ACADEMIC ACTIVISM
KATELYN WALTEMYER AND MEGHAN AHERN

New classes offered at JMU expand on Black Lives Matter movement and political protests

INTERNAL BRUISES
JAZMINE OTEY

Columnist addresses issue of emotional abuse

HEADED FOR UNDEFEATED
BLAKE PACE

JMU football has sights set on outright CAA title

CORRECTION: Last week, the front page stated that Tony Wilt won 72.8 percent of the total electorate and Brent Finnegan won 27.1 percent in the Virginia House of Delegates 26th district election. Those numbers reflected the Rockingham County vote. Wilt garnered 54.52 percent of the total vote and Finnegan won 45.33 percent. We deeply apologize for the mistake.
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Billy Jack’s raises money for employee’s lifesaving surgery

España emigrated from Guatemala 11 years ago and has been working for Billy Jack’s for about five months. He’s been receiving treatment for branchiootorenal syndrome for five years, but the condition has progressed.

Maicol’s New Kidney Fund

Good people drink good beer.

T-shirts for a transplant
By PEYTON JOHNSON
contributing writer

Great dad, hard worker and hopeful are just a few of the words friends and co-workers use to describe Maicol España. España, a cook at Billy Jack’s Wing & Draft Shack in downtown Harrisonburg, has a rare genetic disorder that’s caused both of his kidneys to fail and left him in need of a double-kidney transplant. With a living donor waiting to help him, all that stands in España’s way is the cost of the surgery and treatment.

España has branchiootorenal syndrome, a condition involving the kidneys, ears and neck. His two sons also have the genetic disorder, which has impacted the family’s life in many ways.

“I moved to the U.S. for my dreams of a better life,” España said. “I’m just trying to live and work to help my family, but I never imagined living this way or that my kids would have to live this way, too.”

España, who moved to Harrisonburg from Guatemala 11 years ago, has been receiving treatments for BOR for five years. Although the treatment has helped some, his disorder has progressed to the last and most severe stage, leaving him with no option but surgery.

“I’m on dialysis and I have to use a cycler machine [for dialysis treatment] every night for about 10 hours,” España said when explaining his current treatment. “I just now need the money to pay for my surgery and treatment.”

España’s surgery may cost up to $300,000. To help him cover these costs, Billy Jack’s is selling T-shirts throughout November to raise money for him. Although España has only worked at Billy Jack’s for about five months, he’s become an integral part of the Jacktown family.

“We’ve always been very much community oriented, and very much family oriented,” Joe Fowler, the general manager of Billy Jack’s, said. “Our boss, Aaron, always wants to make sure that every employee is happy, all the way from the hosts to the managers. He wants to make sure everyone is taken care of.”

While Billy Jack’s knew España had a genetic disorder when he began working there, it didn’t take long for Luis Alpolinar, the restaurant’s kitchen manager, to notice the true impact of the disorder on España, as his symptoms worsened over time.

“We knew he was sick, but we didn’t care because we just care about hiring the best people,” Alpolinar said. “When he got sicker, we started asking him what he was doing for treatment or how we could help out.”

To add to ongoing community efforts of raising money for España’s treatments and double-kidney transplant, Billy Jack’s came up with the idea to sell $20 T-shirts to customers that read “Good people drink good beer.”

“We’ve only been selling them for a few days, and we’ve already sold out of all 50 of them,” Fowler said. “We just ordered more because we sold out of them in four days. We’ve collected over $500 in [extra] donations already, so all of that will go straight to him and his medical expenses. Plus, wearing the shirt shows you support something important, but it’s also just a fun shirt in general.”

Other efforts to help fundraise for España include the development of a website that allows anyone to donate money, food donations and donation boxes placed around Billy Jack’s and its sister company Jack Brown’s — all of which help get España closer to paying for the surgery.

While España has worked in many places since he moved to the U.S., he feels particularly fortunate to now work at Billy Jack’s.

“It’s the people,” España said. “It’s the restaurant, it’s everything. This place is really a special one for me.”

España has coped with his disorder through the support of Billy Jack’s and the entire Harrisonburg community.

“It’s reminded me that there are still good people in this world,” España said in Spanish. “I’ve been getting this treatment for five years, and this is the first time I’ve seen the light for the good to come.”

