're on top of the world. Junior Briley Court lives for moments like these.

"Traveling is important because it gives me a better view of what is going on around me, and it's important to know about the rest of the world," Briley said. "When you're traveling, you're inspired to do more things, you make more memories, you get out and know people—know their culture, enjoy their culture, live in their culture."

During the summer, Briley traveled to Europe with an Educational Tours group led by history teacher Hunter Davis. The company hosts tours across the globe for students like Briley to expand their horizons and learn about other cultures.

"I knew that there were other trips going to different countries," Briley said. "But this trip to Ireland was the one I wanted to go on more than any other because Ireland is the one place that really got to me."

Ireland had somewhat of a family connection.

"Apparently, I have family from Ireland," Briley said. "But after the trip, I got home and asked my grandmother about it, and she said she really didn't know. Either way, I got my name from Irish descent, so if I am right, I was the first person in my family to go back to Ireland since the potato famine."

Because of his opportunities to travel out of the country, Briley has witnessed many cultures around the globe.

"The most interesting thing I have experienced was being invited by a local to his farmhouse where he had foods authentic to Greece," Briley said. "They made everything by hand, and they

slaughtered the animals at their house, grew the grain for the bread and grew crops. Everything was run at home."

Briley has traveled to France, Italy, Turkey, Mexico, Canada and throughout the United Kingdom.

"Of all the places I have visited, Turkey is my favorite country because when I went there, it was peaceful and beautiful. Now, it's dangerous to travel there with everything that is going on politically."

Having been to Turkey helps Briley evaluate what he sees about the country in the media.

"It is really interesting to have seen such a beautiful country, when everyone was happy and nothing bad was going on," Briley said. "Now, I see the contrast between the two, between what I saw in person and what I see on the news."

On the trip to Ireland, Briley traveled with other students, some of whom offered a different view.

"It was interesting because some of the people in the group had never been outside of the country before," Briley said. "Since I have been to a lot of places around the world, I saw it from a unique perspective."

Although some students met for the first time on the trip, the bond of traveling together would last a lifetime.

"I know it's cliché, but on the trip, I made a ton of friends I couldn't have even imagined," Briley said. "Before we left home, I only knew about three people, and after we returned, I feel like I am friends with everyone, and we will never forget our trip together."

story by f. schroeder & a. paxton/photo by a. jordan

TRUE COLORS As colored powder flies around her, senior Anna Kate Jordan runs the cross country course during the fifth annual CASA Color Run. The event was created in memory of her mother who worked for CASA. "The Color Run was my grandmother's idea because she wanted to remember the bright, colorful and good things about my mom," Anna Kate said. "It's something that Texarkana didn't have before, and it's for a great cause."

Keep on Going

CHAPTER

With the year underway, our first day jitters turned into the stresses

of the year. The loss of senior Houston Hart in an automobile accident in June and senior Leonard Park's sudden death made us realize how valuable our time together was.

We painted "Forever #6" in the pit, and our rivals grieved with us. Hallsville wore orange practice jerseys with the number six on the back, and Arkansas put LP6 stickers on their helmets.

Rising before the sun, seniors released balloons as a final tribute to their lost classmates. Because of this, we knew their legacies would continue.

During the Texas vs. Arkansas game, we wanted to win it for Leonard, but our attempt fell short with a 7-point deficit. However, the defeat didn't keep us from getting up early the next morning to take the ACT.

Despite the trials and feelings of loss, we knew we had to continue to give it our all. We put on our 'Merica apparel to honor those who fell in 9/11, and we stood out in our cowboy boots and hats to show our Texas pride.

We knew all we had to do is keep on going.

FOLDS OUT



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emories grow in value as time passes. Objects that once held little importance become the only remnants that bring back the happiest times. For senior Anna Kate Jordan, two remaining untouched bottles of her mother's perfume allow her to reminisce on these cherished moments.

Amanda Fussell Woodman passed away March 9, 2011, and Anna Kate, her oldest daughter, had turned 11 the month before. Growing up adoring her mother, as any young child would, Anna Kate faced at a young age what most people never have to experience during this age of innocence.

"Changing schools without my mom was one of the scariest things I've had to do," Anna Kate said. "Going from St. James where I knew everyone to Texas Middle School where I didn't have to wear a uniform anymore, worrying about how to do my hair, and what outfit to wear so I would fit in was hard without my mom."

