

Soar and Succeed, Like a Girl

Senior Fights Misconception that Computer Science is Not a Place for Females

A group of computer science students crowd around senior Briana Bradshaw's computer, asking her for help in writing a program to make matrices. They were working as a team to figure it out, females and males together. "I felt happy and proud because people look to me for help," Bradshaw said. "I am glad that people can rely on me."

As one of the minority of females who have taken engineering and computer science classes in high school, Bradshaw is fighting the common misconception that the field of science is masculine.

"Many girls quit after their first year," Bradshaw said. "Maybe at other schools the representation of girls is better, but there are not very many here."

Bradshaw is used to the dominance of males but does not let it deter her from writing programs and practicing the material that she is taught in her computer science classes.

"All my life I have been around guys," Bradshaw said. "That is how I grew up and it is what I am used to. Getting into the computer science field was not different."

After recently participating in the Texas Alliance of Minorities in Engineering competition, Bradshaw was able to win third place after taking a series of tests in the physics competition.

"I was really proud that I was able to positively represent my school," Bradshaw said. "I was kind of in disbelief."

Bradshaw also took part in a group project at the competition. They had to design a vehicle that propelled itself and carried 10 washers to a certain zone. The team won second place.

"Before I got involved in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), I hated working in groups," Bradshaw said. "Now, being involved in team-building, I enjoy interacting with people more than I would if I did not do computer science. Computer science changed me."

Participating in computer science has paved a path for Bradshaw to become a computer software engineer by exposing her to other students interested in computer science.

"I have gotten to meet a lot of cool people who I'll probably go to school with and end up working with," Bradshaw said. "I would like to work in companies like IBM, Valve or Bungie. They are all working on pretty huge projects and it would be cool if I could contribute to something greater."

Bradshaw encourages freshmen girls to not shy away from taking engineering and computer science classes.

"I want them to realize that it is not rocket science and it can be really fun for them," Bradshaw said. "It has been definitely been the best decision of my life. Girls need to see that they will not look as dumb as they may think, and that achieving in computer science is possible."

More generally, Bradshaw advocates that girls pursue their dreams regardless of what others may think of them. She has no regrets over her experiences as a computer science student.

"Girls can accomplish just as much or even more than guys," Bradshaw said. "They are just as capable. You cannot let what you think people will think of you, stop you. In the long run, that is ridiculous. I did what I wanted and I do not regret it at all."



Sophomore Carries Hope, Passion for Women Pursuing Field of Engineering

After committing to taking engineering classes, sophomore Gabriela Medina has hope for women in her passion for the field of engineering.

"Briana works really hard and is very smart in terms of computer science," Medina said. "I already have hope for women in this field, and she reminds me that I have friends with me in engineering."

Growing up with technology and the influence of STEM, Medina already understands the importance of innovation and thinking outside of the box. From robotics in fifth grade to her engineering classes now, Medina cannot stop smiling when she thinks about all the times she has taken part in engineering activities.

"One time when my mom needed help attaching a part to a grill," Medina said. "My dad could not do it, so my mom called me down. I fixed it, and she called me her little engineer. It felt really good. That is the moment I remember the most."

Participating in clubs like Solar Car Club and Robotics have shown Medina the kinds of engineering and allowed her to compete, even winning the RICE360 competition with senior Kriti Swami last year.

"I want to be an engineer for sure," Medina said. "I lost count after I found out that there are more than 30 different types of engineers, but taking part in Solar Car and Robotics makes me think about what kind of engineer I might want to be."

Even though Medina has been able to find success in the field of engineering, she recognizes that the automotive industry is male-dominated.

"Sometimes things get rough on the women's side," Medina said.

"When women get involved, things are not really clear. It is hard being in engineering because sometimes, men do not think we can handle it. We are in the modern age. Guys need to get out of thinking that women are not capable."

Taking the intro to engineering class, continuing with the principles of engineering class and participating in science-gearred activities has allowed Medina to meet interesting people and work on different projects and activities. To Medina, taken the road less traveled was the best choice she could have made.

"Engineering is a lot of fun," Medina said. "If girls are interested in engineering, they should do it. Even though there are not a lot of girls in engineering here, we are intelligent and we help the team out."

Whether it is engineering or some other activity, Medina hopes girls vicariously live through her motto.

"Dare to be different," Medina said. "You will never know new experiences if you do not dive into them headfirst."



Senior Aims for Goal of Scoring Equality for Female Athletes On and Off Field

It is the second half of the first game in the tournament, and the momentum is building for senior Yasmin Sanchez and her girls' soccer team. Sanchez has already scored one goal, but the score of 1-0 is too close to call.

"We were still vulnerable," Sanchez said. "We didn't get overconfident and we kept playing hard."

Amid the intensity of the game and her team's determination to win, Sanchez scored a second goal.

"This celebration was much bigger," Sanchez said. "The girl who assisted the goal climbed on top of me and I almost fell. Goals don't come from one person. They come from whole team."

Influenced by her brothers from a young age, Sanchez has developed a passion for the game.