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New classes provoke thought on politics
Course looks at societal involvement in democracy

By KATELYN WALTENMYER
contributing writer

In the spring of 2018, the Gandhi Center will sponsor a new course called “Political Protest and Civil Engagement” they hope will be relevant to the academic life of JMU students.

The course was created by associate professor Terry Beitzel and adjunct professor Brennan Gilmore to encourage involvement in political movements and increase civil activism among college students. The course will focus on past and current political protests from both ends of the political spectrum on a national and global level. Students in the course will learn how to make positive change in a democracy.

“Professor Beitzel discussed the idea and I absolutely loved it, so then we began to build the class together and Radford became very interested, so we will be teaching it as a joint class together,” said Gilmore, a 2001 graduate of the University of Virginia who served 15 years in the U.S. Foreign Service at postings in several African countries.

At the beginning of the course, students will be given the task of focusing on a specific political issue of their choice and will spend the entirety of the semester researching that topic.

Some of the specific protests that’ll be covered in the course include the civil rights movement, the labor movement, Black Lives Matter and gay rights. The course was launched by 4-VA, a program created under former Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell in 2011 to allow universities in Virginia to collaborate and perform projects on topics they couldn’t cover alone.

“It is a time of a lot of political issues and anxiety and so getting students to understand that this is not the first time this has happened and to go back and look at some of the issues historically,” Nick Swayne, executive director of 4-VA, said. “Put that in context with where we are now and help understand the issues and being able to do that across institutions is important because of the different demographics attending all of these Virginia institutions.”

While 4-VA member schools promote the idea of collaboration, sometimes there’s either a lack of interest or availability to assemble a course. The individual seeking to collaborate on a course must seek help from non-VA members, such as Radford University.

The class will be co-taught by four collaborators, two professors teaching at JMU and two professors teaching at Radford. In order to conduct a course between two universities, they must use a teleconference to run the class. Both of the universities’ professors will alternate between leading class discussion so that all of their expertise may add to the topic of discussion.

Beitzel acknowledges that voting is typically the sole way college students express political beliefs and he wishes to change that perspective. Through the course, students will be more active in their civic involvement and confident in their political views.

“I think a lot of students feel frustrated,” Beitzel said. “They don’t have a voice or a way to act. I think that is because other than voting, it takes a lot of work.”

Beitzel makes it evident that teaching a traditional lecture course would involve much less hassle, but the importance far outweighs the obstacles.

“It is the most important thing to do right now,” Beitzel said. “To figure out how to be positively engaged in society and trying to make better change.”

CONTACT Katelyn Waltenermyer at waltenermyer@dukes.jmu.edu. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.

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A new course called Black Lives Matter is now available for enrollment as a part of the spring semester 2018 curriculum. This class is being offered as a part of the women and gender studies curriculum, and serves as an elective credit for both women and gender studies as well as Africana studies.

Beth Hinderliter, visiting associate professor in cross disciplinary studies, said that students will be challenged to “think about how, say, the BLM movement has adopted different kinds of strategies, different kinds of thoughts and responses to racialized violence in the United States than the civil rights movement.”

Hinderliter also plans on delving into topics such as the prison-industrial complex and mass incarceration and how these impact communities of color, the working class and low-income populations.

A sociological analysis of how Black Lives Matter protests have come about in different cities will also be a part of the curriculum. Additionally, there’ll be a focus on how the Black Lives Matter movement, founded by LGBTQ women of color, is different than the black nationalist movement seen in the 1970s, which tended to have homophobic underlying messages attached to them at times.

The class is collaborating with two or three other courses on campus to interconnect students on the topics of activism, racism and politics. Hinderliter believes that by collaborating with other classes, the material discussed in these courses will show there’s a wider community at JMU interested in the topic of Black Lives Matter.

One of these classes includes a course taught by Matthew Ezzell, an associate professor of sociology, who’s teaching American contemporary culture with a focus on the construction of whiteness and Black Lives Matter.

“These are issues that affect all of us,” Ezzell said. “These are issues that affect the entire nation, and it is important to have a space to critically examine them.”

Hinderliter echoed Ezzell’s emphasis on the importance of having a place for students to learn about and respond to issues such as Black Lives Matter.

