

Broken ribs, a collapsed lung, and a new outlook

Sophomore's biking accident



Brown tests out the ramp he built at Staunton State Park in one of their outdoor-compatible wheelchairs, just weeks after his accident. Over the course of three days, with the help of his father, Ramon Brown, and family friend, Pete Jones, Brown built a 65-foot ramp. Photo courtesy of Marla Brown

By Ava Dalton and Parker Jones

On September 13, 2018, sophomore Hayden Brown's life took an unexpected turn.

He was out for a ride with his mountain biking team, when he suddenly clipped his handlebars on a tree, flew over the handlebars, and landed on the left side of his back.

"I broke my back, fractured two ribs, and bruised my lungs and scapula," Brown said.

He then made a quarter-mile trek in order to seek help, and his dad immediately drove him to the hospital. He remained there for three days filled with agonizing pain, and he then had to wear a back brace for six weeks.

For the first four and a half weeks after his accident, Brown didn't go to school, having friends collect his assignments and spending his time resting at home. After that, he spent about two weeks coming in for half-days. Because of his concussion and various injuries, he was released from all of his classes five minutes early in order to avoid getting bumped around in the halls, and he took the elevator to travel from floor to floor.

"We also dropped my third hour, so I think I'm technically the only sophomore in the school with a free period," Brown said.

Although Brown's injuries have been an inconvenience, he's not letting them stop him from doing the activities he loves, particularly snowboarding in the winter. He isn't on a team, but he enjoys going with his family on the weekends.

Brown's accident also opened his eyes to the problems that the disabled endure, and this inspired him to take action. For his Eagle Scout project, he directed the construction of a 65-foot wheelchair-accessible bridge at Staunton State Park over the course of three days.

"Staunton was the only state park that had track chairs available to the disabled, so we made this bridge that allows the disabled to enjoy the park as well," Brown said.

The bridge replaced the muddy path that was originally there, and it will give the disabled the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the park even more.

Through everything that Brown has endured, he has maintained a 3.9 GPA. His parents and career goals have motivated him to stay focused and optimistic throughout his recovery process.

"My parents push me to get high grades, and it is not exactly easy, but with hard work it is doable," Brown said.

After his accident, Brown adopted the philosophy that it's worth pushing through the difficult parts of life because they're only temporary. This has encouraged him to keep working hard in school.

"There's an end to everything; you just have to get through the bad parts of life," Brown said. "Trying to catch up in school is miserable right now, but I realize that there's going to be an end to it. Do I want to look back on this misery on Christmas and see that I have all C's, or do I want to look back and see that I have one B and the rest A's because I put in the extra effort?"

SEMESTER RECAP

LINK DAY

Junior Jake Oudakker and senior Alana Giles lead their LINK kids through a host of "get-to-know-you" activities on LINK Day, the freshmen's first day of school. The day served as a chance for the freshmen to become acquainted with the school and to feel welcomed by the upperclassmen.



SENIOR SUNRISE

Honoring a Conifer tradition, many seniors made the trek to Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Morrison, Colorado, before school on August 29, to witness the sunrise and celebrate the beginning of their final year as high schoolers. Many students documented the event with selfies and photos of the sun coming up over the horizon.



MOUNTAIN BOWL

On October 26, Conifer faced off against Evergreen in a tension-filled game that fueled the schools' rivalry. Flocks of Conifer and Evergreen students congregated on the football field to watch the two teams defend their honor. The Cougars ended up defeating the Lobos 48-26, but that didn't dim either school's spirit.



LINK BREAKFAST

Just a few weeks before Thanksgiving break, all freshman students were invited to the cafeteria to enjoy a huge pancake breakfast, complete with donuts, eggs, fruit, and more. The event, hosted by LINK, was meant to be a way of checking in with the freshmen as they neared the end of their first semester in high school.



BOWLING AND ARCADE GAMES

The students in Conifer's Challenge program were invited to the Wild Game to eat dinner, play arcade games, and go bowling. The day served as a fun break from school for both the kids and the program's advisors.



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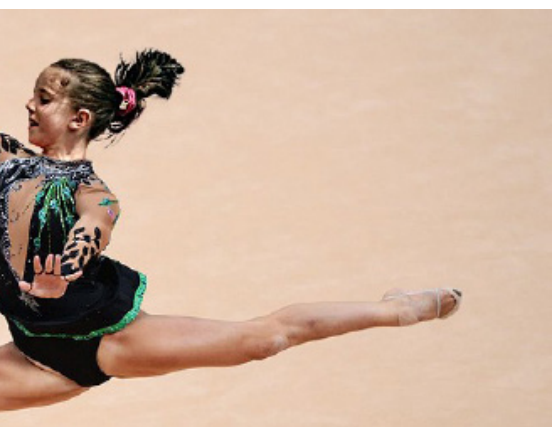
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Life Around Conifer In Pictures

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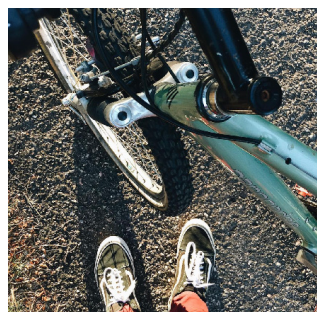
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