"I have five brothers, and my older ones all played soccer at some point in their lives," Sanchez said. "It was a hobby we all had, a way to have fun."

After four years of commitment and leadership, Sanchez says she knew she would become team captain.

"I felt happy and excited to lead my team," Sanchez said. "Soccer is a stress reliever that helps me forget about everything. I focus on the game and my teammates, who are more like family. I focus on succeeding as a team."

As Sanchez concentrates on cooperative achievement, she recognizes that one obstacle for female athletes is gaining support and recognition.

"With every sport, there always seem to be more men and those men's sports get more attention," Sanchez said. "In soccer, people from many countries viewed the games for the men's world cup, but there was also a women's cup that nobody even knew was happening. Nobody talked about it. It is unfair that women do not get the same attention."

Sanchez also noted that the stands at the girls' soccer games are about a third full while at boys' games, they are closer to being entirely full.

"At our games, there are just our parents and the other teams' parents in the stands," Sanchez said. "Sometimes I have the chance to see the boys' games and I always see families and also a group of students who support the guys. As a girls' team, we do not get that student section out there for us."

Sanchez hopes to see female teams treated and seen as equal to male teams.

"It feels like we just get the left overs, and I want that to change," Sanchez said. "I want the school to view that women's sports are important."

Additionally, hearing insensitive comments towards women makes Sanchez realize that society puts labels on girls.

"There shouldn't be comments that make girls seem inferior to men," Sanchez said. "For example, when people say that 'you run like a girl.' How does a girl run? This is unfair. We are equal."

Sanchez encourages female athletes to ignore what society thinks of them, hoping that society will become more appreciative. She wants girls to do as she did by pursuing what they love.

"Girls cannot let what society thinks about them stop them," Sanchez said. "We shouldn't pay attention to people who try to stop us. We cannot let society tell us what to do and we cannot let society tell us no."



FEMALE STUDENTS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS BY PARTICIPATING IN CLUBS, DEMONSTRATING THEIR COMMITMENT TO IMPROVEMENT AND SUCCESS

by senior member **Zoya Zia**

Sophomores Strives to Support, Sustain Musical Females in All Sections of Band

The deep hull of her concert F sustains through the band hall. As one of the two female tuba players in Wind Ensemble, sophomore Quintavia Deshay knows what it is like to be involved in a male-dominated activity.

"People say that the tuba is masculine and that brass instruments are more for boys," Deshay said. "Even now, there are a lot more girls who play woodwind instruments. It is strange."

At the start of her sixth grade year at Hernandez, Deshay decided to play the tuba. She scored high on all the instruments and she had to pick an instrument in one day.

"I just picked what was in the middle of the sheet, which was the tuba," Deshay said. "I did not know what it looked like or anything."

When she saw the tuba the next week, she was unsure if it was right for her. "I thought it was really big," Deshay said. "I decided I would give it a week to see if I liked it. I did not think I would be able to play it, but I stuck with it."

When she settled into the instrument, she was the only girl who played the tuba. Another girl moved in, but Deshay was already overcoming the gender stereotype.

"When I found out that I could practice, I started practicing for 30 minutes a day and thought, 'Wow, I could be really good,'" Deshay said. "I was really excited when we had our first play-off because I had practiced so much. I was the only one who could play it, and I got a 100."

After focusing on the success she could achieve, even though she was surrounded by males in her tuba section, Deshay continued playing the tuba and advanced to state competition with her solos in 9th and 10th grade.

"Girls should try the tuba if they want to," Deshay said. "If they do not like it, they can change their instrument. They should try any instrument they want to."

Deshay believes that there should be more diversity in gender representation across the woodwind and brass sections of the band.

"With more girls playing brass instruments and more boys playing woodwind instruments, the band may be better," Deshay said. "A more diverse band brings a different atmosphere."

Standing by her decision to play the tuba, Deshay encourages other girls to play a brass instrument if they are interested.

"Girls think they have to fit in with tradition, but they don't," Deshay said. "I didn't and I wouldn't change my decision. I wouldn't change playing the tuba for anything. It feels good when I play, even if I mess up. Other girls can enjoy that too."



Gender Misrepresentations

Gender Roles: Cultural and personal ideas dictate and determine how males and females should dress, think, speak and interact within the context of society. Source: cliffsnotes.com



Fact 1: At one time, *all* teacher and secretary positions were occupied by *men*.



Fact 2: *Pink* used to be a *boy* color and *blue* was a *girl* color. Before that, all babies wore *white*.



Fact 3: *High heels* were originally created for *men* and were considered *masculine*.



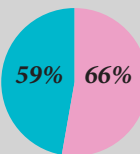
Fact 4: *Cheerleading* began as a *boys' club* because it was considered *too masculine* for women.



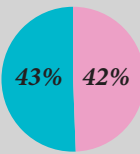
Traditional Societal Expectations For Men and Not Women

1. Making All of The Money in a Household
2. Having Higher Ranked Job Positions
3. Being Physically Strong
4. Being More Athletic

Statistics Check!



