

Emily Bacon

Meet her

Copy by Toni Elton
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From a young age, as Emily Bacon described, she liked to wear heels and dresses with her younger sister, but she didn't begin to question her gender until she entered middle school. "... [my sister and I] would always play dress up and...in my head I didn't see anything wrong with it. And then starting my high school career, I just was like, this is the time, I'll just be myself."

Walking through the school halls, Emily explained that, "I do get yelled nasty things in the hallways..." When asked how she deals with these negative remarks and unfair treatments she said, "I don't deal with it in a healthy way, I'll say that. I tend to get in my own head a lot...I do have bad anxiety because my entire life I have felt like everyone's against me... If I was more positive and put out a better energy I think it might not be as bad, it might all just be in my head."

Growing up as the oldest of six, Emily gained a close relationship with her younger sister Samantha.

But Bacon explained that when she first came out, their relationship wasn't what it is today. "...it goes along with kind of gender norms...everyone just treated her as if she were more delicate...and I was jealous of that..." Emily said when explaining her relationship with her sister.

Due to the rocky relationship that developed with her family, Emily made the decision to move to Wyoming and live with her dad. "...I was living in Colorado and I kind of just wanted a fresh start to get away from my family so I ended up going to Wyoming, which actually now that I think of it was the worst decision." Emily stayed in

Wyoming for the entirety of her seventh grade year, where she experienced a heightened amount of bullying, and ended up moving back to Colorado.

"People are much more accepting in Colorado...it just feels safer," Emily said. After settling back into life here, Emily's relationship with her sister changed for the better. "My sister...she's just a little gay girl and so...I hope that I've had a good influence on her in allowing her to be herself...she's had questions, but it's mostly just been easy...and I think that having a trans sister has made it so that she is so accepting and so beyond her years."

But to those unlike Emily's sister, who has heard the advice and opinions of someone who is transgender, Emily voiced that she'd want them to know, "That everything is so complicated...nothing in life is set in stone and we never think of things as...one way or the other. I feel like everything in life changes."

Emily also voiced her opinion on gender by saying, "...[gender] it's very binary. People want to put you in one specific category and I'm pretty androgynous, so like, that bothers people...and I've kind of come to terms with it, I'm still coming to terms with it and I'm kind of happy to be different, like to stand out."

When explaining herself Emily voiced that, "I hope that to other people I just look like a strong, independent woman, and that's who I want to be." She also explained that, "I think being a female is difficult for anyone, but having to convince people that you're female...it's even more difficult. And I do get asked a lot, 'it's harder to be a girl why do you want to do that to yourself?' And it's not really a choice... it's kind of what I have to explain to people, it's like...it just feels more right, I feel more comfortable around women and as a woman."

Lost in thought, Emily Bacon stares into the distance as she thinks about her sister after being asked about who in her life she is closest to. Emily explained that "...I think I've always just admired her confidence."

Photo by Zoe Vescera



Allan Smith-Daigle

Meet him



Allan Smith-Daigle stands with his mom, embracing in a hug. Smith-Daigle said that his mom keeps him updated on news regarding the transgender community as well as supporting him through his own journey. Photo Courtesy of Alan Smith-Daigle

Alan Smith-Daigle (10) described his journey through understanding his own gender identity as, "...it's been a lot of growth for me. In middle school it was something I struggled with... trying to fit into gender roles and then figuring out how my sexuality interplays with my gender identity was also a big part of that."

To Alan his gender identity means more to him than just what people see on the surface. "My gender identity, it's a connection between my body and... my soul, my existence...It's been hard to figure out. Because... I had a subclinical eating disorder when I was struggling a lot with gender dysphoria, and it was constantly, like, I hated my body, I hated being born this way... It gave me a lot of grief, but I've gone through a journey now...just because I'm different, just because I was born a certain way, I am a boy, I am a man... but I'm different. And that's okay...Trans and Proud. I don't want to have to hide who I am."

In the high school environment, where students are in a state of trying to accept their own identities as well as others,

Alan expressed that, "I'm lucky to go to this school because our community in general is very understanding. I've had peers that help me. I'm in a position now where I can offer advice and leadership to other transgender people."

Alan is a member of GSA and noted that he knows many other transgender people within the community. He explained that there are teachers and peers within the school that he can go to for support, but the person he holds the greatest connection with is his mom. "I've always looked up to her, and trusted her..." He later added that, "...she helped me legally change my name...my whole family in general... they've helped me deal with the legal and social side of everything."

Along with dealing with gender dysphoria and an eating disorder, Alan has faced a challenge with what society defines as masculine. "...with men the definition of masculinity and maleness... is very strict, like being muscular, having short hair...not doing makeup, not being interested in feminine things, not acting feminine, it's a much more restrictive

gender to be in, and masculinity in our society in general is that way."

Aside from the restrictions and adversity that the transition has brought, Alan noted that being a transgender male has given him a perspective that others do not have. "...I've experienced things that a lot of people don't get to experience...I have a generally different outlook on gender...and how it shapes our society..."

Before he came out, Alan explained that he would stand by while he heard transphobic and homophobic remarks, but he voiced that "...jokes in general are some of the most harmful forms of bullying. So if you hear people joking about trans people...that invalidates the trans experience, because you're making something that people go through every day a joke. So, just stop the jokes."

From the experience of a member of the transgender community, Alan wanted others to hold onto the idea that, "[Transgender people] have the power to succeed, we just need people respecting us and...treating us with the same dignity that everyone else gets."