With a younger sister to watch out for, more responsibility fell on Anna Kate.

"I had to grow up really fast, really early, especially having a little sister," Anna Kate said. "I got 11 years with my mom and she got only four years with her, so she doesn't remember anything about my mom, other than what she sees in pictures and videos. Trying to be a role model for her and remind her what my mom wanted her to be like is hard because I'm 17, and I'm not her mom."

Anna Kate found solace knowing her mom loved her job and made an impact on the community, especially through her work at Court Appointed Special Advocates, an organization of volunteers who represent abused and neglected children.

"Almost her entire adult life she was doing

some kind of good for all of Texarkana, so it's nice to think about when people ask what my parents do," Anna Kate said. "I know my mom went to work every day and loved what she did, and that's really comforting to me."

In an effort to raise funds to support CASA and to honor her mother's memory, Anna Kate and her grandmother chose to host a 5K Color Run. Beginning in 2013, the annual event has raised over \$120,000 to support the organization.

"I didn't understand what she did until I was older and realized just how much everything she did meant to so many of the kids," Anna Kate said. "It's really cool to say that even though she's gone, she is still doing so much good."

Although her mother may not be with her, she continues to influence Anna Kate's decisions. She plans to follow in her footsteps by attending the University of Arkansas.

"Both of my parents went to the University of Arkansas, where they met, and that's always been something that she wanted me to do just because she loved Fayetteville life so much," Anna Kate said. "After she died, I saw [going there] as a way to get closer to her, by experiencing what she went through going to Arkansas."

As a reminder of her mother's memory, every day Anna Kate wears Michael Kors perfume, the same perfume her mother always wore.

"For the past couple of years for my birthday, I've asked for my own bottles of the perfume, so I don't use up hers," Anna Kate said. "It's still the same scent, so I smell like her. I don't think I'll ever get rid of her original bottles."

story by p. madlock/photo by a. kift

CHAPTER

Fall into Place

DROP IT LIKE IT'S HOT In a crowd-pleasing performance, freshman Jurman Williams falls back into a breakdancing move during a pep rally. Jurman won the dance contest with the loudest cheers from the audience. "I felt accomplished because that was the first thing I've ever won in a school setting," Jurman said. "Having all the people cheering for me made me feel very special."

As the leaves fell, our year set into motion. From homecoming to the Halloween scavenger hunt, we settled into the new year.

But as we fell into a routine, we remembered to cherish the surprises that came our way, especially the victories that gave us a sense of accomplishment, like the advancement of cross country runners Will Harrell and Owen Likins to state.

We came together to carry Tevailance Hunt onto the next round of voting so that he would have the chance to play in the Under Armour All-American game in Orlando, Florida.

We celebrated the successful volleyball season even though it came to a disappointing end in the championship game against Sulphur Springs.

Through it all, we treasured those we loved the most and supported them in times of hardship, especially Mrs. Diaz and Ms. Voltz as they fought their own battles against cancer.

Even when it seemed like everything was falling apart, it was actually falling into place.



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ometimes in the darkest moments, a small glimmer of hope emerges in the least expected way. During his mother's funeral, freshman Jurman Williams glanced back to see his seventh grade teacher and her daughter supporting him.

"I found myself in a whole lot of chaos," Jurman said. "I was constantly wondering 'Where am I going to live? Where am I going to go?'"

Since his father was not available, Jurman planned to move in with relatives after his mother's passing, but he soon realized this wouldn't work out.

"I lived with my aunt, but she started losing her eyesight, so she wasn't able to take care of me," Jurman said. "So then I moved in with my brother, but he had so much drugs in his life that it didn't work out."

A family member contacted Jurman's middle school teacher, Marsha Geraci, about him, and that's when the pieces began to fall into place.

"She didn't know if she had space, but she has a son who moved into his own apartment, so I could have his room," Jurman said.

Soon, Geraci became Jurman's legal guardian, and he felt like their newly-adopted son.

"That's the biggest thing that has happened in my life," Jurman said. "I consider them like a real, official family. When I started living with my adopted mom and family, I felt very loved. They really care for me."

At the middle school, Geraci sponsored First Priority, a student-led Christian organization.

