

Walking tall Kelly Alexander is the Comeback Kid

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Kid

When he first moved to the area, Kelly Alexander was off to a rough start, facing numerous problems such as missing school and getting into trouble with the law. After spending time on probation and in a group home for juvenile delinquents, Kelly has turned his life around. Now he participates in swimming and track, all the while maintaining his grades and studying for his qualifying test for the armed services. Kelly plans to serve in the United States Navy.

It has been said that many people are attracted to those with opposite personalities, but not of opposite character. One reason this holds true is because personalities may change over time, and they often do, but your character defines the ethics and beliefs you live by. According to senior Kelly Alexander, you have to, "just do the right thing even when nobody's looking." For Kelly, no one was ever looking.

Kelly is an upcoming graduate with the class of 2010. He goes to school, to sports practice, then home to study for his prospective qualifying test for the armed services. He was on the swim team, and throws the discus and runs long distance for track. He surfs and plans to lifeguard in the summer; just a simple Eastern Shore life. But, things were not always this easy for him.

At age 11, after growing up in Baltimore City, Kelly moved to Berlin and began attending Berlin Intermediate School. At age 11, Kelly began getting in trouble. By the time he was in eighth grade, he had already missed 10 days of middle school from being suspended, and had another 40 or so unexcused absences.

In high school, Kelly was on probation for two and a half years, and spent twelve months in a group home for juvenile delinquents. "I used to be bad. I used to be really bad," stated Kelly, 'used to' being the key part of that statement. Since then, he has more than turned his life around.

Even though he may not be pursuing his childhood dream of becoming a race car driver, Kelly is going after an even more admirable goal; he wishes to serve in the Navy.

As it is the one thing he aspires to do most, Kelly has been working hard in preparation to achieve his goal. Not only does he have to study his regular school work, but he also has to practice for the AS-VAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery), which will determine if he is accepted into the Navy and, if he is accepted, to what area he will be serving.

Throughout all the troubles he has faced, Kelly has never given up on himself or taken the easy road out. Having never once considered dropping out, he has stayed more motivated than many others in the class of 2010.

Even with all his negative influences, Kelly has continuously done many things that will allow him to create a future. Decisions as small as refusing to

get any piercings or tattoos until he has a career. "It doesn't matter who you are, it looks bad being all inked up at an interview," shares Kelly.

Although he may have never given up on himself, Kelly openly mentions that in the past certain family members have. However, one person who has always believed in him is fellow teacher and coach Rick Cawthern. Kelly explains that Cawthern was one person who "stuck by my side through everything."

But regardless of those around him, Kelly has proved that he can take care of himself and get done what needs to be done. When asked what he was most afraid of, Kelly responded, "I try not to be scared of anything." This amount of bravery and perseverance has led Kelly to a successful end of his high school years.

In the beginning of his freshman year, Kelly came into Decatur already in alternative education, for which Cawthern was the advisor. Kelly admits that he was disrespectful, and had quite a bit of an attitude.

Now he can honestly and rightfully describe himself as cheerful, fresh, and easy going. Getting along with all his teachers, and bringing a little more happiness to every room he walks in, Kelly is far from the same person he was in the past.

Walking down the halls of Decatur, especially in the Spring, you might hear students reminiscing and longing for the good old whimsical days of no homework, napping, and classic Disney movies. With his life now being better than before, Kelly may not wish to return to these years, but he still carries a part of his childhood with him.

Not only this, but he can also be related to a well known childhood hero. Although he doesn't go about slaying monsters and defeating Titans, Kelly is in many ways just as great of a hero as the classic Hercules, but in a so much more real and relatable way. Kelly proved that he could do whatever he aspired to do with his life, even if he may have gotten off to a rocky start.

Throughout his childhood, Kelly overcame obstacles that the average student could not even imagine, and he still carries some of those scars, physical and emotional, with him. Yet despite these troubles, Kelly Alexander has matured and grown into a cheerful, upbeat, motivated student, and perhaps most importantly, one of character.



Photo by Abby Simpson