

Doing things differently: Diversity at WJEA Camp

Students and staff of the WJEA Summer Camp discuss their passions and interests outside of journalism, as well as give information about their lives, hobbies and motivations for going through the day.

Looking on the bright side



Chris Danko poses confidently for his portrait overlooking the water on the Western Washington University campus. *Photo by Julian White-Davis*

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Chris Danko's adolescent head bent over the paper, listening intently at the words coming out of his friend Brent Visser's mouth. Danko watched Visser's hand slide across the paper, exposing the many ways a tic-tac-toe game can go - and of course, how to win. Although tired after completing one of many Shakespeare plays he has participated in, Danko still had the energy to learn even something that

seems so trivial from his friend, Visser. Not every play in Danko's life has ended with a celebration of tic-tac-toe at Applebee's. Danko recalls a time when his mother started hugging him the middle of one of his plays, obviously upset, but not yet understanding why. Upon finishing, he was met with news that Visser had ended his life. The age difference may have been approaching 10 years, but that did not

stop them from becoming good friends through the theater program, Short Shakespeareans. Participating in his first play at 3 years old, Danko took a quick liking to theater - causing him to look up to Visser and his accomplishments in the arts. Now a junior at Wenatchee High School, Danko is still impacted by the life and death of his friend. It does not just extend to his theater and other activities, but also to the way he goes about

life and treats those close to him. "It just helped me realize the value of life and to hold onto the people and things that are here because they could be gone in that moment," Danko said. He also now helps people coping with depression in their life. Danko firmly believes that everyone on this earth has a gift, and that it should be protected at all costs. Even if he may not like someone, he appreciates them and what they

"Everyone has a gift to give and I think that protecting those gifts is really important." can give to the world. Danko himself is not only gifted with a positive outlook on life, but with his passion for many different things - ranging from theater and music to

journalism and academics. The death of a loved one is possibly the most difficult things anyone could face, but the things Danko has learned have prompted him to be an inspiration for those who want to make a difference. "No matter what the situation is there is always a way out," said Danko, who said he is passionate about helping others cope with their depression.

Chris Danko
School: Wenatchee High School
Publication: The Apple Leaf
Grade: Junior

"It's like I didn't really acknowledge them before and now I can see people's gifts and can see what they have to give that's different than everyone else."

Optimism begins with the sun

Sienna Brown
School: Timberline High School
Publication: The Blazer
Position: Editor-in-Chief

"I'm really into writing right now... It gives me a chance to process my thoughts carefully and say what I really mean."

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On April 9 in Lacey, the dark, heavy clouds hid the sun and threatened to burst with rain. Although it was already 7 in the morning and Sienna Brown knows she should be getting ready, she still lied in bed. The warmth and safety of her bed comforted her and invited her to stay longer. Sienna shut her eyes and in the darkness wished the day to go by quick. Before she could open her eyes, the sun peaked from behind the clouds and entered through her bedroom window. The sun's gentle rays lay on her eyes and allowed a light red to replace the midnight black. Editor-in-chief of the Timberline High School newspaper "The Blazer," Sienna Brown is one of the many teenagers who battle major depression disorder, chronic anxiety and a slight personality disorder. "I've been dealing with depression and anxiety since the fourth or fifth grade," Brown said. Her mental illnesses do not stop

Brown from performing her favorite and daily activities such as writing. In fact, Brown accepts the challenge and combats her depression with positive energy. "The sun is up and it's going to be a good day," Brown said. On the surface it may appear that Brown has everything all figured out but her conscious begs to differ. "Often times it seems like the whole world is just darkness," Brown said. "Sometimes it seems like there is no light. And it's really intimidating... It's really easy to believe it's not worth it." Without the support of her family and close friends, Sienna may not have fought back so hard. One friend helped Brown see the light at the end of the tunnel. "Vicky. What a gal," Brown said. "She was the light in my whole life." Vicky Doman taught Brown to always smile and see the bright side of things. This is something that Brown intends to pass down to her friends and family. With a big smile and a



Sienna Brown smiles as she holds her phone to her face. Her phone is a means of contacting and confiding in some of her closest friends, in order to deal with the issues she faces during the day. *Photo By Jason Tiller*

skip in her step, Brown says, "The sun will rise and we will try again. And that if I can tell anyone anything it's that there is always another opportunity... Even if things are not going okay the sun will come up and you will have another opportunity to make it right." Things don't have to be so dark and frightening, like ominous rain clouds looming in the sky. Sienna smiles knowing that should she can always find the bright side of things no matter what her inner demons say.

The art that is cooking



Standing tall on the steps of a stair sculpture on the Western Washington University campus during the 2016 WJEA Summer Camp, Rogers High School teacher Bonnie Hager explains her lifelong passion for food and cooking. When she's not advising her school's newspaper she finds herself watching the many educational and competitive shows on the Food Network channel. *Photo By Claire Shinner*

At a family reunion in Missouri, teenager Bonnie Hager came down to breakfast only to find her aunt, who was hosting the reunion had made a wide array of food to accommodate the different family members who had come from as far as the Pacific Northwest. "I've never seen so much food at breakfast. She made three different types of fish at breakfast. She also made chicken at breakfast and hushpuppies. French toast, pancakes, and waffles. Just everything was there," Hager said. Hager's family comes

from both the Pacific Northwest and southern regions of the United States. The big range of flavors she had been exposed to while growing up developed a palate that wasn't afraid to try new things. "I feel that I've had a broad range of food that [was] available and whenever I travel I always like to try new things," she said. Advisor to Rogers High School's newspaper staff and Junior English teacher, Hager loves to cook and experiment with food. However, she didn't always have a love for cooking. As a child,

ijabo dahir
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Hager was impatient and couldn't wait for the food to come out. "When I was a kid my mom just could not cook the food fast enough. I just wanted the food right then and there," she said. Though as she got older, she started to appreciate the art that is cooking and experimenting with your own food. "You really are a food artist with any kind of dish that you make so I've learned to appreciate the process of making a dish," Hager said. Today, Hager and her fiancé cook together with varying degrees of success. Often watching the

Food Network together, they were inspired by the chefs on the shows. "My fiancé and I decided one day when we were watching the Food Network, 'Hey, these people are making that. I bet we could make that.' And we gave it a try," Hager said. Overall, the fact that cooking allows for different combinations and trying new things is the reason that Hager is so passionate about cooking. "[Cooking is] like a lab," she said, "It's like science, like you're a mad scientist in the kitchen."

Bonnie Hager
School: Rogers High School
Position: Advisor

"You really are a food artist with any kind of dish that you make so I've learned to appreciate the process of making a dish"