In the past, Hinderliter has assigned students projects where they recite and record spoken-word performances. A.J. Morey, associate provost for the Office of Cross Disciplinary Studies and Diversity Engagement, helped Hinderliter establish the course at JMU.

She discussed why she found it important to have a contemporary class offered next semester.

“We’re living in a time of great civil unrest and issues of racial injustice have not been resolved,” Morey said. “Sometimes, a course like this can help bring understanding to both sides, so it’s better to talk about it than to just refuse to talk about it at all.”

Hinderliter additionally touched on the topic of civil and political unrest by stating she finds the class to be especially important in light of the 2016 presidential election and white supremacy rallies this summer in Charlottesville.

She’s already received pushback from students about the class, including emails sent from some students asking why there’s not a white lives matter course being offered as well. Despite the resistance, Morey said students will still benefit from this course and learn about allyship.

“It’s not as easy as it sounds, and may also have their awareness deepened of the ways in which class and race and gender cause division in our culture,” Morey said. “Education is more than a paycheck—it’s about becoming a more decent human being. It doesn’t mean that they aren’t decent now, it just means there are always ways we can learn and grow.”

Hinderliter said that while there are many classes on campus that could focus on the historical background leading up to the Black Lives Matter movement, this is something that’ll immerse students in the contemporary aspects of it.

“I would encourage people who are interested in engaging with activism on the ground as well as thinking about how we can spend lots of time being reflective in pursuing strategies to combat racism, to come up with justice reform in the United States,” Hinderliter said. “People who want to learn more about anti-racism activism, people who are interested in coalition politics for social justice movements.”

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**New course dedicated to social justice movement**

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

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Professors need to withhold from sharing their political opinions in the classroom in order to allow all students to feel comfortable with their political party. Conservative students are outnumbered and overwhelmed.

Kevin Romm  freedom of thought

Whether you’re scrolling through headlines on the internet or following breaking news on TV, more often than not, the underlying theme revolves around political divide. And if you want a closer look at the live action, chances are you can find it on Twitter courtesy of the trolls stirring up controversy.

One place where you don’t expect to find political expression, however, seems to be an increasingly popular location for it — the classroom.

Obviously, your math professor is less likely to bring up their thoughts on politics than your social sciences or humanities professors. However, if a word problem asks for the surface area of President Donald Trump’s proposed border wall, don’t be surprised if your professor goes on a 15-minute rant that roasts the current administration.

And don’t be shocked either when they start grading increasingly harsher after you decide to express your own opposing views.

Some students may not realize their professor is biased or pushing certain beliefs, which could mean one of two things — either there’s really no bias or you may align politically with Democrats.

A study by the Higher Education Research Institute found that 60 percent of professors identify as “liberal” or “far-left,” while just over 10 percent are “conservative” or “far-right.”

Econ Journal Watch evaluated voter registration data for faculty at 40 top universities, revealing that majors such as history, journalism and psychology have the biggest ratio of Democrat to Republican professors: 33.5-to-1, 20-to-1 and 17.4-to-1, respectively.

The drastic difference in the numbers doesn’t mean professors who are left-leaning or even the few who are conservative are shoving their beliefs down your throat.

While at MU, I can only think of a handful of professors who’ve been obvious about their party affiliation. Many students may go their entire time at any college or university without experiencing bias.

But especially in today’s hostile political climate, when bias does arise in the classroom, the consequences can be severe to those with a minority view. Some students have even expressed concern that professors graded unfairly because that student held opposite beliefs.

Although that may not happen often, the pure thought that expressing your personal views could negatively affect how you’re graded is terrifying, regardless of your affiliation. But a more likely scenario could prove just as terrifying, as your professor may not be the only one with an opposing view.

The CATO Institute recently published a study finding that “Fifty-percent (50%) believe that most students at their college or university are liberal” and just 20 percent believe that their campus expresses balanced political views.

The classroom, especially in college, should be a place where people from different backgrounds with different ideas come together to share them without harm. The problem stems from when a majority of those in the class, including the professor, have an opposite view from you.

As a conservative, I enjoy talking about what I believe in while also learning how others think. But if the conversation turns to a heated debate, I know I wouldn’t feel comfortable expressing how I feel in front of a class that may judge my beliefs or even resent me for them.

