Iowa State Daily (April 27, 2018)

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Imagine living your life on Iowa State's campus with a mental disability. Will you be able to function in the morning after a panic attack kept you up for hours the night before? Will your professor understand you're too depressed to get out of bed for class? Will people believe you have a disability? How will this affect your mental health?

Laura Wiederholt, former president of the Alliance for Disability Awareness and senior in biology, doesn't have to imagine this life or how it would affect her mental health. She lives every day with what she describes as "word soup of stuff that people see as wrong with you."

Wiederholt added postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, or POTS, to her word soup when she was 18 years old. Generalized anxiety disorder and major depressive disorder were already in the bowl.

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

"Sometimes, it's not someone's disability that's holding them back, sometimes it's other people's reactions to it," she said, explaining some with physical disabilities may also experience mental health issues such as anxiety and depression due to these reactions. Whether this reaction is rooted in curiosity, such as the question of how Wiederholt and her boyfriend, who doesn't have a disability "work," to which she replies: "I have a disability and he doesn't and we date. That's how it works." Or the misconception that those with physical disabilities also have intellectual disabilities.

"You can certainly have both, but you don't have to have both and it's really weird when people treat you like you do," she said.

She recalled a time when she was sitting at an airport in her wheelchair, which she uses when POTS makes it too hard for her to walk, drinking a smoothie when an employee walked up to her and asked her if she knew her name and where she was going. She said four different people asked her if she was lost during that trip.

MENTAL DISABILITIES

Wiederholt tells those who open up to her about mental health issues you have. "You can certainly have both, but you don't have to have both and it's really weird when people treat you like you do," she said.

The diagnosis of generalized anxiety disorder to the level of disability was almost like a relief.

"I didn't know I had anxiety. I thought that I just really sucked at being alive," she said. "I didn't know if everyone had the feelings that I had, but they were just dealing with it better."

In reality, what she was experiencing wasn't happening to everyone, but it was affecting more people than she realized. When she was first diagnosed, she said she didn't realize how common anxiety was. Anxiety affects 40 million adults in the United States age 18 and older every year and is the most common mental illness in the U.S.

According to statistics provided by Student Accessibility Services, SAS, 33 percent of students who are receiving services from SAS are found eligible based on a psychiatric or mental health disability, such as depression or anxiety. As Wiederholt tells those who open up to her about their anxiety: you're in the least exclusive club. But this club is one Wiederholt would gladly quit if given the chance.

"If I had any of the stuff go away, I'd take the anxiety," she said. "But I'm not going to sit every day saying 'I want this to go away'. This is who I am, this is a part of me, just like I have brown hair and I'm kind of tall and I talk way too much."

One subject Wiederholt enjoys talking about is her disabilities. She said being open about all of her disabilities is important because it can be a comfort for people who may be going through the same things to see they're not alone. She also said a goal of her openness is to expose people to disabilities who may have never experienced it.

"Especially with the mental health stuff," she said. "I've come to realize that it's really important to talk about it because, hopefully, the more you talk about it, the more that people will calm down to talk about it and realize that people can be successful and do things regardless of the mental health issues you have."
In 2014, four Iowa State students set out to solve the problem of worldwide food insecurity with a food dehydrator that is now located in over 40 countries.

Troubled by the fact that a third of food produced goes to waste globally, Clayton Mooney, Mikayla Sullivan, Ella Gehrke and Elise Kendall began the process of developing a food dehydrator. They started the company KinoSol while still attending Iowa State. All global resource systems major, they had common backgrounds in international experiences and a desire to #wasteanumber.

They settled on the name KinoSol for its symbolic meaning. “Kino” stands for connect, while “Sol” translates to sun in many languages.

Their common backgrounds in international travels opened their eyes to the issue of food waste and cemented their motivation as a team to collaborate on solving the issue.

“We had all seen it to some degree with our own eyes,” said Mooney.

As a team of four, which has expanded to as large as 11 members, they have been able to work as a team to create their vision.

“This isn’t just a project, it’s really helping people solve food insecurity,” said Rebecca Lyons, junior in agricultural studies and KinoSol marketing coordinator.

