

# HHS teen won't let seizures stop her

by freshman Emily Boote.

Having an incurable disease might freak some people out, but freshman Raegan Swangel tries to not let it get to her.

"I feel mostly normal and sometimes I forget I have it until people remind me," said Raegan.

Raegan was diagnosed with epilepsy when she was 5 years old. After adults started noticing Raegan staring

off into space constantly, her mom took her to Covenant Hospital, where she was sent to a neurologist and was diagnosed with epilepsy.

According to Mayo Clinic, epilepsy is a central nervous system disorder in which nerve cell activity in the brain becomes disrupted, causing seizures or periods of unusual behavior, sensations and sometimes loss of consciousness.

Raegan has the most problems with her seizures during sports because when she gets tired, it makes it hard to breathe. But this four-sport athlete refuses to let it stop her from doing the things she loves.

"I'm so dedicated to sports that I couldn't imagine not playing because of it," said Raegan.

The worst seizure Raegan has ever had was during softball

when she was on first base, taking grounders. She said she needed to sit down because she was dizzy. Instead of sitting down, Raegan started walking away "like a zombie."

"It was weird because I still knew where I was going," recalled Raegan.

As she was stumbling away, she was almost hit by a car. The driver called her brother, 2015 HHS graduate Austin Swangel, who came to

pick her up. Shockingly, Raegan did not recognize her brother. She just bawled and couldn't say anything except that she was sorry.

When they got home, an ambulance was waiting, and the paramedics began to overwhelm her with questions. Raegan couldn't speak.

"It was so frustrating!" said Raegan. "I knew exactly what I wanted to say, but I couldn't move my mouth to say it."

To help avoid more seizures like this, Raegan takes a pill called Lamotrigine twice a day. Though it lessens her symptoms, it makes her tired, and if she doesn't eat, it hurts her stomach.

Despite taking her medicine faithfully, Raegan's reality is that seizures happen randomly, and there's really nothing she can do to prevent or prepare for them.

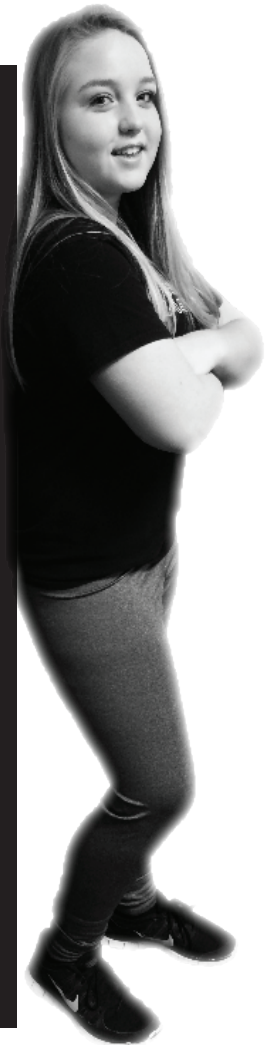
Said Raegan, "I try not to panic because I know it's going to be okay."

**"I try not to panic because I know it's going to be okay."**

-freshman Raegan Swangel

## Did you know:

- Epilepsy is caused by overly active brain cells.
- Seizures are not contagious, but they can be genetic.
- Epilepsy is incurable, but treatment often helps.
- The disorder affects people differently depending on the severity.
- Epilepsy affects on 48 out of every 100,000 people.
- In 400 B.C., the Greek physician Hippocrates was the first to write about epilepsy.



# Junior pursues her dreams of music

by sophomore Hailey Elder.

Every little girl dreamed of being Gabriella from *High School Musical*. Junior Maddie Hartleip took that dream to the next level.

Although Maddie did not start enhancing her skills musically until she saw *HSM* at seven years old, music has run through her veins since she was in diapers.

"I've always had an interest even has a baby," said Maddie. "I had a piano, (and) my mom said I used to dance to it."

Today Maddie is a pianist, percussionist and vocalist.

When asked what she enjoys about being a percussionist, she said, "When you are a drummer you are in charge of setting the style."

Though she enjoys setting the style of a piece by being an instrumentalist, it's singing that is most dear to her heart.

"Singing is so personal. It's your voice, your voice is your instrument and there is nothing blocking you from your audience," said Maddie.

Maddie has plans to continue her dream and go into a musical career. She is not positive on what college she wants to go to, but she is leaning towards Berklee College of Music in Boston.

She wants to study musical performance and musicology, the study of how music affects people.

Though she hasn't yet committed to Berklee, Maddie knows no matter what she does and where she goes, music is all that matters.

"All I know is music has to be a part of it," said Maddie. "It's not something I think I can ever let go of."

