

Morgan Swanner overcomes great odds to play beautiful music with violin

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE – There have been times in **Morgan Swanner's** life where she was told she wouldn't be able to do certain tasks.

Rather than folding up, Morgan has used each instance as motivation to not only achieve any expectations, but exceed them. Swanner is an **Edwardsville High School** student and is a member of the school's orchestra program.

Swanner does not have a grasping motion in her right hand and even despite that, she has become an accomplished violinist and inspired many throughout the region. A device made by **Shriners Hospital** in St. Louis enables her to be able to grasp the bow and play with the violin.

“She always wanted play an instrument and we couldn’t think of anything she could play and we asked about the violin, her mother, **Jeanne**, said. “We took her violin to Shriners and they quickly made a splint for Morgan so she could play. She took it up from there. Morgan attaches the bow on to her right arm.”

Jeanne said Morgan plays so beautifully now that most don’t notice anything different.

“For some reason, people look for a reason not to do things,” she said. “Morgan doesn’t let anything slow her down.”

Morgan said playing the violin and being able to participate in orchestra means everything to her. She is so thankful to Shriners for their help.

Her mom said: “Without Shriners she wouldn’t be able to do it,” her mother said. “Shriners helps our kids fit into the world.”

“Morgan never asks for any concessions,” her mom said. “She does the same things every other kid does.”

Victoria Voumard, Edwardsville High School Orchestra Director, sees Morgan as an extraordinary young woman in many different ways.

“She is one of the most genuine, hard working, talented, patient and kind students I’ve ever encountered,” Voumard said. “She inspires me in many ways. I’m happy she wanted to share with me about her experience in hand camp. She has incredible compassion for others and she is bound to accomplish great things.”

Morgan said the most difficult challenge for her is plucking or trying to play or extremely fast with the bow.

Once she was told by someone that she couldn’t climb a 30-foot rock wall. She did it with one hand, so the person was quickly silenced.

She said the Edwardsville School District has been incredible to work with over the years. She said not once has anyone ever pointed out her disability, students or faculty.

“They always have helped make it easier to fit in with everybody else,” she said.

“Everyone makes me feel I am one of them and I can do everything I can do.”

Morgan said for her future, she wants to continue to play the violin and also possibly attend post-high school at **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville**. She said she would love to go into the medical field to work in OB/GYN or newborn intensive care.