According to the CATO Institute, 74 percent who identify as “very liberal” don’t feel the need to censor their thoughts while in a class setting. Just 17 percent of strong conservative students feel they don’t have to censor their ideas, meaning 83 percent of these students feel they can’t express their views on college campuses because of potential backlash.

I’m not surprised most students and professors are primarily liberal, but these percentages are far more drastic than I thought. The numbers vanished my perception and proved that political bias is affecting students’ abilities to express their beliefs.

Even more troubling, this opens the door for students to conform to political ideas just for the sake of fitting in. Imagine being so afraid to express how you feel about a certain topic that instead of sharing, you just change your beliefs.

If there were more professors with moderate or right-leaning views, or even liberal professors willing to set their political affiliation aside for the sake of discussion, it may give students more confidence to voice their own opinions.

An open dialogue would give students with different views a better chance to understand and respect one another. Today, people of both parties are quick to judge harshly and quiet anyone who disagrees with their point of view.

These tendencies in higher education aren’t anything new, as studies following professors’ political beliefs trace back to 1990.

Bias was prevalent back then, but the gap wasn’t nearly as wide. Just 42 percent of professors identified as liberal in 1990 — 20 percent lower than today — and about 19 percent identified as conservative — nearly twice as many today.

From what I’ve seen, it’s a fact that nothing has been done to curb the gap, and at the current rate, what’s being buried is students’ abilities to voice their political opinions.

The political bias on college and university campuses could even be the cause of the growing divide within our country. Unless it’s dramatically reduced or eliminated, we could see further escalation of people literally fighting for their views without any thought of acknowledging someone else’s.

Being liberal or conservative shouldn’t matter when trying to combat bias because the right for anyone to express their beliefs doesn’t align with either political party. That freedom is one of the few that extends past Democrat and Republican party lines, and is given to every American.

If this divide is going to end, we need to be open to listening to more people who have different views and try to understand where they’re coming from — and it starts in the classroom.

Kevin Romm is a senior media arts and design major. Contact Kevin at rommke@dukes.jmu.edu.
It’s easy to find yourself jealous of the love your best friend and her boyfriend share. With the passionate way he stares at her, spoils her like a queen and never wants to be apart from her, you slowly start to become envious of their relationship.

But then you notice the dark reality behind their superficial romantic acts. You realize his passionate gaze signifies his possessiveness, the way he spoils her is an act of manipulation and their inseparable nature is simply his obsession. You then come to the horrifying realization that your friend has become a victim of emotional abuse.

There are many factors that make it obvious someone is being physically abused, but it’s a lot more difficult to spot the mental scars of emotional abuse. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 48.4 percent of women and 48.8 percent of men have been victims of at least one occurrence of psychological aggressiveness within a relationship. NCADV also claims that psychological abuse causes long-term damage to one’s mental health.

In an article from The Washington Post article, Leigh Stein, author of the memoir “Land of Enchantment,” recalls her troubling experience with emotional abuse and expresses how difficult it was for her to recognize the signs.

Stein’s boyfriend Jason had already made plans for the two of them to move across the country to Albuquerque, New Mexico, within a few months of dating. He had a plan thought out where Stein would work on her novel and he'd get a job so that they’d have a steady income.

At first, Stein viewed it as a symbol of Jason’s love. Nevertheless, it wasn’t long before signs of emotional abuse came bobbing to the surface. Even then, she shoved them back down, refusing to acknowledge either them or the nagging voice in the back of her head.

She ignored it when her boyfriend forced her to shower twice each day because he hated how she smelled of oily French fries after work. She ignored it when he was unwilling to even touch her unless her entire body was completely hairless. She even ignored it when he told her that because she wasn’t sexy in his eyes, it was time for her to consider an open relationship where he’d be free to have sex with other women.

“At 22, I misread the signs of abuse in my relationship with Jason as evidence that this was my one true love,” Stein said. "I felt like I was in a movie — how quickly we moved in together and isolated ourselves from friends and family, because all we needed was each other — but really I was in a playbook of common abuser tactics that are easily mistaken by victims for romance, and often misunderstood by others, who equate abuse with hitting.”

