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WHERE I
Belong

story by s. rolfs design by a. sianis

Derick Gregory '21 learns to stunt while being the only male on cheer team



"SINCE THE MOMENT I STEPPED FOOT ON THE TEAM, I FELL IN LOVE WITH CHEER. I HAVE KEPT STAYING DEDICATED AND COMMITTED TO BEING THE BEST. A BIG PART OF IT IS NEVER FEELING LIKE I AM OUT OF PLACE."

DERICK GREGORY '21

Towards the end of eighth grade, Derick Gregory '21 JOINED CHEER. He first decided to try out for the team when one of his friends suggested he join to participate in an extra curricular activity.

"She honestly just kept persuading me into it," Gregory said. "She talked about how fun it was and all I could think about was that I had to try it. Even though it was not normal to some people, I just wanted to be involved at school in a way that was fun. I tried out and I made the team."

Being the only boy on the team, Gregory has had a spotlight on him since his freshman year due to the lack of men in the cheerleading community.

"Majority of the time it's not weird being the only boy but I can definitely tell there's more eyes on me. I honestly just be me and perform next to the girls as one team," Gregory said.

Despite the social normal, Gregory has always felt like he's had a place on the team.

"I think that we are a lot different than your normal cheer team," Gregory said. "We are all so close and just like one big family which is hard to find in a lot of teams let alone teams

that as big as ours. Usually every other team has their own little groups of friends during practice, but we're all so close it doesn't matter."

As a junior, Gregory was planning on going to college for cheer. Colleges such as Colorado Mesa University were starting to look at him.

"I don't really think about it a lot but colleges look at me more because I stand out," Gregory said. "It's hard not having another boy at the same level or on our team because we could be throwing cooler stunts that would score better."

Gregory has learned how to do group stunts like full ups, switch ups and libs. As for co-ed cheer, he has learned full-ups, full-up extensions and toss-QPs.

"Over the years, I've stayed dedicated and committed for not only myself but my team. I've learned a lot. If you mess up, you don't just quit. You keep going until you make it perfect. Sometimes the only way to get over your fear is to full send and do it, like in tumbling," Gregory said. "I honestly could not imagine my life without cheer. It's become a part of who I am. I discovered I have a talent that I didn't have until I became a part of this cheer family."