"I heard people talking about this Jesus person," Jurman said. "I had heard about Him, so I started going to that club. That's when I officially knew who Jesus was, and I experienced the love for Christ over me. My teacher basically brought me to Christ."

After joining the Geraci family and finding Christ, Jurman felt like a weight had been lifted.

"When I was living with my mom, I always felt like I had so much weight on me," Jurman said. "But when [Geraci] came into my life, all the weight of the past disappeared."

This newfound freedom made Jurman feel like dancing, literally. He became known around campus for his dance moves.

"When I am dancing, I feel very free, like there's no weight on me at all," Jurman said. "When I'm dancing, nothing is in my head. I'm not worried about anything. It feels very free."

Despite the hardships in his life, Jurman has learned from his past and the love he has received.

"Whatever bad thing that happens in your life, you have to stay positive through it. God will get you through anything in your life. He will get you through a death in your family, anything in your life."

Jurman understands that life has a way of working out the way it should.

"What falling into place means to me is being in a dark situation and God blessing you with a good situation to be in," Jurman said. "Right now, I feel like my life is going pretty good. All I know is that God has blessed me with today. I'm just glad God allowed me to live another day."

story by e. schroeder/photo by r. sizemore

Enjoy the Little Things

CHAPTER

THANKFUL FOR THE FANS
Senior Tevaience Hunt receives his jersey for the Under Armour All American Game in Orlando, Florida, at the Camping World Stadium, on Jan. 4, 2018. Tevaience expressed his thanks to those who participated in the four rounds of public voting to help him claim a spot as one of two players to be selected on behalf of the fans.



As the Friday night lights came to an end, we recollected every moment as the gleams from the annual bonfire reflected into many tear-filled eyes.

We cherished the small things that comforted us and reassured us. From spending time with family to enjoying the countless traditions of our school, our fears were assuaged by the little moments that brought us joy.

While competing in any playoff game was no small feat, we appreciated the opportunity to take on the defending state football champs, even though it didn't end as we hoped.

We enjoyed the gratitude displayed on our teachers' faces as the Culinary Arts program provided an appreciation luncheon, and we showed our excitement when we rallied to get T-Vay to the next round of voting.

We celebrated when the band placed first in their contest, its best performance in many years.

We tried not to fret about the future because we trusted that everything would end up how it was supposed to. In the midst of the stress in our lives, we found ourselves thankful for the little things.

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FOLDS OUT





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single moment in senior Tevailance Hunt's freshman year could have changed the course of his life.

"I wanted to quit football for good," Tevailance said. "We were in the weight room, and I didn't want to lift weights, so coach Hawkins told me if I didn't want to lift weights, then get out."

Tevailance looked at his coach and said, "I'll quit right now."

His coaches response was simple: if he walked out the door, not to come back. And Tevailance walked out the door.

"Coach Mallett came to the locker room, and he was telling me that this wasn't a good choice," Tevailance said. "I didn't care at the time, but three days later, I came back to realize I made a dumb choice. I received my consequences, and I just took it from there."

The decision to come back began Tevailance's journey to become a star athlete and the opportunity to participate in the All-American Under Armour game in Florida. In order to play in the game, Tevailance had to win four rounds of fan-based voting.

Classmates, teachers, community members, and even people outside of Texas voted to make sure he surpassed his opponents.

"When the voting thing started, I didn't really think I was going to win," Tevailance said. "It's amazing to think everyone would come together to help me, and I thank them for that."

With his family, friends and community encouraging him, Tevailance's number one fan and supporter is the one who has been there since the beginning, his mom.

"Me and my mom's relationship is really like no other. We connect with each other,

no matter what," Tevailance said. "She always tells me—and repeats it everyday—she won't force me to do anything I don't want to do. Whatever I do, she just wants me to succeed in it and do good. No matter what it is, she'll be with me the whole way."

Growing up wasn't always easy for Tevailance and his family.

"We didn't have much to eat. We didn't have places to sleep sometimes," Tevailance said. "My mom would always be sad because she couldn't find me anything to eat, but I'd tell her I'd be fine."

He credits his mom for pushing him to get better and even has her name tattooed on his arm.

"I thank my mom for keeping me positive. I look at the tattoo and think positive," Tevailance said. "That's how I go throughout my day. I tell myself everyday to find a way to get better."

Tevailance graduated at semester with plans to play football at Texas Christian University.

