

Quirks and smirks in no short supply for Joz

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Before school, you may spot him throwing his bright green super ball across the hallway. Later, you may find a fortunate few carrying orange dog balloons—his signature creation. Later still, you may witness the father of the Animal Cracker Fight performing the sacred rites.

In a word, Ryan Jozwiak is quirky. When asked about his hobbies, which extend from collecting Pokemon cards to playing the harmonica, Ryan lightheartedly explains that they are an attempt at a healthier lifestyle.

"See, my biggest regret of high school was becoming addicted to *World of Warcraft* at the end of freshman year. This year, one of my resolutions was to stomp it out of my life completely, so I've been clean for almost three months now," Ryan explains with a straight face, while testing the "spin" of his chair.

To Ryan, life has progressed from the euphoria of a level 79 alt druid to the beauty of "seeing whole different areas of life." He reflects, "By really experiencing life, you can see what you're missing out on and also what is okay to miss out on."

And while this progression has taken place during high school, Ryan has flourished academically. A straight-A student, Ryan is known for his wit and intelligence among friends and teachers alike.

"Ryan has a brilliant mind and good insights into literature," English teacher Gina Enk says. Chuckling, she adds, "If you can read his handwriting, he's a really good writer, too."

Ryan's current English teacher, Amy



Photo by Amy Liu

TOGAPE TIME. Aside from long walks on the beach and penning metaphysical haikus, Ryan Jozwiak finds solace in quiet afternoons spent with Steven King and *Togape*.

Pine, agrees about his dynamic presence.

"If ever there is a lull in class discussion, Ryan always has something attention-grabbing to fill it," Pine says.

But Ryan's talents are not confined to literature, either.

Science teacher Karl Craddock, who teaches Ryan in Advanced Placement chemistry, marks Ryan as a "teacher's ideal student" for his "high academic character, thirst for knowledge for knowledge's sake and ability to keep things in perspective—that school should be fun."

This "learner for learning's sake" also has been a four-year member of the boys soccer and volleyball teams and has earned two varsity letters on volleyball.

"Ryan has always been a class act both on and off the court," boys volleyball coach Curtis Pinley says. "The thing that has impressed me about him is his dedi-

cation and work ethic during practice. Ryan is always pushing his teammates to become better athletes."

Fellow teammate Chris Chandler says that Ryan "is extremely energetic and is known for his loud outbursts during a pre-game ritual called 'Stompin' it out.'"

Although he can let loose on the courts by stompin' it out and rapping for fun, Ryan relaxes with any music, particularly funk and emo, which Ryan deems a "heartfelt introspection of the soul." In fact, the former band member dreams of purchasing a baritone saxophone.

"The bari sax—that I can just jam to," Ryan adds. "It's just relentless power at the tips of my fingers."

By finding the humor in life, Ryan enjoys it. In fact, he rides that untamable road of life on cruise control.

"No one's going to enjoy yourself for

you. You have to go out and do it on your own time," he says. "My mom is a recurring cancer patient, and what I learned from her is if you live day-to-day, you're going to be much happier. If you don't stress out about the future and just take it as it is, life's generally alright."

So his solution to the maze of high school life? Be yourself.

"You just got to do what feels right," he says. "If making balloon animals feels right—though your hands may smell like latex—but if you can handle latex, then you can handle happiness in general."

And with that, the master of "chill" smiles and leans back in his chair unassumingly, though he has found the key to a treasure many adults cannot find—happiness.

Ryan tries to share his treasure with everyone, whether it's in the form of a laugh attack or by volunteering at the Wellness Place, a center for cancer research.

"Ryan's probably one of the nicest people I know," girlfriend Jordan Gorrell says. "He's not only brilliant, but he's got a great heart. I don't think I've met anyone more selfless."

As a mere passerby, the boy with the disheveled brown hair is just some random kid who has a fascination for bouncy balls. But in reality, he's Ryan Jozwiak—aka Joz—resident genius, athlete and comedian extraordinaire.

"He's not outward about how good he is at everything, but he is," science teacher Matt Zimolzak said. "Ryan always surprises me with his multitude of talents."

