



Never Lose Faith

Name: Alyssa Oswald

Grade: Freshman

Time Spent in Recovery: 6 Months

Lesson: No matter how hard things get, it's important to never lose faith.

STORY BY PEYTON REEVES, MALLORY CHRISTENSEN & ZOE BLANDON
PHOTO COURTESY OF ALYSSA OSWALD

On April 7, 2008, 9-year-old Alyssa Oswald, now a freshman at Mountain Vista, wakes up to find a lump on her chest the size of a golf ball. Curious, but not too worried, her family schedules an appointment to have it looked at after school. That afternoon she is diagnosed with Stage-2 Hodgkin's Lymphoma in her chest and clavicle regions.

This was just the beginning of a six month period spent in the hospital, in which she received six rounds of chemotherapy. "I was scared and crying. I thought I was going to die," Oswald said. She looks back knowing that the experience taught her a lot.

Oswald had a long, painful experience in the hospital.

"I had pain in all of my joints and bones, I lost my hair, and I was nauseous and tired. I couldn't play sports and school was difficult since I missed so much. I was always scared of what might happen but I tried to stay positive," Oswald said.

Despite her situation, she always remained positive and hopeful.

"I had a lot of support from family and friends," Oswald said. Recounting her experience, she realized it brought her family much closer together. They supported her throughout her entire time within the hospital, and always told her to never give up.

Oswald overcame a six month period of chemotherapy and accomplished so much in her life. Entering Mountain Vista as a freshman, Alyssa looks forward to the school year. Oswald is taking honors classes and is on JV volleyball. "It's amazing to know that I have come so far and to

know that I can still do the same things anybody else can," Working hard and never giving up are evident in Oswald's work ethic.

"It's completely out of your control and you're overcoming it. If that doesn't show you that you can overcome anything then I don't know what will," Oswald said. She is very humble about her whole experience and doesn't let it affect her day to day life. "I like the fact that people don't look at me any differently knowing that I had cancer but can still look up to me and know that in any situation things can get better," Oswald said.

Going through this has taught Oswald many lessons that she continues to carry with her daily. "I have set standards for myself and have made the decision to watch what I do," Oswald encourages students to avoid things like drinking and driving. "Having something serious that could take your life really makes you think about all of the other stupid things that could put your life in danger. Stay away from those things," Oswald said.

This entire experience has really put Oswald's life into perspective. Going through something this severe has affected her and changed the way she views her life day to day.

Oswald has learned and gained knowledge from this journey. Her lessons have left an imprint on her and her family.

Three words. "Never lose faith," Oswald said. Oswald always had hope and faith, which helped her overcome hard times. Oswald is extremely optimistic about her current situation. She has been in remission for five years now. Through her eyes, this whole experience has made her a stronger person and taught her lessons she will keep with her forever.