"I just want to get up there so that I can get a feel of the program and get ahead of the game," Tevailance said. "I feel good, I've always wanted this moment to come, and I figured if I kept my head on straight, then it would come and now it's here, so I can't stop what I'm doing now. I've got to continue forward."

After years of hard work and dedication on the high school football field, Tevailance has come a long way in his journey.

"Never take the little things for granted. Little things can turn into big things real quick," Tevailance said. "It's been a long journey, and it's not stopping anytime soon."

story by a. paxton

CHAPTER

Give Me A Break

MAKE AN IMPACT As part of her independent research project relating to cheer, senior Katie Biggar presents information to other cheerleaders about her project, which focused on the effect of cheer on mental health and body image.



Dealing with the holiday season and the chaos it brings, we took the time to focus on what we could do to help one another in our school and community.

From Rosebuds treating our teachers with snacks to choir entertaining us with holiday carols to the band, drill team and cheerleaders spreading Christmas cheer in the annual downtown parade, we brought happiness to others.

Our most meaningful deed was seeing the smiles on the faces of the children as leadership students delivered gifts to the Tiger Angels and hosted parties at Theron Jones Elementary School.

While some of us focused on aiding those around us, others celebrated accomplishments of their own, like senior Katherine Stoeckl who was selected for the All-Region band.

When semester tests ended, we blew off steam by throwing dodgeballs at one another in order to raise scholarship funds during the annual Dust Bowl tournament.

As we counted down the days until the end of the year, we were happy to finally get a break.



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er life is a series of numbers: a problematic equation of calories in which the image in the mirror and the number on the scale always seems to fall short of the correct answer. Half cup of green grapes: 50 calories. Package of peanut butter crackers: 200 calories. Grilled chicken thigh: 210 calories. Stop.

For senior Katie Biggar, this equation wasn't enough; it was never enough, so she stopped using the equation. The less she consumed, the closer she got to the answer, an answer that was always just out of reach: peace with her body.

"I remember when I was 13 I would do 300 crunches a night and look at my body to see if it changed," Katie said. "Once I realized that food had a lot to do with it, I began to eat minimally. I used to fast as long as I could. I fell in love with the idea of perfectionism. I would look at these fitness people on Instagram, and I was never satisfied with who I was."

It seemed innocent, simply a health cleanse. However, it turned into an addictive cycle, a self-mutilating eating disorder, which sucked her in and left her drowning.

"It started because I needed control," Katie said. "So much was going on in my life that I couldn't control, but my body was something I could."

Eating a doughnut was enough to send Katie over the edge.

"I went onto the app My Fitness Pal, and I plugged in everything I ate, and I had surpassed my daily calorie intake just on doughnuts," Katie said. "I started to cry and hyperventilate. I was holding my head and screaming 'I can't do this anymore,' rocking back and forth, hitting my head with my palm as hard as I could because I just wanted

to feel numb."

At this moment, Katie and her mother realized the state of her condition. It was a breaking point. A moment of vulnerability and release put her own life into perspective and forced her to admit she needed help.

"It was like a high. An addiction," Katie said. "After you go so long, your stomach starts to shrink. You are killing your body."

Katie sought help from a nutritionist, therapist and doctor who created a meal plan specifically for her in hopes of stopping the damage to her thinning bones and shrinking heart.

Not only was the disorder killing her body, but it also caused her to disconnect from several of her best friends.

"When we would go out to eat it was understood that I wouldn't eat, so eventually they stopped asking," Katie said. "Now that I'm trying to recover, it's like I am too late."

Oddly enough, the biggest thing that helped her through this was her Instagram account that she dedicated to recovery.

"Not a lot of people understand or want to open up about it, but this community of people on social media has been in the same place as me," Katie said. "It makes me feel not alone."

Her hope of better things to come kept her going. The thought that one day she would finally have peace with herself.

"I want to live like a normal person because life is too short to count everything and step on the scale every day," Katie said. "Everyone is different. You have your own metabolism. Your own body. Your own shape and you don't need to try to look like someone else."

story by c. johnson

SWIMMING SUCCESS At the conclusion of the regional 5A swim meet in Lewisville, Texas, senior Kristen Clayton receives the award for Regional Swimmer of the Meet. Kristen qualified for state for the fourth time.