Ryan will bring these talents to Northwestern University to pursue a medical-related field.

Nicole Thompson finds the time to make her mark

Nicole Gut
A&E Editor

With aviator sunglasses on and blonde hair flying past her, Nicole Thompson zooms down Quentin for her job at Jimmy John's. Two hours later, she's off to church. By the time her day ends, it's too dark for the aviators.

Nicole will be leaving behind many footprints in the community and at Fremd as she makes her way to college.

She is member of the yearbook, the volunteer group Service Over Self (SOS), the service organization Youth Hunger Opposition in Palatine (YHOP), National Honor Society (NHS), wind symphony, and marching band.

"I am involved in kind of a ridiculous amount of clubs here," Nicole said. "I'm busy. Really, really busy."

Looking for an opportunity to write and aspiring to become a journalist, Nicole joined the yearbook sophomore year and became an editor junior year.

"Junior year, I was the co-editor of the Student Life section, and this year I'm co-editor of Clubs," Nicole said. "It's definitely my favorite club. I love it."

Senior Stephanie Calabrese, Nicole's co-editor of Clubs, says she has a blast working on yearbook with Nicole.

"Nicole has so many good ideas. She never ceases to make me laugh, but I can also count on her to do her part," Calabrese said. "We work really well together and have a good time doing it."

Also an active member of SOS all four years, Nicole became part of the executive board her junior year. She helped coordinate Thanksgiving meals for needy families and played a big role in the Heart to Heart Foundation, which raised money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

"I love doing service activities. It's a very rewarding experience. It's one of my favorite things I've done in high school," Nicole said.

In addition to the service projects Nicole did through SOS and NHS, she helped coordinate YHOP, which was started by her best friend, senior Kellsie Kinsella.

"I've been with Kellsie since the beginning. I've worked

with her on a lot of different fundraisers," Nicole explained. "On Facebook, I send out messages to people to keep them informed on what's going on with YHOP. We also did a big banquet at Vittorio De Roma, and I helped out a little with that."

The help is obviously appreciated by Kinsella, who admits that Nicole stuck with her, even through the grunt work, and helped raise \$115,000 for YHOP.

"She has helped out at many different bake sales, handed out business cards in the freezing cold, worked on the Dinner Dance and many other events. She has been crucial in YHOP achieving its goal," Kinsella said. "Nicole was always there when I needed a last-minute volunteer and always graciously helped out."

Despite her long list of accomplishments, Nicole says her biggest was making wind symphony senior year.

"I worked so hard for my audition last year. I don't know if I've ever worked on anything harder," she recalled.

In wind symphony, Nicole has met other serious band members to whom she can relate.

"We get to play the best music of all the bands. The people who are in wind symphony are the most dedicated to music and that makes it so much more fun because we get to do so much more," Nicole said.

In addition to her crazy extra-curricular schedule, she also pushes herself academically.

"I'm a complete nerd. I take Advanced Placement classes. I went to both yearbook camp and band camp, two summers in a row," Nicole said. "But I love being a nerd. I think it's more fun that way."

With everything this student does at school, she still has time to work, babysit and participate in her church youth group.

"One thing that's very important to me outside of school is my church youth group at All Saints Lutheran Church," Nicole said. "It's been a really wonderful experience getting to know kids my age who are just as into their faith as I am. It's a really great group of people."

Nicole's friends agree that she is one of a kind and that her achievements reflect who she is at her core.



Photo by Amy Liu

RAISE YOUR VOICE. From SOS to yearbook, Nicole Thompson has served the school in more ways than one.

"She is one of the most caring and loyal friends I have ever met. She always tries to do the right thing, whether it be for her family, her friends or for her schoolwork. She is never afraid to be herself," Kinsella said.

"She is one of the funniest people you will ever meet," Calabrese added. "Nicole is one of those people who will do anything to help someone else. Bottom line, Nicole is an awesome person, and I am so glad I got to know her during my time at Fremd."

Next year, she will attend University of Missouri at Columbia to study journalism.