

Transparent

Story/ M. Williams

Imagine being neglected and denied by society for being yourself. Imagine not feeling comfortable in your own skin and feeling nothing but hatred when you look in the mirror at your own reflection. Imagine living with a fake identity for someone else's benefit. For 15 year old East High sophomore Christina Hope Rose this goes beyond imagination.

"I'm pretty sure I've known my whole life. I like dressing up and wearing heels. I knew for sure in middle school. One day something clicked and I knew I didn't want to be a guy. So I went to my friend and said 'I feel like a girl.' And they just said 'okay.' None of them were surprised," East High sophomore Christina Hope Rose said.

Being born into a life that is destined for struggle, Rose was adopted by her family at age three and came out as a transgender female when she was 13. Rose's given name is Christopher Tillotson but after the hardship

of coming to her senses she realized that isn't who she truly is. There needed to be change.

"I was 13. I cried a lot and just felt depressed," Rose said.

Rose revealed that it took a long time for her to come out to her parents as Christina and not Chris. Although Rose's parents were kept in the dark during the time period before her formal coming out, Rose's younger sister and older brother, Tanner, had known months prior.

"I can't say I really felt anything when she came out. There was a little confusion at the start but I never felt uncomfortable. But I was confused because one day I just kind of saw her walking around in a dress at school and there was no actual coming out to me, per say. One day she broke down crying and told me but I just said that I knew because I would always see her walking around in the halls," brother Tanner Tillotson said.

With Tillotson being Rose's number one support system at home, Rose continued to be herself while at school but always hiding in the shadows at home. After leaving middle school, it was in high school that Rose truly thrived; especially after meeting choir teacher, Traci Squires.

"Something that stands out about Christina is how comfortable she feels in her own skin when she dresses very femininely. It makes me happy to see her like that," Squires said.

Squires met Rose during

freshman year in choir class. Although Squires first met Rose as Christopher, she soon realized that that wasn't who "Chris" truly was. Over time, Squires and Rose bonded and Squires acquired a big role in Rose's life.

"I have very bad gender dysphoria. For every trans person it varies but mine is very bad because I can't even take a shower without wanting to cry. I just hate looking down at myself," Rose said.

Gender dysphoria is the condition of feeling one's emotional and psychological identity as male or female to be opposite to one's biological sex. Living in skin that doesn't feel like your own causes Rose problems that will have traumatized her for life.

Within these next three years of high school Rose prays to become a more confident version of herself and hopes that she will have the body that will evolve with her mindset.

"There is nothing more liberating than being yourself," Rose said.

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