CHAPTER



Here We Go. Again

Returning from the extended Christmas break was a strain. As we tried to get back into the groove, a snow day prompted us to play in the wintry mix.

Theater students practically lived in the rehearsal room while preparing for the musical “Oklahoma!” Things got a little fishy in culinary arts when they learned to cook salmon and make sushi rolls, and English students in Mrs. Wicks’ class proved how hungry they were for books when they held a book tasting.

With freshman orientation and choice sheets going out, everyone, except the seniors, was reminded they have to do all this over again.

Science Club went back to its roots when members went to Westlawn Elementary multiple times to help build bottle rockets.

The UIL academic teams loaded buses before dawn to travel to practice meets in preparation for their upcoming season.

We entered second semester fired up to start the “beginning of the end” off right. As many of us got ready for competition season and the dreaded early mornings, we thought, here we go again.



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er alarm sounds at 4:50 a.m. By 5:15 she's headed out the door for the 45 minute drive to the pool. These early morning drives have been her routine for the last four years as a member of the TigerShark swim team.

"When I was younger, I wasn't really good at anything else, and I was really uncoordinated," senior Kristen Clayton said. "I was never interested in softball or running, or any of that, so swim was just the one thing that clicked with me, and I just stuck with it."

And Kristen stuck with swim throughout her high school career, earning a place at the state meet each year.

"My first time at state was really exciting. I was kind of nervous because I'd gone in both of my individual events, and I wasn't sure how I was going to perform at state, especially being a freshman," Kristen said. "But I was really close to some of the older girls, and they made me feel better about it, so the relays really made it fun."

As she headed into her final season, Kristen felt the weight of being the oldest.

"There's a lot of pressure on you whenever people look at you and they're like, 'OK, you have to go fast because you're the oldest,'" Kristen said. "You've got to push your hardest. It's your last time, so you get kind of nervous."

At region, Kristen was awarded Regional Swimmer of the Meet, an honor based on the events she won and her times.

"It was really exciting for me because it was my last time," Kristen said. "I just felt like I had accomplished something significant whenever I got it."

Kristen described her final state meet in Austin as bittersweet.

"When I saw a bunch of the people either cooling down or warming up, it kind of hit me that I was never going to do that again," Kristen said. "I was kind of sad whenever it started, but as we kept going, it just kind of seemed like a routine, and I got used to it."

With more people qualifying for state the past two years, the competition had been difficult.

"I was excited because we had made it to the finals," Kristen said. "It made me feel like we really accomplished something because last year it didn't go very well at state. I really wanted to make improvements this year, but I think a lot of stuff occurred over the past few months that made it a little bit difficult."

With the meets over, Kristen no longer felt all the pressure.

"After we did our last swim, I was just kind of relieved and felt like the whole weight was off of me now," Kristen said.

And with the end of the season, came the end of the early bird routine. There would be no more jumping into the pool by 6:15 a.m.

"What I hated the most about it was we didn't have the luxury of trying to get ready for school," Kristen said. "You never really had an opportunity. It was always wet hair, makeup done in five minutes and head out to go eat, then come to school."

As Kristen looked back on her time in swim, she found herself grateful for the experience.

"I love the team, and I enjoyed the meets and everything, but I think for the last competition season, I was just kind of ready for whatever happened, and it was just going to go how it goes," Kristen said. "I was just kind of living for that moment."

story by a. paxton

CHAPTER

Life Is Good

DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY
During the Sadie Hawkins dance on Feb. 24, senior Carson Phillips joins his friends in the middle of the circle to break it down with his popular dance moves.

As the snow melted, our schedules flooded with meetings, practices, and rehearsals. We spent more time at school than we did at home. Life was busy.

The TASC planning committee's drive to "deepen the heart" spread across campus. Rosebuds sold \$1 carnations that we bought for one another, and when we threw the Valentine's Day party at Theron Jones, we learned that it doesn't take a lot to bring out a smile.

April showers came early, but the clouds parted before we hit the dance floor at Sadie. When DJ Eryn McDonald paused the music, we all belted out, "I only love my bed and my momma, I'm sorry."

Dinner Theater or Dessert Theater became Throwback Theater (but we still aren't sure what to call it), and despite the late nights and grueling practices, we came together to raise enough money to cover future StuCo service projects.