Those experiences witnessing food waste influenced the idea of a food dehydrator.

According to their website, “dehydration is an easy and inexpensive way to avoid post-harvest loss and storage increases the availability of food during low and no harvest periods.”

The idea for KinoSol was to focus on aiding small-scale subsistence farmers.

“KinoSol is really teaching from an educational standpoint that there is enough food for everyone,” Lyons said.

Properly storing food is just as important as producing it.

“There was just like a large amount of food available, but only in some parts of the year,” said Kendall.

“The Orenda dehydrator, KinoSol’s current model, takes moisture out of fruit, vegetables and insects to keep them from going bad. With its connection system of using the sun to dry out produce, essential nutrients are kept intact while still preserving the produce for months.”

“Being naturally powered is a plus for KinoSol’s dehydrator. A statistic from their website states that only 24 percent of people living in Sub-Saharan Africa have access to electricity.”

Product Evolution

Located mainly in countries along the equator, such as Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Rwanda, where the climate is hot and dry, electricity is not necessary for the solar-powered Orenda dehydrator.

The Orenda dehydrator is made entirely of plastic, a far cry from its earliest prototype made out of wood.

Kendall said early prototypes were built in the garages of family members.

They tested out many shapes and sizes before settling on plastic, which Kendall also said has a similar warming effect as that of a greenhouse. They even tested the prototypes out in the Iowa State greenhouses.

The plastic Orenda dehydrator can lay flat and snap into place for an assembly process of 15 minutes or less.

It became commercially ready in January 2017.

“The current unit sells for $130 and is intended for use in developing countries. However, the KinoSol team realizes that food waste is just as much of a problem in the U.S. as it is globally, so they are currently developing a domestic KinoSol unit that can work in urban environments.”

Mooney said there are about 260 units worldwide right now with a hearty focus in Africa. He said around five dozen dehydrators have been placed in Uganda.

KinoSol is able to produce dehydrators in these numbers, because of the support they have received from partnerships. One of the biggest has been Iowa State.

Support from Iowa State

With an established relationship in Uganda with the Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods, Iowa State connected KinoSol with CSRL. With that connection at their disposal, KinoSol was able to get dehydrators into the hands of Ugandan rural subsistence farmers.

Feedback from the farmers who used their dehydrator was very important to the KinoSol team.

“It was very important to get prototypes to the end user,” Mooney said.

Iowa State gave KinoSol a variety of resources, including allowing the KinoSol team to utilize and work with the Iowa State nutrition lab.

“We just had no many amazing opportunities we were motivated to keep going,” said Kendall.

In addition, KinoSol attended many business pitch competition, including the thought for food challenge. Their experience at the competition sparked the idea for KinoSol.

Feedback from users is a big factor to KinoSol’s success. The KinoSol team continually reaches out to their partnerships to hear how the dehydrator is working and if there are any product concerns.

“We had to make sure there was a value all along the supply chain,” Mooney said.

One comment they often hear from subsistence farmers is that the size of the dehydrator is too small to preserve all the produce they would like at one time.

“People would like a larger one so they could do more at once,” Kendall said.

The Orenda model is small scale and meant to be used by families and communities. The dehydrating process takes around six to eight hours in proper sunlight to effectively dry out the produce.

“Not only is it helping at the family level, it also allows for entrepreneurial endeavors of the users’ own,” Lyons said.

Partnerships and Farmer Feedback

KinoSol currently has nine partners worldwide, and they are particular about who they partner with.

“They carefully choose partnerships with only a small percentage of those who ask to partner with KinoSol.”

“We had to learn the hard way that not all partnerships are equal,” Mooney said.

Turning people down is a choice the team makes by looking to see if the values of who they would be partnering with align with their own mission, and if the dehydrator would be located in a dry, hot climate that it could be effective in.

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Laura Wiederholt and Lauren Berglund are just two of 2,000 students with documented disabilities on campus.

And they’re not ashamed of talking about them, either.

