

IND graduate overcomes head injury

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When a hurtling rubber lacrosse ball smacked Megan Fridley square on the temple during the last game of the 2012 lacrosse season, the impact was immediate.

"Everything went blurry," remembered the 18-year-old recent graduate of the Institute of Notre Dame in Baltimore.

Fridley initially thought the effects of her concussion would last only a day or two, but the injury would have a more far-reaching impact on one of IND's top-performing student-athletes. Fridley was away from school activities for five months, making use of an accommodated schedule at the beginning of this school year.

"The end of my summer was spent trying to learn how to read again," Fridley said. "I could read the words, but I couldn't comprehend what was going on."

Fridley found it difficult just to walk down the street or have dinner with other people without suffering headaches. She spent much of her time in bed.

"It was not a highlight of my life," she said.

In time, Fridley's condition improved. She credits prayer for playing a role in helping her along the way.

"I started praying a little more because my aunt, who is very religious, suggested praying," said Fridley, a parishioner of St. Mark in Catonsville. "It was helpful because I felt like I was less alone."

Vanessa Williams, a religion teacher and campus minister at IND, said Fridley found ways of supporting her team members and school clubs even when she was unable to participate in various activities.

Fridley volunteered with Project K.IND, working with fourth grade students at Cardinal Shehan School in Baltimore. She was a member of the National Honor Society and the Spanish National Honor Society. Fridley was also involved in peer ministry, student government and a program to give tours to potential students. This summer, she will participate in TamarIND, serving as a mentor to city girls.

During her time at IND, Fridley played three years of varsity field hockey and varsity basketball, four years of varsity lacrosse and one year of junior varsity soccer.

"Because Megan is very quiet, her exceptional contributions and academics can

easily be overlooked,” said Williams, who called Fridley a “wonderful young lady and an excellent student.”

Fridley received the Sister Hilda Marie Sutherland Award at IND’s 32nd annual sports banquet May 23. The coveted honor was presented “for help, generously given to the team, both on and off the field.”

Enrolled in IND’s honors program, Theresian Scholars, Fridley completed research on eosinophilic esophageal food allergies. She suffered from the condition as a young girl and was interested in how her allergies differed from more common anaphylactic allergies. For her Theresian Scholar research project, Fridley explored differences in testing and treatment methods for allergies.

“I researched how society has changed to better help people with food allergies, especially with ingredient labels and contamination warnings,” said Fridley, who graduated June 1.

Fridley will attend the University of Dayton next year and hopes to pursue a career in physical therapy. She will miss the close-knit community at IND, she said.

“What makes IND really good is the friendships and bonds formed over the four years and the welcoming community,” she said. “You and your class end up growing as sisters.”

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