Even though we may not have aced every test, won every game, or accomplished every goal, we decided that not everything had to be perfect. When we took a moment to pause, we realized our time is precious and life is good.

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Senior Carson Phillips is hard to overlook. Typically wearing a T-shirt, shorts and Crocs, no matter the temperature outside, he greets everyone he knows as he makes his way down the crowded hallways. It's a stark contrast to those who ignore others as they pass.

Carson, who has autism, has a gift for brightening someone's day.

"Every time I see him, he's always saying hi or asking me how my day is," freshman Mackenzie Adkins said. "When he says hi to me, it makes me feel special."

Ever since childhood, Carson has shown extraordinary talent with building things with Legos and art.

"My favorite thing I have built out of Legos was the Old Fishing Store," Carson said. "My favorite Legos are the Disney Castle."

When it comes to drawing, his favorite character to draw is SpongeBob SquarePants. Both hobbies take a considerable amount of time.

"It takes a lot of practice," Carson said. "It takes me a day or two to finish [a project]."

One of his fascinations is with watches. He often Snapchats friends to remind them to wear their watch to school.

"Every single time I see him—in the hallway or at dinner—he says, 'Do you have your watch on?'" senior Sophie Lower said. "Most of the time I don't, so he says he's reminding me to wear it tomorrow. It's like a little ray of hope or sunshine during the day. You can be having a bad day, and he's still going to talk to you no matter what."

Carson, like any other student at the school, has his favorite class: architectural design taught George McCasland.

"I like to draw and build things," Carson said. "[A house I built last year] is my favorite. I built [the house] out of dirt, wood and plastic. It took a long time."

McCasland has enjoyed having Carson in class and has found him to be helpful in some daily tasks.

"Having Carson in my architectural design classes has definitely been a learning experience for us both," McCasland said. "Carson likes to build as well as draw using AutoCAD. He is also in charge of making sure I get the roll checked every day. I'm going to miss him as he graduates and moves on with his life."

One of his favorite school activities was attending the Sadie Hawkins dance. When Carson boogied his way to the middle of the dance circle, other students cheered his name and joined in on his dance.

When the song "I Don't Dance" by Lee Brice came on, senior Anna Morgan asked Carson to dance to the slow song.

"The one dance I had with Carson made my night," Anna said. "As he spun me around, I could not help but smile. The highlight of my Sadie was when he looked at me after the song ended and said, 'This is the best dance ever.'"

Carson's attitude and love for life is a constant reminder to his classmates that with whatever you do or wherever you go, life can be good.

story by h. harrell and a. morgan

All or Nothing

CHAPTER

JUST ANOTHER NIGHT AT THE BARRE Sophomore Travayn Taylor does a bit of improvisational dancing at Joni's Dance Center studio where he competes in contemporary, musical theater and lyrical dance.

With spring in full swing, competitions and sports happened back to back, so we knew there was not time to shirk our responsibilities. Even though the rain delayed many games, the sky cleared for the reopening of Southern Tropics.

We spent numerous hours preparing for UIL competitions, which paid off when the social studies team won first place. One Act Play ignited the audience with their performance, and we were saddened when it didn't advance from bi-district.

Unfortunately, jam-packed schedules kept students from signing up for the Miss THS pageant, so it had to be canceled.

During spring break, we packed our bags to travel. In Nashville, junior Colton Capps won best directing at STN, earning a trip to Russia, and publications students went to NYC where they received double CSPA Gold Crowns.

The loss of our favorite substitute, Ms. Voltz, to cancer and Mr. Littmann's illness taught us how much we owe to our teachers.

With the end of school in sight, we had to push ourselves, knowing it was all or nothing.

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ome begin their art as soon as they take their first steps and rehearse throughout their entire childhood. Others wait longer, like sophomore Travawyn Taylor who got a late start in the art of dance.

"Dance is really a central part of my life," Travawyn said. "I started dancing at my church, and then my mom put me into dance classes because she saw that I really wanted to do this full time, and I've been dancing ever since."

Travawyn began dancing at the age of 8, but didn't necessarily begin learning the traditional way.

"At the beginning of my dance career, my mom was a single mother, and she didn't have enough money to put me in dance school," Travawyn said. "So I just used YouTube, and I looked up stretching videos and tapping videos. I would try to copy their moves and technique."

