

Accepting the Struggle

Hawk's Endurance Through Anxiety

By Abbey MacMullen

Growing up as a top athlete, pushing herself in her academics, being a role model for her two younger siblings, and living in a household that has always strived towards success has played a major role in Reagan Hawk's life.

But along with this came a lot of worry, stress, and anxiety that she battled with from the early age of seven. Anxiety has been an ongoing issue since she was little and she didn't always know how to deal with it.

"The first time I can remember noticing something was wrong was when I came home after school one day at age seven and started hysterically crying because I was unable to breathe," said Hawk.

This was just one of her first panic attacks that Hawk dealt with in her life.

Growing up, Hawk was placed into competitive volleyball at Elite in Stark County, Ohio when she was six years old. As time went

on she became really great at it and now currently plays for the top national team at the same club. But along the way came a lot of competitions, long practices and games, and pressure. Because she worked her way up to such a high level, this caused her to constantly be stressed out. Not only that, but her mother was a math teacher, so she always encouraged Hawk to work her hardest in school. Hawk did just that and always tried her hardest in school and continues to challenge herself with AP classes. So on top of putting a lot of effort into volleyball, she now put a lot of pressure on herself through her academics. It took some time, but she had to learn how to navigate her way through her constant anxiety.

"Reagan is one of the most kindhearted, hardworking people I know", said one of Hawk's best friends, Maya Cunix.

"She is always trying

to improve and find new ways to challenge herself. She inspires me because of how goal oriented she is", said Cunix.

Another major pressure in her life was her pressure to be a role model for her younger brother who is thirteen and her sister who is ten.

So, as time has gone on and she has been through more experiences, her anxiety increasingly got worse. And up until this year of 2023, she did not know how to control her emotions and rarely ever spoke about them.

"I think when I realized things were really starting to get bad was when I would feel too ill to show up to practices, school, or events," said Hawk.

This was a wakeup call for Hawk and she knew she needed to do something about the constant anxiety she was feeling before it would eat her up whole. The first thing she did was

go to her mom, Tanis, as she was someone she knew she could talk to and would understand. She realized the best thing for her to do was to see a therapist so she could get the help she needed. This was a very scary first step for Hawk as mental health was something she rarely had ever discussed up until this point.

However, by making this choice this taught her that her emotions are valid and that it is important to acknowledge the ways she had been feeling.

Currently, Hawk prioritizes taking a step back when needed and slowing things down when things seem to be too much to handle.

“I now know when I have reached my limit and have found new ways that work for me to calm myself down,” said Hawk.

Another major source of help Hawk finds when she gets overwhelmed is putting her faith into something else.

“Something that has



Photo Creds: Tanis Hawk

This represents Reagan’s bubbly personality and her love for the beach.

She loves to be outdoors as it is where she finds the most peace.

really helped when I start to get anxious me was the choice to put my faith in God. I have seen a noticeable difference and my anxious levels have decreased greatly,” said Hawk.

This goes to show how far Hawk has come from not even being able to speak about her mental health to now coming to terms with her struggles and now is doing something about it. She still is very involved in volleyball and school, but now understands herself more and knows her limits.

Even though it took several years, Hawk has been able to learn more about herself and how

important mental health really is to her. She now is more open and willing to express herself and no longer constantly feels like she has to hide her emotions. Hawk also has a very large support system including her mom and dad, siblings, grandmother, friends, and volleyball team. She enjoys immersing herself into things that make her happy and surrounds herself with people that bring out the best in her. E v e n though she still struggles with stress and anxiety, she has adapted new ways to compensate for this and has grown so much as a person.