Wiederholt, senior in biology, re-launched the Alliance for Disability Awareness — a club dedicated to supporting students with disabilities and raising awareness about them — during her sophomore year and has been president since.

Berglund, junior in child, adult and family services, will take over as president next semester.

Wiederholt has dysautonomia, which is an umbrella term for a group of disorders that cause dysfunction of the autonomic nervous system, along with anxiety and depression.

Berglund has oculocutaneous albinism, which is a rare disorder that causes a reduction of pigment in the skin, hair and eyes. Berglund is blind and uses her guide dog, Sheba, to get around.

The Daily sat down with the two of them to reflect on their year of advocacy together.

How have you seen the Alliance for Disability Awareness grow?

Wiederholt: Initially I mostly just kind of thought of it as a bunch of students can come and hang out, and it’s kind of turned more into advocacy. I’ve ended up doing a lot of work with the administration, way more than I ever thought I would. As I saw the complaints that were coming in, I was thinking, a lot of these complaints are identical and maybe we can fix them.

How many people are in the club?

Berglund: I’d say an average of six people at a meeting.

Wiederholt: It’s somewhat disappointing, the lack of engagement. I think it’s a hard topic to talk about.

Berglund: … And a lot of the disabilities themselves prevent people from attending.

Wiederholt: If I wasn’t president, I guarantee you I would have missed some of the meetings. I’ve had to force myself to get up and be like it doesn’t matter if I hurt, it doesn’t matter if I just got done crying and look like a mess, I have to go. People’s disabilities prevent them from doing the things that are best for advocacy. And a big part of the reason why it hasn’t grown so much is that it’s not very appealing to the community as a whole. The Iowa State community as a whole, when they find out it’s an organization run by people with disabilities about disability awareness, it seems like they lose interest.

Berglund: They want the Real Buddies, help the poor disabled kids kind of thing and that’s not us.

Wiederholt: Not to say you can’t be in the club if you don’t have a disability, in fact I’d encourage it, but we very rarely get members without disabilities. I wish that there was more community engagement, I think when we do show people, they get upset. We did the Step Into My World event [an event where students can experience what it’s like to have certain disabilities and have to maneuver with a cane or wheelchair] in the library and I took people around in a wheelchair and I was like, ‘OK, try to get in the bathroom,’ there was a guy that said ‘I can’t get into the bathroom’ and I said ‘That’s right, you have to go to a different building to go to the bathroom,’ and he’s like ‘Well that’s ridiculous.’

Wiederholt: You don’t think about things until you’re forced to and I just think that’s part of the benefit [of having events like Step Into My World] we can force people to think of the different things and then they keep those things in mind.

Berglund: Putting a fellow student’s face and name and story to the things that they’re told … You know people are disabled, you know people have disabilities, but you don’t really realize that they affect your peers until someone is like ‘hey, me too.’

Berglund: Sometimes as the club and when we all come together, we help students reach the point of accepting their disability and accepting the identity and what comes with it.

Wiederholt: The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a person with a disability as a person who has a personal or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. People will think, ‘I have anxiety and there are days when I can’t even eat because I just feel so sick in my stomach.’ That’s a major life activity. There’s a lot of stigma around having a psychiatric disability. There’s a reason that I talk more about my physical disabilities than my mental disabilities and it’s just because it still makes me uncomfortable.

Berglund: I’ve even noticed Laura, in the beginning you only said ‘I have dysautonomia.’ The last three or four times we’ve spoken, I’ve heard you say, ‘I have dysautonomia and I have anxiety and depression.’

Wiederholt: Originally I kind of started it for selfish reasons, like I felt alone and I wanted a place where I could not feel alone, and now I just kind of realized if you have the ability to speak up for others and you can try to help improve things, I find it very fulfilling to do that and I think it’s the right thing to do because there’s plenty of people that just can’t. If I can help, I really want to help.

Wiederholt: I think for me growing up, I was taught how to advocate and so many people with disabilities, especially blind students, are not really taught that you have to advocate for your needs or you’re not going to do well. I was the first student to graduate my district who had a visual impairment and no other disability and hopefully paved the way for people behind me. My hope is with my advocacy efforts, I can make it easier for the people that come behind me, but hopefully also teach others how to advocate for themselves because I think it’s one of the most important skills anyone can have, especially someone with a disability.