With the help of YouTube, Travawyn practiced dance for two years on his own until he received a scholarship through his involvement in another extracurricular organization in Shreveport, Louisiana, where he lived at the time.

"The reason why my mom got enough money to put me into dance school was because a lady at the Boys and Girls Club really wanted me to be able to dance there and gave me a full-time scholarship to go to any dance school in Shreveport," Travawyn said. "I went to the dance school called Power and Grace, and she paid everything."

Currently, Travawyn is a dancer at Joni's Gymnastics and Dance Center where he competes in contemporary, musical theater and lyrical dance categories. While he is dancing, he gets a mental break from life.

"Everything that's on my mind is put to

the side for just a few seconds while I'm dancing," Travawyn said. "When I'm done, it comes back, but it's at a lesser tone because dance kind of overrides my mental thoughts."

Along with his passion for dance came some ridicule from peers.

"I remember when I started dancing I got bullied a lot and wanted to quit," Travawyn said. "But my mom was like 'No, don't stop.' I didn't tell her that I was getting bullied because I didn't want to put that burden on her, and I didn't want her to go to the school because that would make me even more targeted."

As Travawyn got older and more confident in his abilities, he had to make a decision: put aside the negative comments and give dance his all or to give up.

"As I got into middle school, I started realizing that the negativity is temporary," Travawyn said. "I just need to do me, use what God gave me and really showcase my dance to positive and caring people."

He credits the negative experience for making him a stronger person.

"It built me to the who I am now," Travawyn said. "After everything, I am really strong physically and mentally."

Travawyn's decision to continue in dance has led to other opportunities. During the summer, he will travel to Pennsylvania for five weeks of intensive ballet training, a trip paid for by a scholarship.

"At times when I feel defeated by people's words, I still have to give it my all because I want a career in dance," Travawyn said. "I can't look at those people because in the future, we're probably not going to know each other. I need to give it my all now."

story by a. parson

This IS Us

PHYSICAL WORKOUT On Thursdays, senior Davion Griffin joins others who have enlisted in the Army Reserve for physical training. PT sessions were held at the recruiting office at Central Mall.

CHAPTER

Our hopes and dreams began to become reality during these years. Some of us received acceptance into our favorite college while others kept exploring their options.

Each of us added a uniqueness to the student body. As a new student here, junior Andrew Davis explored his passion for theater.

Sophomores who created the YESS Equality Club gave us a chance to feel comfortable with our differences and promote acceptance.

Colton Minter didn't wait until adulthood to become an entrepreneur. The sophomore created his own business.

Freshman Fezeka Barnes showed her athletic ability by participating in four sports.

Those who weren't born in the US cherished their heritage while embracing American life.

We all had separate qualities that made us different, but we all shared the goal to graduate.

The kids who formed clubs, who pursued their dreams, who weren't from America, who walked these halls—they're all the same. They are us.



It's only one day a week, but it's preparing him for a lifetime. On Thursdays when senior Davion Griffin puts on his PT gear and begins his physical training, he knows that each step he takes moves him toward a better life.

Davion hadn't planned on joining the Army Reserve until Staff Sgt. Peter Maurin spoke to his REACH class.

"[His visit] got me motivated to the idea, like the sense of duty and purpose and being a part of something bigger than yourself," Davion said. "It's also a backup plan just in case college doesn't exactly work out."

Davion referred to his decision to enlist as "kind of an impulsive thing."

"I wanted to go up to the mall and talk about enlisting," Davion said. "That's what started this entire thing."

When Davion visited the Army recruiter's office in Central Mall with his mother, he was asked to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test right then. ASVAB scores are reported as percentiles from one to 99. Davion scored a 95.

Despite the many benefits that came along with the Reserve, Davion's desire to join wasn't because of them.

"It was just the appeal of it," Davion said. "It sounded like something that could help me better myself. I just want to be something different and try something different."

Davion hopes his service will give him a bigger perspective of the world outside of his hometown.

"I've been in this city my whole life," Davion said. "Besides being boring, it's also a rather crushing environment to be in."

By the time Davion was in middle school, he saw family friends and peers choose the wrong path. That's when he resolved to make a better life for himself.

"I came from the ghetto, where I currently live still, and most people there don't finish high school—they drop out, they go to Options, or they get addicted to some substance—but I've been clean my entire life," Davion said. "I'm going to pass high school. I'm going to actually do something with my life."