Stein’s story is one that many find themselves familiar with. However, analogous to Stein’s denial, it’s often hard for an individual to come to terms with the fact that they’ve become a victim of emotional abuse.

It’s almost as if they’ve been brainwashed because in such cases, dark bruises and battered skin from physical abuse can no longer be utilized as evidence. Instead, victims are forced to rely on mental scars that appear invisible to those around them.

According to a trusted guide to mental and emotional health, regardless of whether emotional abuse is harder to detect, it isn’t any less damaging than physical abuse. Many researchers even claim that in some cases, the effects of emotional abuse can be worse.
INTERNAL BRUISES

How to recognize emotional abuse and heal

In a research paper titled “Unseen Wounds: The Contribution of Psychological Maltreatment to Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Risk Outcomes,” the researchers made a similar assertion.

Led by Joseph Spinazzola of the Trauma Center at the Justice Resource Institute, analysts discovered children who suffered from emotional abuse and neglect experienced similar negative mental health effects and were often worse than physically or sexually abused children.

The online guide to mental and emotional health states that emotional acts can be yelling, name-calling, blaming and shaming. It also includes other behaviors such as isolation, intimidation and manipulation.

In Stein’s narrative, her boyfriend uses many, if not all, of the psychological acts previously described. From isolating her in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to his various rude remarks, the signs are evident to outsiders.

Furthermore, according Robert Eckstein, a psychology and justice studies lecturer at the University of New Hampshire, to his various rude remarks, the signs are evident to outsiders.

The manipulation previously mentioned is ubiquitous within relationships around the U.S., but many can’t distinguish the signs.

This lack of knowledge can lead to one staying in their relationship, forever confined in a box where they feel as if there’s no point in trying to escape the harmful psychological effects of mental abuse.

It’s easy for one to find themself buried beneath the manipulative lies their significant other whispers to them, and unfortunately, it’s even easier to feel hopeless with the nagging feeling that there’s no one who can help.

Domestic physical violence is troubling, but at the very least, the physical scars will eventually heal. Emotional abuse, on the other hand, has scars that can stay with someone for a lifetime without them even knowing what caused it.

It’s critical that more people educate themselves about emotional abuse because while it may be harder to spot than physical abuse, it isn’t any less scarring.

If one is in a relationship where their significant other continuously humiliates them, blatantly ignores their opinions, tries to have financial control, uses neglect as a means of control or continuously talks down to them, there’s a high chance they’re in an emotionally abusive relationship.

When sucked into such a controlling relationship, it’s hard for one to pull themself out of it. Their minds have been warped to the point that they feel as if they won’t find happiness without their significant other.

Regardless of how hard it may be, it’s extremely important one finds the strength to break free from such a toxic relationship so that they can find true happiness. It’s okay to be alone sometimes, as scary as it might feel.

In the world we live in, it’s crucial that one never gives someone the reigns to devalue them, because in the end, everyone is their own support system.

If you or anyone you know is suffering from domestic violence or emotional abuse, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.

Jazmine Otey is a sophomore writing, rhetoric and technical communication major. Contact Jazmine at oteyjl@dukes.jmu.edu.

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By AALIYAH MCLEAN
The Breeze

On Jan. 27, Morgan McCall was out with friends at her sorority’s date function thinking it was going to be a great night, until she received an unexpected phone call from her mother that changed her life. She found out that her 43-year-old father committed suicide.

“That night my mom asked me to call her, which made me feel uneasy,” McCall said. “She never does that so I knew something was wrong, as soon as I got on the phone with her, I could hear in her voice that she had been crying. I knew it was going to be bad.”

McCall never expected to receive this call.

“As soon as I heard it, I dropped to the ground, it felt like my whole world was crashing,” McCall said. “All of my friends just came in and surrounded me as tears just flew to the ground.”

McCall is a junior criminal justice major from Toms River, New Jersey. She’s the middle child of the family, with one older sibling in college and a younger sibling still at home. She wanted to find a new place to call her second home, so she came to JMU.

“I wanted to get out of my comfort zone and leave New Jersey,” McCall said. “I love the mountains and it’s something different.”

McCall was blindsided by the news. She thought her dad had been doing well through his constant phone calls and texts.

