



Photo by Maggie Rossiter

Battling Cancer

freshman copes with aunt's death

Abbey Furlow

She's going to heaven soon and the butterflies will lead her there. Freshman Cassie Dorner can still remember these words her parents told her eight years ago, when her aunt Melodee passed away after her battle with colon cancer.

Dorner's aunt went in for a routine check-up and was then told that she had ovarian cancer. The doctors sounded optimistic about her recovery and said Melodee could return to work. But, her situation would soon take

a turn for the worse because on July 1, 2001, Melodee was diagnosed with stage four colon

cancer. Had the doctors correctly diagnosed her the first time, they would not have been so optimistic. "I found out about the diagnosis when my dad came home crying. He told my brother and I the news. I was in shock. She was such a great person; I couldn't understand why it had happened to her," Dorner said.

Dorner and her family spent endless nights with Melodee while she was going through treatment at Immanuel Hospital. At the time, Dorner was only six years old; she couldn't fully comprehend what was happening. "I was confused at why we always had to go to the hospital when we went to visit her. I didn't know why she was always wearing bandanas and had a light-blue robe on."

Even though Dorner's family was with her aunt Melodee every step of the way, there was an unspoken fear of the inevitable. Dorner's young age made her naive to the full reality of her aunt's circumstances. "I was scared to get too close to her because I didn't want to break her. I saw all the wires surrounding her, and I thought that if I touched her then I would disconnect one and accidentally kill her."

With each trip to the hospital, a new memory between Melodee and Dorner was made. "I had a game. Each day I would try to top the last time I saw my aunt. So, each day was one of my favorite memories," Dorner said. This game provided Dorner with a distraction, keeping her mind off the future of her aunt's life and allowing her to focus on

the time she had left with Melodee. She made the most of each moment she spent with her aunt, trying her hardest to make the best of the difficult and confusing situation.

On Aug. 1 Dorner's mother received a phone call around 11 a.m., informing her that Melodee had died, after about one year of treatment. "I remember asking my mom if the butterflies had taken her to heaven. She said that the butterflies had led her to

heaven and that whenever I see a butterfly, 'Aunt Melodee is using the butterflies to keep an eye on me,'" Dorner said.

When her aunt passed away, a vast mix of emotions flooded Dorner's mind. "It actually got harder at first. Going down the road, the reality that she was gone set in. Our trips to the hospital didn't come anymore," Dorner said. She felt anger; Dorner knew that Melodee still deserved to be here on this

earth. When she thought about her aunt's absence, Dorner couldn't help but feel sad and confused. Why was Melodee the one who had to be taken? But, Dorner also felt a sense of relief. She knew her aunt's body was finally healed and at peace.

Talking was, and still is, a key part of Dorner's healing process. Her family has always been there when she needed someone to confide in. Even if she's not sure what she's feeling, talking about it with someone who has also experienced a loss has brought her comfort. "It's okay to talk about that person. Don't be sad that they're gone; be happy you knew them and had the time to love them."

"It's okay to talk about that person. Don't be sad that they're gone; be happy you knew them and had the time to love them."
-Cassie Dorner, freshman

More Than Just a Name

Freshman faces difficult choice in choosing her name

Allison Dethlefs

Wilson, Kuiper. Kuiper, Wilson. Keep the name she had called her own for the past 14 years, or change it to the name of the family she was proud to be a part of. Freshman Jordan Kuiper couldn't decide.

Until her dad's phone call, she had been set on changing her last name, but now? Now, she wasn't so sure. Her dad had talked about honor-what an honor it was for his children to have his last name, representing his family- but Kuiper couldn't help thinking that if he had really wanted to be a part of her life, he wouldn't have left 10 years ago.

Her parents split up when she was 3 years old. Kuiper's father went to prison and within the first year of incarceration, they divorced and Kuiper had very limited contact with her father. Her only connection to him had been phone calls and the occasional letter.

For nine years, Kuiper and her brother, Cole, only saw their father on the rare occasions that their grandparents brought them to Sioux Falls, South Dakota to visit him in prison. Her father eventually remarried in prison and when released, moved with his new wife to Nevada. Nothing could change the fact that Kuiper had grown up virtually fatherless, a role no one else could quite fill.

However, Kuiper acknowledges that this void goes mostly unnoticed, thanks to her mother's side of the family. Raised a Wilson, she has lived with her mother her whole life and sees her as more than just a parent. "She's one of my best friends," Kuiper said. "I can tell her anything."

She also has found positive role models in other members of the Wilson half of the family: the uncle she fondly describes as almost a brother and the grandfather who

she looks up to as one of the most prominent role models in her life. She loves the feeling of being a part of a big family that shares dinner get-togethers and a sense of home.

