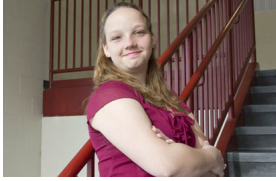


## Facing her fears GHS grad gets ready to soar

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
Thursday, 09 May 2013 13:33 -

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Talina Ramsey gets attached to things quickly.

Because of that, moving eight times before finally landing at Gothenburg High School the last month of her junior year was difficult.

For a couple of weeks, she stood alone in a sea of students who milled about the hallways before school and laughed and chatted with each other during lunch break.

“I didn’t have friends and I felt out of place like I shouldn’t belong here,” said the transplant from Van Wert, OH.

Before she moved to Gothenburg, Ramsey lived in different towns throughout Ohio and Indiana.

At times her shyness became so overwhelming, her stepmother had to pull her from the car to attend school.

“I’m a very sensitive person,” Ramsey said.

One day, while standing in a hallway of GHS, something changed.

A freshman at the time, Alex Boson walked up and talked to Ramsey.

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“I thought at first she was playing a joke on me because a crowd of students was laughing.”

But it was no joke.

Boson visited with Ramsey again after school. Soon, Ramsey was walking around Lake Helen and participating in other activities with Boson and other girls.

Things had started looking up.

By the end of her junior year, Ramsey was ready to venture even further from her shy shell.

Remembering how she admired the flag girls who marched with bands and performed routines, she tried out for the school's Color Guard team.

“I was nervous when I got the letter in the mail,” Ramsey said after tryouts.

And elated when she found out she'd been selected.

One of Ramsey's biggest challenges, trying not to embarrass herself, came along before the organization's first performance with the band at a football game.

“I fell down the bleachers steps and hurt my knee,” she said with a laugh.

That episode became material for Ramsey's entertainment speech entitled “Newbies,” which she based on her experiences as a new kid in school.

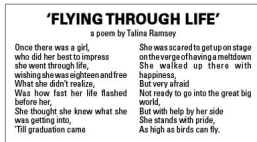
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After taking a required speech class from Dan Jensen the first semester of her senior year, she toyed with the idea of joining the speech team.



With Jensen's blessing, she competed for the first time in Cozad last December.

"I figured it was a good way to push myself out of my bubble and try something new," Ramsey said.

Her first experience was horrible because she read her speech from notecards, instead of giving it from memory, and paused a lot.

Still, she stuck with her commitment and earned three medals and a superior ribbon during the season.

"That gave me confidence," Ramsey said.

As did speech team members who she said always picked up her spirits when she needed support to go on to the next round.

"I liked speech a lot and I miss it."

In April, the 18-year-old stepped out of her comfort zone again when she volunteered to perform in a school poetry slam where students shared original work before an audience (see poem in box).

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“I’ve grown a lot since I first came here,” she said. “I’ve grown into being myself.”

In addition to making new friends and trying new activities, Ramsey is also proud of how she’s learned to open up to teachers—particularly Jensen, English teacher Roxanne Whiting and family and consumer science teacher Dee Weaver.

Whiting describes Ramsey as a sweet, shy girl who has stepped out of her comfort zone by joining the Color Guard and speech teams.

“All year she kept telling me she wanted to try and not be held back by fear,” Whiting said.

On Sunday, Ramsey will face a new fear.

“Graduation and walking into the world alone,” Ramsey said. “I feel like all my years have flown by and that I didn’t make the most of them until I got here.”

Yet, Ramsey knows something about courage which she shared in a senior video created by Whiting.

“I said to ‘Be courageous and spread your wings,’ ” Ramsey said.

With diploma in hand, Ramsey plans to attend Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte and complete general studies so she can pursue a degree in social work.

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