Wiederholt: One of our goals is to teach [people] that you don’t need to be ashamed of who you are and how you are. You’re not less of a person because you have a disability. It certainly causes challenges in your life and it makes things more difficult, but it’s the type of thing that you will find work arounds and you’re going to find a way to do everything.

Wiederholt: Not necessarily everything, I can’t drive a car.

Wiederholt: I mean within reason. There are plenty of things that people are like, ‘oh I can never do that.’
POLICE BLOTTER

4.25.18

Macy Sue Scheideman, age 20, of 120 Lynn Ave - Ames, IA, was cited for possession of alcohol under the legal age at 960 Stange Rd (reported at 9:07 a.m.).

An officer investigated a property damage collision at Lot 3 (reported at 9:01 a.m.).

An officer initiated a drug related investigation (reported at 9:39 a.m.).

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IOWA STATE DAILY BLOG

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Hidden racial biases need to end now

The nation is divided over race where people of color, especially the black community, face racial prejudice and discrimination much more than others.

Recently, the arrest of two black men at a Philadelphia Starbucks painted the grim picture of the country’s racial disparities in public places. The black men were arrested for doing nothing but just waiting for a friend in a public space. The incident was about race; even white people can see this would not happen to them if they did the same thing.

This profiling incident drew public outrage across the country, indicating the extent of the problem that needs to be resolved now.

Starbucks CEO Kevin Johnson met with the men in person, apologized and vowed to change at the business chain and vowed to spearhead the campaign for lasting change.

To rectify this reprehensible incident, he condemned this disheartening incident. He also ordered to close more than 8,000 Starbucks stores on the afternoon of May 29 to a significant portion of employees can receive training on dehumanizing the racial bias, promoting conscious inclusion and preventing future discrimination.

However, the training could cost Starbucks around $16.7 million but can increase the loyalty of employees can receive training on bias.

Roots of such covert bias and racism are eternal and run deep in our country and continue to cause devastating effects. Discrimination and racial prejudice are not being taught, people learn from their society, culture and the environment they live.

People lack cultural competency when they can’t differentiate between a home—less person and a black professional in informal attire.

We are well aware restaurants and cafes do not have any policy to prevent anyone from using their facilities. The real issue is the country’s collective implied biases toward people of color, especially African-Americans.

Some argue the police did what they were supposed to do and what they were called to do. However, arresting people without adequate reason makes authorities look incredibly tone deaf. However, the Philadelphia Police Commissioner, who notoriously defended his officers at first, later apologized for the incident.

In this era of technology where social media is becoming a powerful tool for exposing these hidden biases, technology can fight prejudice by bringing such incidents to the attention of millions and break the assumptions of those who do not believe in it.

People of all color are responsible for removing this evil from our communities. People need to raise their voices to condemn such episodes and strive for lasting changes to ensure what happened to these black men never happens again.

We know certain people are comfortable with the status quo or believe in procrastination as a more comfortable option. However, they should try walking a mile in the other’s shoes before dismissing their concerns.
The Drake Relays have arrived

Iowa State junior Evelyne Guay, fourth from left, starts off the women’s distance medley relay at the Drake Relays in Des Moines April 29, 2017.

BY ZANE DOUGLAS
@Iowastatedaily.com

The Drake Relays are the only things between Iowa State and the Big 12 Championships now, so ultimately it will be important for the Cyclones to finish strong. The men’s team is heading to Des Moines, Iowa, this weekend to take part in one of the biggest track and field events of the year for the team and the whole country.

“The Drake Relays are always a really unique and cool opportunity,” said middle distance coach Jeremy Sudbury. Middle distance will be the focus with the Cyclones competing in four relays and a few other races this weekend that fall under that category.

Sudbury has coached well for those athletes to this point and this meet he will be working with sprint coach Frank Rizzo and head coach Martin Smith more to prepare for all the relays this weekend.