“Nothing in the world can prepare you for that type of loss,” McCall said. “You never expect your mom to call you to tell you that your father had decided to take his own life.”

McCall didn’t have the best relationship with her father after her parents split ways and he moved to Texas. She wasn’t able to be as close as she wanted to be with him.

“I hadn’t seen him since sixth grade because he moved away, but we started building our relationship so much last year,” McCall said. “Even though she went without a relationship with her father for awhile, she finally gained it back like she always wanted.

“For once, she finally felt secure with their relationship,” Michaela Wuest, one of McCall’s best friends, a junior interdisciplinary liberal studies major, said. “We all thought she was really growing an amazing relationship with her dad.”

McCall joined the sorority Alpha Sigma Alpha when she was a freshman, and created a bond with other members, allowing her to find her place at JMU.

“At the time, I lived in my sorority house and everyone went out their way to support me,” McCall said. “I’m so grateful for the Greek life community because of all of the things they did for me.”

McCall was surrounded by a big support system and was showered with lots of love, even from members she didn’t know.
After losing her father, McCall took initiative and actively helps students understand mental health.

"The next morning, my sorority sisters drove five hours to take me home to New Jersey so my mother wouldn’t have to come get me," McCall said. "They sacrificed all of their time that they could’ve been doing homework or whatever else."

McCall didn’t want to just mourn the tragedy — she wanted to find a way to use it as a platform to raise awareness on different campuses.

"I want to help people with mental health issues, especially college students," McCall said.

On Sept. 26, McCall’s father’s birthday, she decided to open up and share his story on social media. Not expecting anything out of it, she made a GoFundMe page to raise money for a charity that focuses on mental health.

"I raised $150 by sharing his story," McCall said. "I didn’t expect anything, but anything little helped and meant so much to me."

McCall’s closest friends who were there for her at the time said she’s become more passionate and tries to teach everyone the value of life.

"She struggled a lot and now she’s growing as a person," Ryan Gary, one of her sorority sisters and a junior communication studies major, said. "She helps everyone get through their issues even though she has her own."

McCall didn’t want to just be the person everyone had to check on — she wanted to still be a support system for others.

"She’s an extremely strong person and helps people be the same," Wuest said.

Despite her loss, McCall decided to take the negative experience and turn it into a positive one by helping others realize the importance of recognizing the symptoms of someone who’s struggling with depression and mental health.

"I’m thankful for the experience and to be healthy to help other people while I’m able to," McCall said.

McCall believes students should feel lucky to be alive every day, and she wants to help those who are struggling to realize and understand that.

"It taught me not to take life for granted and to value every single day," McCall said. "Every day I try to live life for my dad and the stuff that he doesn’t get to have."

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Kaylin Miller

Faces difficult childhood which inspires degree in social work

By ALYVIA KLUSKA
contributing writer

The homemade turkey, kitchen-table centerpiece and Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade are all things that have been molded by society into the annual holiday called Thanksgiving. People are all too familiar with the classic experiences of trying to choose which family member will be the host of this year’s feast or scrambling around the kitchen to finish that decadent pumpkin pie. Unfortunately, it’s very common for individuals to get caught up in all the holiday chaos, ultimately failing to remember what really matters.

“Thanksgiving is a chance to bring everyone together, just for one day, forgetting about all of the trivial matters of life and focusing on being surrounded by those who truly love and support you,” Kaylin Miller, a junior social work major, said.

This year, along with many previous holidays, Kaylin plans on turning the tables of Thanksgiving and wrapping herself up in what it truly means to be thankful.

When she was born, her parents were unequipped to care for a child at the time, so Kaylin was raised by her grandparents and was completely sheltered from the idea of a life connected to family members outside her grandparents.

“My parents had me when they were in their early twenties and didn’t want a baby at the time,” Kaylin said. “So, after six months, they gave custody of me to my grandparents.”

After handing their six-month-old baby over to her grandparents, Kaylin’s biological parents quickly moved on to develop their own families. Their actions led Kaylin to a life of complete separation from her siblings, leaving her with her grandparents as her only form of support.

“I felt like an outsider looking in,” Kaylin said. Kaylin was deeply affected by her parents’ actions. Her experience as a child of dealing with such a divided family made all of this a tough pill for Kaylin to swallow.