Since she grew up with her mother's family, Kuiper felt drawn to the idea of being known as a Wilson. "I felt like I would be more a part of the family if I had their last name," she said.

"To my dad, a name is a huge thing," she said. "But no matter what your name is, my family will always be my family; the Wilson's will always be my family."

- Jordan Kuiper, freshman

It was not until her eighth grade year, however, that she began to think seriously about changing her name. Her uncle was getting married, and this sparked within her the desire to do something decisive. After thinking about it, she brought the notion up to her

mom, who honored her daughter's wishes and took the issue to court. Once known by the court, Kuiper's request would take a while to get approved and would not only need to be permitted by the court but by Kuiper's father as well.

One fateful day during the waiting process, she received a phone call from her dad. He had heard about her decision to change her name and was hurt that she no longer wished to be called a Kuiper.

"He said that as a father, it's an honor for his kids to have his last name. It made him sad that I didn't want to represent his family," Kuiper said. "When he asked why I decided to [change my name], I told him that it was because I grew up with the Wilson's. He understood that, but he was stuck on the honor thing." She understood where he was coming from, but she also thought that he should have made more of an effort to be a part of her and her 12-year-old brother's lives.

Wilson, Kuiper. Kuiper, Wilson. For days after the phone call, Kuiper thought about her father's words. She thought about the love and support that had always been offered by

her Wilson family.

She thought about her father's parents, the grandparents who she saw yearly in trips to Florida and who sent gifts for every holiday. She feared that her name change might hurt them.

She thought about her brother, the one other person who shared the Kuiper last name. She didn't want him to be alone in carrying the burden of a name he had no choice but to bear.

Back and forth she went, and then, finally, she talked to her mom.

She and her mom had a serious discussion on the subject, and Kuiper came to a solid conclusion. "To my dad, a name is a huge thing," she said. "But no matter what your name is, my family will always be my family; the Wilson's will always be my family."

Both she and her mom agreed that, in the end, her last name was not that important, and it most definitely did not make her any less a part of the family. "The people who love you don't care about that stuff," Kuiper said simply.

It has been about a year since Jordan Kuiper almost became Jordan Wilson. Although she has kept her last name until now, she says that she has recently been reconsidering the option. In her mind, one of the biggest factors playing into what she decides to do is whether or not her brother chooses to change his last name as well. If nothing else, she has thought about changing her name when she becomes 18 and can do it by herself. But until then, she



All Fun and Names. Freshman Jordan Kuiper laughs with friends in homeroom. Photo by Allison Dethlefs

will not rule out the possibility of becoming a Wilson by name, as well as by heart.

"It's still an option in my head," Kuiper said. Kuiper or Wilson, for now she is just content to love and grow as a part of the family she cherishes.

"After all," she acknowledged, "a name is just a name."

5 most Common Names at Marian

1 Katherine (Kate, Kathy): 27 girls

2 Megan: 22 girls

3 Sara: 21 girls

4 Emily: 21 girls

5 Elizabeth: 20 girls

Graphic by: Erin Reed

Diving Down Under

A look into friendships that cross continents

Molly **Rakoczy**

At some point in their lives, all teenagers take friendships for granted. They see many of their friends every day at school. Those they don't talk to at school, they hang out with on the weekends or at activities and jobs.

But some girls have long-distance friendships. Friends from different schools, cities and states.

And some girls have friends from Australia.

Kat and Courtney

It all started on Facebook for junior Kat Dudley and Courtney Seragusana. Seragusana is in year 10 (sophomore) at

the Servite School in Perth, Australia. She was one of the girls who visited Marian from Sept. 28 to Oct. 5.

Seragusana knew Marian girls before her trip to Omaha. Senior Molly McCarthy stayed with Seragusana when she went to Australia over the summer. When McCarthy found out that Seragusana was staying with Dudley, she told Seragusana and the friendship between Seragusana and Dudley began.

Prior to Seragusana coming to Omaha, she and Dudley chatted over Facebook. Messages whizzed back and forth as the girls got to know each other. They talked about music, friends, siblings and boys.

"Kat is a lot like me, which is good," Seragusana said.

"We are both outgoing, so it wasn't awkward at the airport. We talked the whole way home," Dudley said. "After I would say something, she would say, 'I would actually say that.'"

Seragusana loved spending time with Dudley and her friends, especially juniors Jackie Tondl, Claire Wieger and Olivia Hershiser.

Seragusana attended Mt. Michael's homecoming football game on Oct. 1 and dance on Oct. 2 with Dudley and her friends. At the Servite School, only year 11 and 12 students (juniors and seniors) go to dances. However, Dudley told Seragusana that they would be attending the homecoming dance, so Seragusana brought a dress with her.

