

Madi Olivier Writer of the Year Statement

I was quiet and unsure of my skills when I joined staff my sophomore year, but I quickly found my place and grew comfortable talking to pretty much anybody. I became the online and news editor this past year and spent hours rebuilding our website, which got twice the number of page views than it did last year. I also branched out this year and wrote all kinds of stories, contributing to over 60 this year. This helped me find confidence in my writing and ability as a leader, which I hope to use to put together a great publication as the editor in chief next year.

Butterfly effect: <https://www.mhsmarquee.com/feature/2019/12/10/butterfly-effect/>

This feature is about a locksmith. All I knew was that she raised butterflies, so I planned to write a Q&A. That changed as I asked how she got into butterfly gardening. She said “That’s a long story. Are you sure you want to know?” She told me it pulled her out of a depression after a miscarriage and helped her through the deaths of other loved ones. I was nervous about this feature because I believed I was only good at news, but I kept working to tell her story and inspire others. I found confidence in my writing and now believe that everyone has a story.

A second chance: <https://www.mhsmarquee.com/feature/2020/01/31/a-second-chance/>

This feature is about a journalism teacher on campus and his time in a coma due to surgery complications. It was the first time his story was ever told in writing, so I wanted it to be perfect, even when he couldn’t remember a lot of what happened. I spent hours writing and making edits, producing a story that I am the most proud of and finding my personal writing style.

LISD considers rezoning students: <https://www.mhsmarquee.com/news/2020/01/30/lisd-considers-rezoning-students/>

This original angle was our district’s boundary adjustments, but I had to rework it quickly when they decided to table that discussion until next school year. I interviewed many students from my school as well as a student from another high school in our district and our superintendent to make sure everybody involved in the situation had a voice, which helped me learn how to compile different opinions on a complex topic and explain it in a concise, clear way.

Leaving a legacy on and off the track: <https://www.mhsmarquee.com/sports/2020/05/07/leaving-a-legacy-on-and-off-the-track/>

This obituary was about a beloved coach who died suddenly while we were in quarantine. Interviewing people about losing a loved one is difficult enough, but doing it over the phone made me work harder to establish a connection. I believe writing this improved my interviewing skills and I am glad I was able to capture how loved he was and the impact he left.

Black lives matter protest: <https://www.mhsmarquee.com/news/2020/06/02/black-lives-matter/>

I wrote this story during my summer break, after I realized no other media outlets were covering our community protest. This story was widely discussed in our town and got over 6,000 views in a couple of days. The Dallas Morning News then reported on this story.