From that day forward, Kaylin’s childhood relationship with her biological parents remained unstable and quickly evolved into a tangled web of detached siblings and stepparents. Growing up, Kaylin’s parents faced countless financial hardships and succumbed to multiple drug-related issues. This left Kaylin’s grandparents with endless unwanted financial burdens, and also presented Kaylin with several younger siblings who she rarely got to see. Despite a lack of familial support growing up, she now has a close group of friends to depend on.

“Kaylin and I have been friends since kindergarten and now we are roommates,” Kayla Miller, a senior health sciences major, said. “Even though I have known her for 15 years, I still find it hard to keep up with her family. They’re torn apart in so many ways. Throughout the years, I have noticed that it does affect her, but she brushes it off well and keeps going.”

Over the course of Kaylin’s life, she’s been presented with a variety of challenges that, in the end, pushed her to build a name for herself through her own ambition and self-determination. In doing this, Kaylin has developed the belief that it’s crucial to learn from one’s own experiences and apply all that newly acquired knowledge to everyday situations.

I have noticed that it does affect her, but she brushes it off well and keeps going.

Rather than dwelling on her past, Kaylin uses her experience to help other people in similar situations.

ALYSSA ANTONIO / THE BREEZE

Kaylin Miller

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Although Kaylin had a childhood with little support from her parents and siblings, she made it a point to remain positive and make the best of every situation. She worked hard to push herself through high school in hopes of achieving one of her many goals of becoming the first in her family to attend college. After years of commitment, Kaylin succeeded and was accepted to JMU.

“I am extremely proud and thrilled knowing that I am making something of myself so that I will not have to struggle emotionally and financially like some of my relatives did,” Kaylin said.

As Kaylin matured, she slowly began to uncover her own individual niche within her community and education.

“I plan on pursuing a career that allows me to be the absolute best person I can be, hopefully making a noticeably positive impact on someone else’s life,” Kaylin said.

Currently, Kaylin is thriving at JMU. Her altruistic character and enthusiastic attitude are contagious and she continuously affects those around her on positive levels. Kaylin plans on giving back to the community by presenting others with the endless opportunities she missed out on while growing up. She specifically wants to focus on children who are much like herself, experiencing broken homes and unstable families.

With such a specific goal on Kaylin’s horizon, she continues to strive toward building a life-changing career.

“I have known Kaylin since elementary school,” Brooke Simpson, a junior kinesiology major and Kaylin’s freshman-year roommate, said. “She is one of the most selfless and caring people I know. She sees the very best in people and always befriends everyone she meets.”

With Thanksgiving right around the corner, people can try to take a minute to recognize the lesson that can be learned from Kaylin’s story. Although she lacked a typical childhood of love and support, Kaylin refuses to view her story in a negative light.

“My experiences have not only made me who I am today, but they also allowed me to be more appreciative of the people in my life,” Kaylin said.

Stories about tackling adversity and overcoming lengthy hardships like Kaylin’s and so many others’ remind people that Thanksgiving isn’t always about who’s cooking this year’s pumpkin pie or where one has to go for the football game.

“It means a lot to me, now that I am older, knowing that I will have that one day of reconnecting with my family,” Kaylin said. “I am so thankful and comforted to know that there are people in my life that really do support and appreciate me.”

CONTACT Alyvia Kluska at kluskaam@dukes.jmu.edu. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter @Breeze_Culture.
Eyes on perfection

A JMU win this Saturday at Elon won’t just earn the Dukes the outrightCAA title, but will complete their quest of attaining a perfect 11-0 record. Just as Houston has preached all season long, all the Dukes are focused on is winning the next game.

“We talked about today in our team meeting that the focus needs to be on what we need to do to beat Elon,” Houston said. “All of the perfect season, theCAA championship, all that stuff, they’re just intangibles. Those things happen if we go out and do what we need to do.”

JMU is one of two teams in the entire FCS with the chance to finish with a perfect record, with the other being North Carolina A&T from the Mid-Eastern Atlantic Conference.

“The whole formula comes down to this is the biggest game of the year,” Houston said. “Because it’s the only game we play this week. That’s the same thing they’ve heard every week from us.”