The girls got their hair done and got ready together before the boys came over. Seragusana attended the dance with one of Dudley's friends and referred to him as her "not date" for the night.

Her "not date" shook silently with nerves as Seragusana attended her first formal dance. "He's smart and funny once you get to know him," Dudley said. "Before he opens up to you, he's nervous and shy."

Seragusana's final conclusion of the night? "Americans are a tad bit weird," she said. "They don't seem to care what other people think about them or their dancing."

Seragusana and the other Australians headed home at the beginning of October.



A Night to Remember. Courtney Seragusana and Kat Dudley pose for a picture before Mt. Michael's homecoming dance. Photo courtesy of Claire Wieger.

Dudley and Seragusana talk over Facebook messaging. "It's just like texting," Dudley said, "because we both have Facebook on our phones."

But the 13 hour time difference does affect their talking. Dudley said, "She's usually sleeping when I'm awake and I'm asleep while she's awake."

Muriel and Natalie

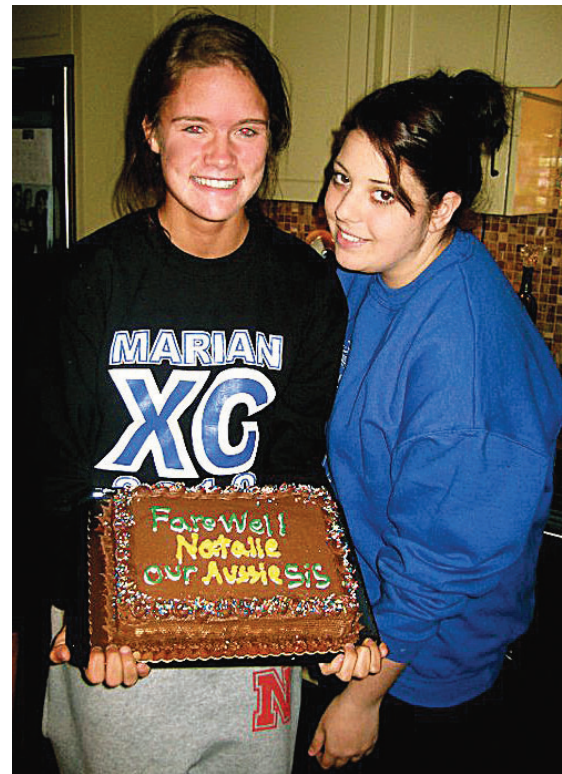
"I love Marian but I miss the boys," Natalie Ariti, year 10 at the Servite School said. She stayed with senior Muriel Neary and her family as part of the exchange group.

Senior Allie Nebbia, who visited Australia in the summer, introduced Ariti and Neary to each other. "I loved getting to know the girls and my host family," Ariti said.

Neary and Ariti went to a haunted house while Ariti was visiting. "It was so scary," Ariti said. But, she did try candy apples, which she described as "amazing."

Along with going to a haunted house, Ariti followed Neary around during her school day and went to all her senior classes, just like the other Australian visitors. Classes at Servite are about the same size as classes at Marian, with about 30 girls in each class.

Although Marian and Servite are similar, such as being founded by the Servants of Mary, there are also important differences. They have boys. They have two different uniforms, one for summer and one for winter. Their lockers are outside and they can only go to them during their two breaks and lunch, which is also outside.



Sweet Goodbye. Muriel Neary and Natalie Ariti smile before eating a farewell cake, prepared in honor of Ariti's departure. Photo by LexiWalz

"Our school is a lot more open and to get to some of our classes we have to cross a road, but I love the Marian lunch room. It's awesome," Ariti said. Her favorite memory of Marian even took place at lunch time.

Everyone gathered around a table, all talking and laughing at Ariti's accent. Then she told them "that they all have accents too."

"I have made so many friends, friendships that will last forever," Ariti said of her new American friends. "I wish all my American girl friends the best senior year ever and that we always keep in touch."

What has been your experience in the states? Aussies Speak out about their experiences

"There are no boys so you can concentrate. You also have high standards. In Australia, a 75 percent is an A." Jess Heptinstall



"Homecoming. They don't care what other people dance like. It was wild." Courtney Seragusana

"They do not have V (an energy drink). They need it. It has guava juice." Holly Smith



Graphic by AlexEilers

Aussie Lingo

Match the AMERICAN word with the AUSTRALIAN word

American

1. Sketchy
2. Candy
3. Bangs
4. Shopping Cart
5. Trash Can

Australian

- a. Fringe
- b. Dodgey
- c. Bin
- d. Lollies
- e. Trolley

Answers: 1.b 2.d 3.a 4.e 5.c

Graphic by Molly **Rakoczy**
Molly **Misek**

Source: Charlotte Smith, Natalie Ariti, and Courtney Seragusana