Sudbury is excited, especially about this year for the Drake Relays with the weather projected to be nice and sunny since it’s usually rainy around this time.

“The weather looks really nice. I think everyone’s excited about that,” Sudbury said.

At the end of the season, the Cyclones will need some athletes to start heating up now and it looks like senior middle-distance runner Jaymes Dennison has stepped up to be that guy with a great performance last weekend.

Dennison set his personal record in the 400-meter dash last weekend while also helping his relay team win the 4x400-meter relay.

Both events brought him near the top of Cyclone history as his 46.90 in the 400-meter dash is now ninth all-time for Iowa State. His relay team finished in 3:07.57, which was good for eighth in Cyclone history.

“I think anytime you have a senior like Jaymes Dennison … start to come into form at the end of the season I think is really exciting,” Sudbury said.

Dennison is quickly turning into a leader and role model for the Cyclones’ young corps of 400-meter and 800-meter runners. It’s proving successful as they seem to be thriving in their roles.

While Dennison is shining in his leadership role on the track, junior hammer thrower Vlad Pavlenko is doing the same, despite being the youngest on the team in his event. Pavlenko said he is excited for this weekend.

“It’s all about putting it all together and [making] it happen,” Pavlenko said.

Pavlenko has been historically good this year with the fourth best hammer throw in Iowa State history coming a few weeks ago in the Sun Angel Classic.

He will look to continue his success as the season winds down and maybe rise higher on the historic list.

With Pavlenko and Dennison excruciating on history for the program, the younger players will be looking to them for their leadership skills at the end of the long track and field season.

The Drake Relays are the only things between Iowa State and the Big 12 Championships now, so the athletes will be looking to step up on the big stage and make a difference for their team.

Cyclone women head to Des Moines for Drake Relays

BY SPENCER SUCKOW
@Iowastatedaily.com

After making stops at outdoor meets across the country over the past month, the Iowa State women’s track and field team will finish up the outdoor regular season in their own backyard this weekend.

Starting on Thursday night, the Cyclone women will compete in the Drake Relays in Des Moines, Iowa, which serves as the final meet for the team until the Big 12 Championships in late May. As usual, the meet serves as a homecoming of sorts for many Cyclones on the roster.

Thirteen members of the women’s track and field team are natives of Iowa, and at least five, Larkin Chapman, Emma Whigham, Jasmine Staubler, Adriana Kammer and Abby Caldwell, are expected to compete throughout the weekend.

While the Iowans on the roster are certainly familiar with the Drake Relays from growing up in the state and competing in the meet themselves. Other members of the team have seen success at the Blue Oval in the past as well.

Perhaps the best example of this is senior jumper Boonnay Luque, who took first place among university athletes last year in both the long and triple jump with leaps of 20-feet-1 and 45-feet-9 ½, respectively.

While those jumps are well off of Luque’s personal records in the events, part of the reason for the lower scores last year came due to the sloppy conditions outside.

Rain and cold temperatures plagued the 2017 relays, but with clear weather and temperatures in the 60s expected this weekend, Luque should be able to best her marks from last year and continue her excellent senior season.

Also looking to build off her success at the relays last year will be junior Whigham, who took third place in the heptathlon at the relays in 2017. Although she won’t be competing in that particular event this year, Whigham will be competing in the 400-meter hurdles, an event she’s improved on throughout the outdoor season culminating in a 1:01.50 personal record last week at the Michael Johnson Invitational.

Additionally, Whigham was also part of the relay team that took second place in the 4x800-meter run and third place in distance medley, along with Staubler, Evelyne Guay and Erin Stennes-Fahey.

In addition to the returning athletes, there are also some women making their Drake Relays debut this weekend. In fact, there are currently seven entries for Iowa State scheduled to compete in the relays for the first time.

Among the first timers expected to show well is Essence Henderson, who’s notched several first place finishes in what’s been a stellar freshman season. Henderson will be competing in the shot put and discus events in which she placed in the top-three just last weekend at the Michael Johnson Invitational (which included a seventh-place personal record in the discus).