If the Dukes can do the job against Elon, they’ll finish the 2017 regular season unblemished for the first time in school history.

4. Carry the momentum into the postseason

A win this Saturday won’t only allow JMU to claim theCAA outright, but it’ll propel the team right back into the playoffs and its goal to repeat as the national champion.

Hitting an eight-game win streak in the 2016 regular season, JMU’s early wins led it on a tear through the postseason — where the team averaged 43.75 points in its four contests. Just as they did last season, the Dukes will look to translate their regular-season momentum into a deep playoff run.

While a win this Saturday will mean a lot for the regular season recognition of this JMU unit, it’ll mean even more for the team moving forward. Assuming they reclaim the No. 1 overall seed in the FCS College Football playoff rankings, the Dukes will hold home-field advantage throughout the postseason and earn a bye week in the first round of play.

“At the end of the day, there’s a lot on the line for us,” Houston said. “Those are all things that the kids understand and that are very important to us. Winning this game Saturday, momentum is one thing but there’s a lot on the line, too.”

For the Dukes to continue the winning culture they’ve created over the last 22 games, JMU will have to leave it all on the field this Saturday.
Redshirt sophomore Kelly Koshuta embarks on first season in purple and gold

By CATIE HARPER
The Breeze

A 136-mile drive on I-81 North is all that separates redshirt sophomore forward Kelly Koshuta from where her dream of playing college hoops began and where she’ll finish it.

Koshuta started her career at Virginia Tech, but in May 2016, she announced her decision to leave the program. A month later, she confirmed she’d be sporting purple and gold come November. For Koshuta, who sat out the 2016-17 season due to transfer ineligibility, Koshuta, who sat out the program. A month later, she announced her decision to leave Virginia Tech, but in May, she confirmed she’d be sporting purple and gold come November.

Sitting out last season didn’t stop Koshuta from developing bonds with her teammates. While she couldn’t play with them every night, she was still around them every day.

“They were very welcoming, bringing me in, teaching me the ways of JMU and how we work as a team on and off the court,” Koshuta said.

Head coach Sean O’Regan sees a lot of potential in Koshuta. After being a five-star recruit out of James Madison High School, the Virginia, native only saw playing time in seven games during her freshman campaign at Tech. However, O’Regan expects her to carry a larger role at JMU.

“My standards for her are really high,” O’Regan said. “She’s got a really high basketball IQ, so she does a lot of things for us.”

The decision to leave her life at Virginia Tech behind was no easy choice for Koshuta. It was the strong relationship she’s built with him, I trust him a lot,” Koshuta said. “I know he is going to make this program very successful.”

Koshuta is known for her ability to score in the post, which will help the Dukes as the season progresses. Last season, JMU lost its second all-time leading scorer, Precious Hall, to graduation, so the team desperately needs players like Koshuta to step up low.

“I think we have a post presence this year,” Koshuta said. “With some injuries last year we didn’t have that. Now we do and I think that really helps make the game inside and out. Having Koshuta in the post isn’t the only thing that’ll help the Dukes this season. When Koshuta starts scoring, teams will be forced to pay more attention to her and leave other players available to shoot.”

“It opens up the floor much more because it’ll come down to teams having to double down on them and then you’ve got guards who are open,” sophomore guard Kamiah Smalls said.

After playing just three games in purple and gold, Koshuta has already shown the danger she can bring to the Dukes’ offense. In only her second game as a Duke, she posted a career-high 20 points against Wagner College.

“Kelly brings exactly what you see on the stat sheet for us,” O’Regan said after the game. “She’s got a really high basketball IQ, so she does a lot of things for us, but primarily that off of her and leave other players available to shoot.”

“Kelly brings exactly what you see on the stat sheet for us,” O’Regan said after the game. “She’s got a really high basketball IQ, so she does a lot of things for us, but primarily that

As Koshuta looks ahead to her first season being able to play for the Dukes, she has big goals for where this year’s team will go. This year’s team has talent and depth, a combination that can see the Dukes to a successful season.

“I definitely have high hopes for us,” Koshuta said. “We’re constantly getting better. I plan for us to go as far as we can.”

CONTACT Catie Harper at mcrcats@dukes.jmu.edu. For more basketball coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter at @TheBreezeSports.
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by Linda Thistle

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