Even before Davion made the decision to enlist, he knew the basic guidelines of respecting adults around him, as well as encouraging himself along the way.

"Respect your parents, they are trying their hardest," Davion said. "If they're not pushing you to try harder, if that doesn't work, do it for yourself. If you have to motivate yourself, do it."

Behind every decision Davion has made regarding his future, his mother has been there to support him.

"My mom tries her hardest to provide for us, and I find that really inspiring," Davion said. "She wants better for herself and me and my siblings, and I want better for myself and better for her for providing for us so well throughout the years, even throughout the hardships."

Davion thinks his ambition and desire to be a success is reflective of the student body.

"Texas High Tigers push the limits, they go beyond what they're expected to do," Davion said. "I'm doing that right now, and I think that represents us."

by a. paxton

Beyond These Halls

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PROM NIGHT At the Texarkana Arkansas convention center, junior Gabriella Kelley-Nevels escorts her brother, Kinonte Anderson, to a Night to Shine, a prom event sponsored by the Tim Feltow Foundation for special needs students.

CHAPTER

Divider

Inside the school hallways, we made a difference each day, but we knew we could reach out to our community as well.

We collected items such as makeup, nail polish and purses to donate to the Battered Women's Shelter, gathered socks to distribute to the homeless and made dog toys to give to the animal shelter.

We supported elementary schools across Texarkana by raising money to provide less fortunate students with Christmas gifts and traveled to classrooms to read students books on Dr. Seuss Day.

Alarm clocks startled us awake on weekends so that we could participate in Race for the Cure, Dash 4 Cash, CASA Color Run and Run the Line.

After a long day filled with tests and after school practices, we drove to Williams Memorial to cook and serve our community a warm meal on Monday nights at Community Cafe.

We volunteered outside the school boundaries to show we cared for our community.

We wanted to show that there's more to us beyond these halls.

FOLDS OUT



S

he glowed in her evening gown. He looked sharp in his suit and tie. Together, they made their way down the red carpet. For junior Gabriella Kelley-Nevels, escorting her brother, Kimonte Anderson, to the Night to Shine prom is something she's likely to never forget.

Night to Shine, sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation, gave special needs students a prom night experience. When REACH teacher Jenny Walker told her class about it, Gabriella knew she wanted to take Kimonte, who has cerebral palsy.

"We had a community service project that we were supposed to be doing, so I was wondering if I could just throw a prom for the special needs people who are in his classroom," Gabriella said. "But then she told me that Tim Tebow was throwing this thing, and I wanted to participate in it."

Gabriella knew it was important for Kimonte to have an experience like this outside of the school environment.

"He needs the experience just like we experience prom as seniors, but you know, special needs kids don't really go and attend the prom at our school," Gabriella said. "With this being specifically designed for them, it's really cool."

Gabriella couldn't think of a better escort than herself.

"It's important for me to go with him because that's my brother. I'm really close to him and I understand him," Gabriella said. "I know what he has been through, and I know that he is going to really enjoy it a lot."

Gabriella has continued to be by his side through family difficulties and challenging struggles.

"My grandmother took us in because both of our parents are deceased, so it kind of made me look at things totally different when I had to help her [with him]," Gabriella said. "It was different, but I was up for it because I love him so much."

Gabriella knew that escorting Kimonte would be a positive experience for her as well.

"When you're around him, you can't even be in a bad mood because no matter what he has been through, he is always smiling," Gabriella said. "So when I'm around him, he always makes me happy, and he makes me view things totally different. Things that I basically take for granted make me realize that I'm really lucky, and I should be grateful for everything."

Though he may be looked upon as different, Gabriella and her family view Kimonte as any ordinary individual.

"There is a certain way that he is viewed because he is special needs," Gabriella said. "There are people who are always going to be staring and looking because he's not what society views as normal because he is in a wheelchair, he can't talk and he can't feed himself, but he's normal to me," Gabriella said. "He still breathes, he still bleeds, and he still has feelings."

While helping with her brother, Gabriella has learned a lot along the way.

"It matured me really fast, but it also helped me grow as a person," Gabriella said. "You know you shouldn't judge people on just their appearance because he is normal to us. He's just in a wheelchair and can't speak, but his smile speaks for itself."

story by a. paxton