Keira Williams and Tessa Krempel will also look to build off of strong performances last week. Williams took first place in the 5,000-meter run. Events will then continue throughout the weekend on Friday and Saturday, with coverage of the event broadcast on NBC Sports Network from 2-4 p.m. on Saturday and all weekend on USA TODAY SPORTS NETWORK.

The Drake Relays will begin for the Cyclone women starting on Thursday night, when Karly Ackley and Anne Frisbie compete in the open division of the shot put.

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BY TREVOR BABCOK
@iowastatedaily.com

Every Wednesday evening since the beginning of the spring 2018 semester, four friends go live from 88.5 KURE Ames Alternative's studio B. They occupy the airwaves with advice on sensitive subjects, discussion of memes, and entertaining personal stories.

One anonymous listener sends in a question asking for advice on a friend who gets too drunk whenever they go out to the bars. This friend was so intoxicated on one occasion that he tried to start his vehicle but passed out at the wheel before he could put himself and others at risk.

The hosts begin a roundtable giving sincere advice to the listener such as discussing strategies to talk it out with his friend and plans to make sure he doesn't attempt to drive drunk again.

The show is called “Fake Flowers” and is produced by Jonathan Free, junior in computer science, and one of the masterminds behind KURE’s new listening platform, The Basement.

KURE’s website states “The Basement is a platform of freedom where DJs can play the music they want to play, speak about the niche topics they want to speak about and have more independence in the type of content they put on air.”

DJs on The Basement are granted this freedom because The Basement is not regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), an agency that regulates communications on radio, television, and more.

This is because The Basement is streamed on KURE’s website where it is out of the FCC’s reach.

“We want to make it clear that The Basement is not just about being able to say curse words,” said Free.

The discussion of fragile topics and unrestricted format which are trademarks to “Fake Flowers” is why the show is right at home on The Basement.

However, according to a study by New York University’s Steinhardt Music Business Program conducted in August of 2017 titled “Paradigm Shift: Why Radio Must Adapt to the Rise of Digital,” radio risks becoming a thing of the past if the medium doesn’t adapt to the wants of today’s generation.

New digital services such as Spotify and Apple Music are changing the way people listen to music and Generation Z, music fans born in 1995 or after, are embracing this change. Listening to AM/FM radio among teens 13 and up declined by almost 50 percent between 2005 and 2016.

This doesn’t seem to discourage those involved at student-run radio station KURE who are dedicated to their station.

“Everyone who is here just really cares about it. They just want to help the station improve and get more people involved,” said Karina Abbott, junior in marketing and general manager at KURE.

“This was an idea for years before we even started talking about logistics,” Abbott said. “It was on me to figure out how we were going to do it, to find out what we need and how we were going to build it. We luckily had just brought on two new IT directors, Jonathan Free and Nolan Kim. Great guys. They treat it like it’s their baby. They built it. They’re the masterminds behind The Basement.”

Abbott also hosts a show on The Basement from Wednesdays from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. Her show “TuneTalk” discusses newly released music with members of KURE’s music review committee. Abbott explained that she feels there is more freedom on The Basement due to the lack of restrictions and relaxed vibe, making conversations with guests feel more natural. She also doesn’t have to worry if guests haven’t been on a radio show before and sometimes guests on the show come on last minute.

As many as six guests can pile into KURE’s studio B all equipped with headphones and microphones. The guests participate as much as they wish, some more than others. This free-spirited approach to radio is another example of why The Basement was created.

Kyle Guerttman, junior in pre-business and frequent guest on “TuneTalk” explained why he enjoys coming on the show.

“Getting to listen to new music, talking to people about music and turning people on to new stuff. Mostly being able to talk to other people about similar music because that doesn’t happen too frequently,” Guerttman said.

First word of The Basement appeared on KURE’s Facebook page in February with an image of KURE’s unofficial mascot Otto Bot sitting on a couch under The Basement’s logo.

