

On the go: Internship prepares Seton Keough grad for future career



(Tom McCarthy Jr. and April Hornbeck | CR Staff)

By Jessica Marsala

jmarsala@CatholicReview.org

When Rebecca Lewis enters the exercise science program at Salisbury University in the fall, she will be years ahead of her peers.

In spring 2013, the recent graduate of The Seton Keough High School in Baltimore approached principal Angela Calamari and guidance counselor Beverly McIntyre to ask if she could adjust her senior schedule from seven classes to five in order to intern one morning a week at neighboring St. Agnes Hospital in physical therapy.

"It was a great idea because she seems like she's really committed to pursuing physical therapy as a career," said McIntyre, acknowledging that not every student would be permitted or able to manage an internship during the school day.

Over the past year, Lewis amassed more than 100 hours observing and assisting physical therapist Beth McCoy and her colleagues as they worked with amputees and patients with back and neck injuries, among others.

"This is rare; nobody comes from high school," McCoy said. "Usually the students don't get on the ball (interning) until they are in college and toward graduation."

Lewis, whose GPA last fall was 4.17, also demonstrated maturity and dedication in Seton Keough's selective biomedical program and in athletics.

Lauren Urban, a biomedical and physics teacher, coached the swim team, which included Lewis. Urban said Lewis' "quiet leadership" differentiated her from other students and would help her as a physical therapist.

When Lewis took extra time in the locker room to help swim teammate Caroline Bodley, who has Down syndrome, Urban recognized her "unique way of seeing (and meeting) people where they are and not judging them."

Chuck Snee coached Lewis, 18, when she played junior varsity basketball as a freshman and then softball the last two seasons. He described his leftfielder as "reliable and dedicated," especially when she refused to let kidney stones prevent her from attending games or practice.

The Gators won the Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland A Conference championship May 13, and Snee said that wouldn't have happened without Lewis' willingness to do "whatever you asked her."

In managing many obligations and commitments, including her weekend job at a salon and her participation in student council and various honor societies, Lewis cites her single mother, Janet Patricia Lewis (Archbishop Keough High '79), a nurse who works at St. Agnes, as her inspiration.

"She's definitely been my support system through everything," Lewis said.



*Seton Keough Senior Rebecca Lewis takes an at bat during a 22-0 win over the Institute of Notre Dame in the varsity softball IAAM Quarter Finals game May 8.
(Tom McCarthy Jr. | CR Staff)*

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