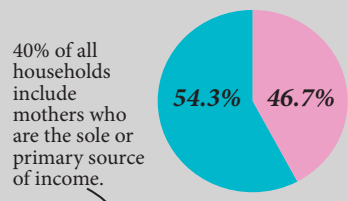
66% of women (ages 18 to 34) rate career high on their list of life priorities, compared to 59% of young men.



42% of women, compared to 43% of men, (ages 35-64) say that success in a high paying job is "one of the most important things" or "very important" in their lives. This is a dramatic increase in the last 15 years.



Of these 40% of women, 37% (5.1 million) of these women are married and 63% (8.6 million) of these women are single.



In 2010, women made up almost half of the labor force (46.7%).

Infographic by **Yutika Diwadkar**
Statistics and Facts Sources: huffingtonpost.com, alternet.org, Pew Research Center
Vectors Images by freepik.com

Stunting Through Stereotypes

SENIOR CJ FOX FINDS PASSION FOR CHEERLEADING WHILE OVERCOMING STEREOTYPES OF THE SPORT

by senior member **Yutika Diwadkar**

Turning on the TV at the age of six and suddenly becoming mesmerized by the cheers and dances of All Star Cheerleaders on ESPN, senior CJ Fox knew cheer was what he was meant to do.

"I remember feeling that I could be that person on TV," Fox said. "It was an amazing feeling, and that's when I really got into cheer and found what I loved."

Until the age of 8, Fox was an avid cheerleader. This stopped when his father took him out of cheer.

"It wasn't really ever my choice, it was my dad's," Fox said. "He didn't think it was very manly and I didn't really understand why, and even today, I don't really understand it. There are so many men in cheer and they're such wonderful cheerleaders. I guess it was just one of those things you don't really understand at that age. I even remember my teachers asking me questions about being in cheer."

However, during this time up, until seventh grade, Fox found himself in a place that was filled with frustration and depression.

"I think a big part of it was the fact that I was taken out of cheer and cheer was a part of who I was. That really had a big effect on me," Fox said. "I was really depressed all of the time, and it's honestly hard to look back on. I hadn't come out yet, which bothered me a lot. I was also in Boy Scouts, which I'd had enough with. I just didn't really feel like myself during that time."

During seventh grade, Fox finally decided that staying true to himself, and being happy was more important than the opinions of others. "I realized that I didn't care about my dad's opinion or anything else people said," Fox said. "I came out in seventh grade to my school in Hutto and then I moved to Hopewell, and I didn't really tell anyone because I was new and shy, but I did join All Star Cheer. I also got kicked out of Boy Scouts, but that just gave me more time to spend on cheer so I didn't really mind too much."

After being a part of All Star Cheer for a couple of years, Fox found his true passion within the sport and pursued it.

"I realized how much I loved cheering for sports," Fox said. "It sounds silly, but there's a difference between competition cheering and cheering for sports, and I found myself loving the feeling of cheering for sports. That's when I joined the Stony Point cheer program and it turned out that I really loved it."

For Fox, joining the school's cheer program gave him the outlet that helped him become the person that he wanted to be, while supporting

him every step of the way.

"Cheer, overall, helped me come out. High school cheerleading did more than that. It helped me become more confident and brought me out of my box," Fox said. "Something that this program has helped me with is overcoming negativity and just giving me the support that I needed. I used to let negativity get to me and I know that there's always going to be that negative aspect to people's perspective, but I've learned to just let it be and brush it off. My cheer team and my coach have really helped me understand that."

Fox also looks to his family as a huge source of support and inspiration.

"I don't live with my mom and dad, I live with my aunt and uncle. My parents just couldn't really support me the way I needed, so I turned to my aunt and uncle, and I'm so blessed to have them," Fox said. "They've given me everything



and more, and they've been so supportive of everything that I've done. I remember when I came out to them and they were just filled with so much joy. There were tears, and it was just an amazing experience. I felt inspired to just keep continuing what I was doing when I saw how much they supported me and how happy they were for me. I consider myself extremely lucky to have them."

For Fox, the thought of becoming an inspiration to other males never faded him. However, when two high school boys approached him with questions about joining cheer, Fox's view of himself changed.

"I was so surprised when they came up to me and asked me questions about cheer. We had a really enjoyable conversation and I think they went on to try out for McNeil, but that was a really great experience," Fox said. "All throughout middle school and for a good part of high school, I just thought that I would continue to remain invisible and that people would just ignore me. Now, I want to continue to inspire other gay males to join cheer. It can be hard sometimes to know that I have a reputation to uphold because that can stress me out, but I remember that I'm inspiring others and that's what keeps me going."

After graduating, Fox plans to continue coaching, while pursuing dance and English at Texas State University, with hopes to pursue a career in sports medicine.

"Cheer is my passion, I know that this is something that I want to continue doing for a good part of my life. I want to help choreograph dances for next year and onwards. I want to just help future cheerleaders do well in such an amazing sport. My team has inspired me," Fox said. "I definitely hope to see more men in the sport. I really want male cheerleaders to become more of a thing and I think that will happen. I want to contribute to that change."