Ott Bot constantly judges human’s taste in music but was sent to Earth to keep the KURE stream going 24/7. The couch, which is in the KURE office in the depths of Friley Hall, is the basis for The Basement’s logo. The old green couch has been there as long as anyone from KURE can remember.

“I’d love to get more people involved with it. I’d love to fill it up with niche talk shows and niche DJ shows,” said Abbott. “We would like to provide an outlet for students to come in and get their voice heard, play the music they want to play, talk about what they want to talk about, a pathway to becoming involved with radio and broadcasting if they want to do that as a career. It’s a great place to start for that.”

Abbott and Free both say creating something new that you can call your own and be proud of is what motivates them to become deeply rooted with their involvement in KURE.

“College radio is providing an outlet for smaller artists, local artist, more indie artists, self-releasing artists, people who don’t get played on other stations,” Abbott said.

[KURE] definitely expanded my musical knowledge exponentially of what was out there. It was like I didn’t even know what I was missing.”

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LIFESTYLE

KURE launches an unfiltered station

Friday, April 27, 2018 Iowa State Daily

By Trevor Babcock
@iowastatedaily.com

Tanner Vieth (DeeJay Tanner) DJs during the DM Tea radio show on KURE 88.5 FM in 2014.

Birthright is a non-judgmental and supportive atmosphere for women and expectant mothers.

Birthright is a non-judgmental and supportive atmosphere for women and expectant mothers.

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Iowa State Daily
Laura Wiederholt and Lauren Berglund met through the Alliance for Disability Awareness and consider themselves to be good friends.

What is it like being a student with a disability on Iowa State’s campus?

Berglund: At times, frustrating. Compared to other universities that I’ve been at and had experience with, Iowa State is above the ball in certain aspects, but also behind it in others. We’re behind when it comes to physical accessibility. But when it comes to you having an issue with a professor we have a whole team of people here who can help you.

Wiederholt: Some things, we’re doing pretty well on especially considering that we have a large campus. I think in general education [is a big issue]. I think society as a whole falls behind on education. There’s supports. There’s accommoda-

Do you feel like you’ve made any changes at Iowa State?

Berglund: I like to think that while I haven’t made [many] changes up higher, I would like to think if anything I’ve changed professor’s perceptions.

Wiederholt: I feel like there have been some things that I can’t really take direct credit for. Nora [Ryan]’s been hired, the University Committee on Disabilities has been reinstated, it seems like administrators have been more conscious of it, but I don’t feel like I can personally take any credit for that. At this point I’ve spoken in front of thousands of people, I like to think that 1 percent of those say ‘oh yeah, this is important.’ Or if that changes their attitudes on people with disabilities, that’s enough for me.

Are there any specific things that you’ve been proud of?

Wiederholt: When you feel like you’ve really reached somebody after you’ve spoken with a group, sometimes they’ll email you afterwards or come up to you afterwards saying ‘hey, I just wanted to say thank you, I never thought of it that way before.’

That’s when I really feel like I’m making a difference. Or they’ll say, I realized anyone can have a disability. That’s when I really feel like I’m making a difference.

Berglund: Sometimes I just feel like I’m in a slingshot and somebody just pulled back and let go and I’m just kinda going, I feel like I’m just kind of in limbo a lot. Especially with the mental illness, it’s always uncertain. You just kind of don’t know what’s going to happen.

Berglund: I mean yeah it’s frustrating and shitty but there’s also times where you’re sitting with your friends and you’re all laughing about something that the outside people wouldn’t understand. There’s ups and there’s downs and there’s just going steady.

Describe your friendship.

Berglund: Our friendship isn’t that much different than anyone else’s.

Wiederholt: I’d say our personalities go together well. Like she’s easily amused and I really like amusing people.

Berglund: She likes my dumb jokes.

Wiederholt: We’re both really talkative. Lauren never shuts up. She’s really easy going about stuff. I feel like if anything, we’re more open. I kind of like that about having a disability, it forces you to be open. If you have people that understand you, your support system is a lot better because they can understand.

Editor’s note: This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

Laura Wiederholt and Lauren Berglund met through the Alliance for Disability Awareness and consider themselves to be good friends.