

PHOTOJOURNALISM

PORTFOLIO

OF THE YEAR

Delaney Connell

Photojournalist
University of Chicago Laboratory HS
Chicago, IL



TOTALLY HOOKED

Sophomore Mia Lane, who independently runs Lost Oddball Crochet, has found her passion creating and selling whimsical crochet plushies and figures. She began crocheting after receiving an amigurumi kit for Christmas, and used her natural talent for entrepreneurship to build her business afterward.

REFLECTION:

This shoot taught me how to pose subjects and make them feel comfortable during a somewhat awkward shoot. To get the photo from above, I had to stand over Mia which was a bit weird for both of us. But, it showed me a lot about how to communicate with subjects and let loose a little so they can feel at ease with me.



SUPPORTIVE RIVALS

Sophomore Victoria Syverson checks on the condition of a Lindblom High School player after a collision on the court resulted in a twisted ankle.

REFLECTION:

I like to shoot sports low to the ground to capture a strong angle, so I was in the right place to capture the perspective of the players and catch the emotion on the U-High player's face as she comforted an opposing player. This photo is a reminder that I can catch storytelling moments even when the clock isn't running.



RHYTHM AND FLOW

Surrounded by her fellow actors, senior Taylor Landry performs in her final high school production. "Urinetown," which ran in the Sherry Lansing Theater May-14-17, followed the story of citizens in a dystopian town where a water shortage led to a ban on private toilets, forcing citizens to comply with their government's pay-to-pee policy.

REFLECTION:

Getting the settings on my camera correct was difficult because of the changing lights and colors on stage. However, the red lights in this scene create an ominous look, which is very fitting to the song the cast was singing. This was the third theater production I covered this year, and I improved in skill and confidence with each one. This is a reminder that I should always push myself to keep reaching, and not stop after one successful event.



MUSICAL MADNESS

Smiling in disbelief, sophomore Nigel Wagh finds himself in the middle of the two seats occupied by ninth grader Davis Dyson and senior Orly Eggener during a game of musical chairs, ultimately eliminating him from the competition. Musical chairs took place during the homecoming assembly in Upper Kovler, organized by student council members. "It felt really fun. It wasn't just wanting to win that was fun, but also the community, the sense of school pride. Even though I lost while playing the game, it was still a really fun experience for me," Nigel said.

REFLECTION:

This shoot really taught me how to be at the right place at the right time and wait for the action to come to me. I also had to get close to the action for this shot. I chose to sit on the ground to make the subjects appear visually impactful.



BATTLE FIELD

In front of a large home crowd at the Sept. 20 homecoming game against Parker, junior Danny Aronsohn dribbles against a defender. After a mid-season slump, the U-High team celebrated the homecoming win with fans who stormed the field.

REFLECTION:

Because of the fast speed of the ball and gloomy, rainy weather, keeping my camera safe while capturing the game was the priority. The crowd was boisterous and I learned a lot about staying focused under challenging conditions.

DELANEY CONNELL

Photojournalist • University of Chicago Laboratory High School

When I began photojournalism in sophomore year, it was all I would ever talk about. I loved the idea of visual storytelling and would carry my camera with me each day at school in case something newsworthy happened. My favorite part of the day, though, was going home and showing my dad the photos I had taken. He would pretend to know what I was talking about when I pointed out the white balance or framing in each shot, but really he was just happy to see me so excited about something. It was obvious that, to me, photojournalism was much more than a class or hobby; it was something I truly loved.

But in the middle of that school year, everything changed. I suffered a terrible loss when my best friend unexpectedly passed away, and I was overcome by grief and sadness that unfortunately affected many parts of my life. Importantly, I lost all my motivation for photojournalism. I began missing assignments and deadlines, including the important opportunity to apply for an editor position in the coming school year. It seemed like the thing that once brought me joy and excitement was now distant and meaningless. My dad still asked about my photos every now and again, however I wouldn't respond; I didn't have the heart to tell him that I just wasn't taking photos like I used to.

Beginning junior year, my connection with photojournalism still seemed somewhat faded. Around me, I was feeling the anxiety of college research and hearing dreadful "junior year is the worst" speech from all the seniors over and over again. But something that really had a sting was the knowledge that I was one of the only students in the advanced photojournalism class that didn't have a leadership position, all because of the grief that had taken over my life last year. But instead of just staying sad, something in me shifted. Even though I thought no one believed in my talent anymore, I decided that if I couldn't be an editor this year, I was going to do everything I could to show I was responsible and good enough to be one next year.

I started with volleyball- my strong suit when it came to sports photography. I went to every game I could while juggling my soccer practices and tutoring sessions. Then I tried something new and shot the school play. I volunteered for as many assignments as I could and entered every contest I had the opportunity to (although I never won anything). Then in the middle of the year, I was honored to be offered an assistant editor position. The relief that my teacher had that much faith in me flooded over me and only made me more motivated to do better. Not only was Ms. Rumble proud of my work, but I was becoming proud of it too.

In May, I experienced the first thing that really made me feel like a leader. I was assigned to critique a beginning photojournalists portfolio website. At first glance, it was evident that the website needed a lot of work; the photos were poorly edited and blurry, almost every caption contained incorrect information, and the bio had misspellings in every sentence. Regardless of how bad it looked, I believed I was assigned to this particular student for a reason, and I was going to give him the most genuine, helpful feedback I could. When we met for our critique session, I noticed him writing down all my notes and asking questions about how he could improve. I had never felt looked up to like that before, especially when he started saying hi to me in the hallways regularly after our meeting. When we finished, he thanked me for my help, but he will never know how thankful I am to him for making me feel like a valued leader.

Photojournalism isn't just a passion of mine; it's something that made me grow more confident with every photo I take. I have so many unique stories from the past two years regarding photojournalism that would've never happened if I didn't take charge in my own mindset and gain my spark back. I'm so grateful to my teacher, my classmates, and most importantly, myself, for keeping faith and not giving up, for some of the most important lessons I've learned have been because of my photojournalism journey.