

*“I know that I am a leader,
but I never imagined that it was going
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- Senior Courtney Gilbreath

‘I’m here’ beginning a new year

Incoming freshmen find new academic adventures, senior leaders latch on to last year opportunities

- story by Christiana Peek

Feeling good, senior Courtney Gilbreath grabbed the microphone to welcome incoming freshmen to the campus.

“We’re going to have a great time today,” Gilbreath shouted to the class of 2019. “So get pumped and get ready.”

Gilbreath and other Link Crew leaders lived by one rule: encourage them and don’t try to discourage them from doing anything.

“We encouraged them to do every little thing that they could because it looks really good on college apps,” Gilbreath said.

“If they wanted to join the underwater basket weaving club, and if we had it, then we encouraged them.”

Gilbreath and other Link Crew leaders found that setting a positive example for incoming students allowed them to pass down what they knew and loved about the campus while also leaving their legacy for the new class to follow.

“I felt really important because I had the opportunity to lead and leave a mark on the freshmen,” Gilbreath said. “I got to show them that not all seniors are like the stereotypical ‘Oh we hate freshmen.’”

Because of the Link Crew’s leadership abilities, the

freshmen quickly became more comfortable and conversations became easier. A noticeable change for both the freshmen and leadership occurred from the beginning of the event to the end.

“They really opened up to us,” Gilbreath said. “And they actually talked to us.”

The relationships formed at Meet the Tiger remained strong through the year. In fact, a lot of Link Crew members, like Gilbreath still spotted freshmen from their groups almost daily.

“They are always like, ‘Hey Courtney, what’s up,’” Gilbreath said. “And we have conversations and I help them with homework.”

Because she likes being active in the school community, Gilbreath says she talks to everybody, even if she doesn’t know them. She says she believes that the relationships formed through leading helps her grow personally as much as they help the school community stay positive and other students stay connected.

“I know that I am a leader,” Gilbreath said, “but I never imagined that it was going to be my turn. It was unreal. At a certain moment it just hit me like ‘Oh dang, it’s senior year, and I’m here.’”