

## A Little Girls Passion

By: Kenzie Davis

“Life contains many obstacles that one must overcome. Everyone has to fail before they can feel successful. This is a lesson cheerleading taught me,” Maria Huth, a varsity cheerleader for Oak Hills High School, said. For Maria cheer brings a whole new meaning to life. She remembers the exact feeling she had walking onto that mat in front of hundreds of people just twelve years ago. For her, the thrill of performing in front of others is what made her fall in love with the sport.

Even as a first-grader, standing on the sidelines of a football game in the cold, the smile would never leave her face. “They would always say, ‘Hands on your hips, smile on your lips,’” Huth said, as she reminisced about her early cheer years. She remembers smiling so much that even after the games and competitions were over, a smile still beamed across her face.

Cheer hasn’t always been smiles and good times for Maria though. There were times where cheer brought many tears and sadness. In middle school, Maria suffered from excruciating wrist pain that made it hard to do the thing she loved the most. When discussing this time Maria said, “The doctor told me they couldn’t figure out the issue with my wrists, told me that I was faking my pain, told me that my mother forced cheer upon me, and told me that I had lost my passion.” Even with pain building up, unsteady emotions, and no encouragement, Maria didn’t give up. She put in twice the effort and fought through the pain for her team.



Her freshman year, she made the junior varsity team, and the very next year as a sophomore, she made varsity. High school cheer brought sadness for other reasons. She remembers back to her first two years cheering at the high school. Both of which brought disappointment when they were unable to defend their state championship title. However, losing didn’t define the team, and it most certainly did not define Maria. After two losses behind them, the very next year they took home the title again. Proud of her team and the work they put in to show just what they are made of, Maria said: “When all the pain, sweat, blood, and tears turn into a success, it feels astonishing.” Although happy for what the future has to hold, Maria says she’ll miss her team who she refers to as her “second family.”



Although still unsure of what exactly her future holds for her, Maria knows one thing for certain, cheer is a part of her future. She adds “I hopefully will be cheering on a college team, working as a UCA staff member, and volunteering as a coach.” As this school year slowly

comes to an end, Maria will be saying goodbye to a team filled with girls she's been cheering with since that first experience on the mat. Maria says not only has cheer taught her how to deal with failure, and to work for success, but it has also shaped her into a different person. Cheer unleashed the social outgoing person inside of her and because of that, she has been so much more open to different experiences.

When asked to say one final word about cheerleading, this is what she had to say: "Cheerleading has influenced my life for twelve years now. I don't know what I would do without it. I aspire to continue my optimism, enthusiasm, determination, and collaboration throughout my entire life."

