

Sloan succeeds with Lilly Endowment Award

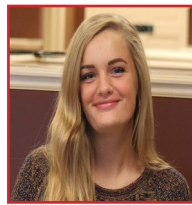
By Adam Crozier

During a one-hundred question final for AP Language Arts, guidance counselor **Andy Cottingham** escorted senior Jayla Sloan out of the classroom. Playing coy, Cottingham dodged questions as the pair took a detour into Boedicker's office.

Lo and behold guidance counselor **Brad Miller**, principal **Kurt Boeicker** and his secretary **Jennifer York** were already in the principal's office.

"I laughed out loud," Sloan said. "I thought I had walked in on a meeting."

But then she recognized Lilly rep-



Jayla Sloan
(Photo by Adam Crozier)

representative Beatrice Beverly and burst into tears. Sloan paraphrased Beverly's announcement: "On behalf of the Lilly Endowment Community, there was no way we could pass you up. You are

great on paper and in person. As soon as you left they said write her name, write her name down—your story's inspiring."

That story began in the winter of 2008 when her father Shaun A. Sloan passed away after he lost control of his car on icy roads. The 18-year-old was in second grade. Sloan is a middle child in tandem with younger sister junior **Jordyn Sloan** and older brother Perry alum Shaun Sloan II. Last semester, the Sloan sisters moved in with big bro, living together in an apartment complex.

Despite personal tragedy, Sloan secured herself a Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship. According to the Central Indiana Community Foundation, this means Sloan may attend any Indiana college or university for free, for up to 4 years. She chose IU Bloomington. She is also one of 13 students in Hamilton and Marion County to win it this year.

"Not only is IU a great school, it's far enough away from home, but I can still come visit. I don't want to be so far away I couldn't just visit if I want to,"

Sloan said. "Plus, if I choose to pursue business I would like to attend the Kelley School. I would go into business finance."

The studious financier began taking accelerated courses through middle and high school. This prepared her for what lies ahead in terms of rigor and workload, but also reminds her how small school drama can seem juxtaposed to the passing of her dad.

"I definitely would consider myself a loner," Sloan said. "I don't have very many friends. It's just high school. Most of the people I see talk about their 'friends' behind their backs. I try to distance myself from that." She wants to succeed where others have failed her.

"My father, the downward spiral of my mother," she began. "Seeing things crumble because of money drove me to succeed in school and hopefully in college." Looking to the future she added, "I want to give back to my kids. To do more for my family than what was done for me."

Sloan's younger sister shares in the gratefulness and recognizes how much this means to her kin. She said,

"It definitely has taken the stress off. Since, financially, college is something we have to worry about it's a big burden off of our shoulders. Now everything seems validated. Her attitude has changed because she knows her hard work paid off."

"Jayla's my best friend. We're so close in age we share a room. I would say she's my rock more than anybody," Sloan said. "Not only is she a parent figure, she's also my friend. It's a good balance between authoritative and supportive relationship."

English teacher **Jessica Hunter** pushed Sloan to persevere and apply for the scholarship, wrote the letter of recommendation and was the first person Sloan told when she found out about the scholarship. "In my entire educational career there is not a student who I've seen had to rise up from the pitfall of ashes like Jayla Sloan," she said.

"She did so with intention, passion, and determination. She's a bad a**. Can I say that? She's a tough cookie."

Hunter has taught the Sloan

trifecta in class. She said, "They're all different in every possible way, but all sound exactly like each other." Hunter loved having Sloan, even when she "disappeared for weeks on end."

"She's exaggerating," clarified Sloan. "I missed a lot of school and I didn't really care to come in. I had a lot going on with my mom. I just lost motivation." But now, Sloan sees her future with a bit more optimism. She said dealing with her problems, moving in with her brother, motivated her to finish school and move out of Indianapolis once college is in session.

"At the beginning of the year I was very stressed about getting into IU. That kind of kicked me into gear. It's almost unbelievable. I feel like everything I've done in school is finally paying off. It's a blessing though, it really is."

Band director pushes back Band-O-Rama

By Fabian Contreras

A new year means new resolutions for the annual PMHS Band-O-Rama, which gathers Perry Township middle school and high school musicians together in performance. The tradition introduced in January 2014, where 400 students involved performed.

According to band director **Karl Vierling** Band-O-Rama been rescheduled to late in the Spring. It is "very hard after winter break" to reunite talent in a short amount of time. As a result, the quality of music "would be impacted" because rehearsal time would be too rushed.

Another difficulty is how hard it will be to reunite the 6th Grade Academy,

the two middle school bands, and the high school bands all in the Perry Meridian High School's main gymnasium in just a few weeks, according to Mr. **Alan Slightom** band director at the Middle School.

The rescheduling of Band-O-Rama to late April was to allow for a time when most of both the MS and the HS performances were over and would have a more open schedule. We hope to have a date determined in the near future.

Mr. Slightom described this rescheduling by saying the quality of the performance will be higher since the bands involved have had a longer time period to prepare for the concert.

The new band director's thoughts are to extend Band-O-Rama later in the year because students will have less to do and they can practice more, as well as put more quality on their performance. Vierling sees Band-O-Rama happening in late spring, in order for students to practice and improve their talent. Senior **Luke Greenwood** says by moving Band-O-Rama to late Spring it "give the students more time to practice." Also, he expects positivism and great things with Mr. Vierling as new band director.

Vierling estimated 460 students will make music together this spring. He described it as a big show for the school, and it will free.



The trumpet section of the fourth period band rehearses their music selections for this school year (Photo by Fabian Contreras).

Student of the Month: What's your most memorable moment or part of Perry so far?

Freshman Austin Ward



"I really just like my teachers. They are my inspiration to keep going in school."

Sophomore Khristina Dorkas



"I don't really go to events, but I like algebra. I have Rose, and I am pretty good at math."

Junior Daisy Robles



"This year's PB&J for sure. I have never really sang in front of a crowd before, and I got to do it with my best friend in front of all my friends."

Senior Cole Knoblett



"Probably this past Homecoming, with all the festivities. I went to all of them, and it was amazing to watch everyone come together for things like Tug O' War."