

Hallett doesn't let condition get in her way

by Danielle Divis

At first glance, Mollee Hallett seems to be a typical freshman girl at David City High School. She is a cheerleader and a Platinum dancer, she loves to shop, and she likes to get in on the latest gossip with her friends. But if you take a closer look, you will see a girl who has had a very different life than others her age.

Hallett has a condition called Congenital Central Hypoventilation Syndrome, which she has had since birth and she's had a tracheotomy since she was six weeks old. According to GeneReviews.com, CCHS is characterized by adequate ventilation while the individual is awake and by hypoventilation with normal respiratory rates and shallow breathing during sleep. Simply, this means that while Hallett is awake, she has no problem breathing on her own, but anytime that she sleeps, she has to be on a ventilator to make sure she doesn't stop breathing. This condition is very rare, with most patients dependent on a wheelchair

or ventilator constantly, so Hallett's case is an exception to this because she is so active.

Hallett's nightly routine is different from most teen's. First, she rinses a syringed needle in sterile water, and then applies the needle to the cuff around her neck. She then takes off her valve located on her trach that stays around her neck 24/7. She then connects the ventilator to her trach, and receives help breathing. If an error occurs while Hallett's asleep, the ventilator alarms her and even tells her what is wrong. This feature is very helpful to keeping her safe. "I have to be careful of my episodes. Sometimes I start to shake, become lightheaded, and begin to feel sick. My episodes aren't preventable, so I have to get medical attention right away," Hallett said.

As a child, Hallett faced some unusual issues. "When I was a child, I had to stay home a lot; it's hard to travel with a ventilator," she said. "I had to be on oxygen most of the time and at some points, I had to have a home nurse." As with several disabilities, others have



Freshman Mollee Hallett has Congenital Central Hypoventilation Syndrome, which forces her to wear a trach during the day.
Photo by Danielle Divis

questions and may stare wondering why Hallett has a trach. "Ever since I was little, people have stared at me wondering what's around my neck. A lot of times young kids ask me what the trach is and why I have it. I would rather have people just ask me about my condition than to just sit and stare," she said.

Life isn't all that easy for Hallett; she does face difficulties and issues that others don't have to worry about.

"I'm not allowed to go underwater in case water would get into my lungs, so I can't go swimming. I'm capable of participating in sports but I can get tired really easily," she said. There have been attempts made to try to help Hallett's condition. "Doctors say there is an operation that could be done to try to help my CCHS. They could put in a diaphragmatic pacemaker that would work just like a functioning diaphragm and help me breathe on my own at night," she said. Hallett is planning on going through with the operation next summer.

Even though living with CCHS is difficult and caution is required at all times, Hallett says she has "learned to live with it". She seems to display a surprisingly positive attitude in the midst of her troubles. "My condition makes me unique but I don't consider myself handicapped. I'm still alive and have all ready lived longer than what I was supposed to. It's not nearly as bad as it could be," she said. With another glance, you see that even with her difficulty, Hallett is bound and determined to live as normal of a life as she possibly can.

Organization can be key

by Carly Buskirk

From keeping books and folders color-coded organized by class to just cramming papers and books into their lockers it's no secret that some students get organized and others just don't.

Organization may not be that important to some students, but many believe it's the key to getting by. Ten out of fifteen students surveyed believed they were organized in school and at home. Take freshman Mollee Hallett, for example. "I clean my room every week, my locker is organized perfectly by each class and I clean my house for fun," she said.

Benefits from being organized range from just knowing where your things are to keeping possessions in good condition. "Being organized in school is important because then you know where everything is and there's no need to go searching for anything," senior Nikki Romshek said. Junior Christina Teubner had a similar view. "If you're organized it's simple; you won't lose things."

On the other hand, there are those who use different methods to stay organized. "I have a messy way of being organized, but I can usually find whatever it is I'm looking for, so I guess it works out," junior Alissa Trainer said. Junior Nathan Shultz also has his own method of organization. "I like to think I am organized but, others don't because I just know that everything that I need is in my locker, it's just under a couple things." Sophomore Nolan Pittman shares his hazards of being unorganized. "I'm not too organized. I just open my locker to see one of my books fall out and hit Stephanie Prochaska on the head," he said.

So, it's obvious that being organized, even in a student's own way, has some good benefits. Junior Sierra Lee had another reason why it's important to be organized. "It's easier to get tasks done by being organized and it really helps you to be better prepared for other situations other than school," she said.

Mixing hard work, fun Speech team reflects on success

by Elizabeth Hruska

"Domination" is a speechster's favorite word, and it was definitely present on March 18, when the David City speech team captured a repeat state title. Now that the season's over, the team can reflect on what it took to become number one.

Coached by Jarod Ockander and assisted by Mark Hassebrook, the team won a state title last year, as well as back in 2006. While it's often accepted that much effort goes with any success (especially on the parts of Ockander and Hassebrook, who spend countless hours preparing and editing), less recognized are the fun and family-like experiences the team members gain.

For several, speech isn't just an extended family. You can often see several sibling speakers succeed in speech, just like in athletics. "My older brother was in speech

and really encouraged me to go out," sophomore Brad Meusch said. Having a similar experience was sophomore Emma Mattingly. "I just always knew that I'd go out. With my older siblings in it before, speech is in my thespian blood."

But that reputation of success also attracted others. "I knew that I'd get to hang out with a new group of people, enhance my speaking skills, and compete individually for a great team and coach," senior Staci Ossian said. According to junior Courtney Betzen, the fun associated with speech encouraged her to participate.

The team also has a reputation for some entertaining moments behind the scenes. Jokingly, this year's team was referred to as the '(very) A.D.D.' team. "I'm a very creative person, so if I'm not giving my speech, I'm doing constructive things...like making ninja swords!" sophomore Dillon Hicks said. "Sometimes we got way off topic. A lot of us did act like we have A.D.D.," junior Christina Osantowski said.