

Johnson works toward career as therapist

By Katelynn Toft

A 2022 Durant graduate is now working to pursue a lifelong goal of working as a therapist with adolescents who have mental health disorders.

Kayden Johnson is attending Wartburg College to obtain his double major in both psychology and social work.

Since he was young, Johnson developed an interest in mental health disorders and carried it with him through his high school career.

When Johnson was in eighth grade, his parents divorced, and after that, he started realizing some of the mental disorders he has himself.

Over Christmas break, he was officially diagnosed with anxiety, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

Looking back at it now, Johnson believes that at least two of his disorders are linked to the divorce.

"I would definitely make the argument for two of them," he said. "With anxiety and depression, those both kind of grew from past experiences."

Johnson doesn't see his diagnoses as a set back. In fact he is using them as a strength. He believes that having firsthand experience with mental health issues will allow him to build relationships with future clients.

"There's going to be many other children in the age range of sixth through

your senior year of high school where you're going to go through so many unbelievably different things," he said.

His aunt, Mrs. Tracy Tappendorf, is a middle school special education teacher at Durant and thinks it's exciting that her nephew has chosen this career path.

"It'll be a good thing for him," she said. "It's good to have more males in that field because you don't see as many."

Mrs. Tappendorf and Johnson have had a close bond ever since the COVID-19 pandemic when Johnson was struggling with the isolation that stemmed from COVID restrictions.

"He kind of went into a dark place, and I was the only one that he would allow to see him," she said.

"I would go over there and push him in grocery carts and be stupid with him."

While in college, Johnson has taken part in some eye-opening activities during field experiences at a group home for children with disabilities. These field experiences were what introduced him to his new interest in mental disabilities.

"My end goal is still to be a mental health therapist for individuals who are adolescents," Johnson said. "I am more interested in a wider range."

As Johnson continues his studies, he learns more about developmental changes in children and how those are related to mental disorders.

When he becomes a therapist, these developmental changes are going to be one

of his main focuses because he wants to let his patients know "that everybody goes through this at some point and approaching every situation that you are faced with with a pessimistic outlook is not going to benefit them," he said.

Johnson's goal as a therapist is to positively impact his patients and improve their outlook on life.

He believes that promoting a sense of well-being is very important.

"My goal when I get a client is to always never have to see them again," Johnson said, referencing a quote he has heard in the past.

That means he did his job, and they feel better about themselves.

In an interview with the *Chronicles*, Johnson was asked about his thoughts on the current mental health crisis facing today's teenagers.

He said statistics point to possible reasons, but one in particular shows that 50 percent of marriages end in divorce, and the effects of those divorces can stay with the children forever.

Johnson said changes in society are also to blame.

"It all just kind of groups back to the developmental changes and the way society itself has adapted because individuals are acting differently compared to 50 years ago," he said. "Teens are going to have a different outlook on life and different ways of approaching situations in comparison to times past."



Photo by Shelby Buesing
Kayden Johnson and Mrs. Tracy Tappendorf celebrate Johnson's graduation.

In the interview, Johnson was asked if he could give one piece of advice to adolescents, what would it be?

"Don't be too susceptible to peer pressure and learn how to say no," he said. "Learning how to say no is a very, very valuable asset that is going to positively impact you on your life."

Senior survey shows medical field still most popular

By Kiyah Daily

For the second year in a row, pursuing a career in the medical field is the most



Photo by Kiyah Daily
Senior Rayana Hollenbeck seeks to become a certified nursing assistant.

popular choice for Durant seniors, according to the annual *Chronicles* senior survey

Out of 24 students who responded, five are going into the medical field.

Senior Rayana Hollenbeck wants to become a CNA (certified nursing assistant) because she loves helping people of all ages.

She chose the medical field because she wants to experience the action involved, and while Hollenbeck is taking the same route as many, her journey looks a little different.

Hollenbeck said she is attending Project SEARCH, which is a program "dedicated to preparing individuals with special needs for employment."

She said she chose to go with Project SEARCH because "some colleges don't have a teacher to help me with my disabilities."

Project SEARCH will also give her real-world experience before entering the

workforce.

Some things she will get first-hand experience doing are getting people into the trauma room or getting fluids into IV bags.

"Project SEARCH is like a step before going into the real world," said Hollenbeck, "but you're still experiencing what nurses are doing."

Senior Lillian Canty is pursuing veterinary medicine.

She is motivated to be a vet so that she "can help those that don't have a voice and make sure they aren't suffering."

Other popular vote getters for careers included three each for business and engineering.

According to the survey, 21 students plan to continue their education. The most popular choice was Muscatine Community College for five seniors. Three chose Kirkwood Community College, and two each chose Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa.

Some adults can see that the senior class this year has a special kind of bond as opposed to former classes, but only three seniors believed the seniors were "tight," according to the survey.

An overwhelming majority, 19 students, said that the senior class is "somewhat close."

Despite the results, 16 seniors indicated they do not plan to live in Durant at any point in their adult life. Only eight said they would.

It's no secret that this class loves sports, but the favorite sport to watch was a tie between basketball and football with eight votes each.

One sport that got a vote was competitive tag, courtesy of Korbyn Ryan.

In competitive tag, five-person teams compete in a small area full of obstacles. One athlete from each team is either the chaser or the evader.

The evader tries to avoid the chaser for 20 seconds, and if the evader successfully escapes, that athlete remains the evader for the next chase.

Ryan watches this sport because he finds it very impressive.

"The amount of agility and endurance needed for a professional tournament is ridiculous," he said.

Competitive tag is similar to a childhood game most seniors used to play, and many will remember those favorite moments as they embark on their new journey. In one of the annual questions of the survey, seniors are asked if they will miss high school.

While eight students from this class say they will not, 16 seniors say they will.



Congratulations, Noah!! We are so proud of you and all of your accomplishments.
Love,
Mom and Dad



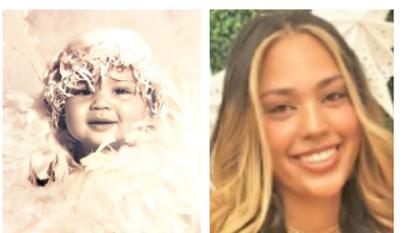
Max,
Thank you for always reminding us that the most important thing in life is to be happy. We are so proud of you. We love you more than you know!
Love,
Mom and Dad!



Brady,
It is time for something new, and as your biggest fans, we can't wait to see what you do! You can achieve whatever you want in life. All you have to do is believe that you can. We believe in you!
Love,
Dad, Mom, Emma and Ally



We are so proud of you, Mackenzie Grace! Can't wait to see what you do in this next step in your journey!
Love you!
Dad and Katy
Mom and Chad



Joslyn,
I am super proud of you and your entire class for overcoming the last 4 years of high school during a pandemic that changed the entire world around us. Here's to the door of new opportunities that has opened for you. I wish you all the happiness and success in the world. I couldn't be more proud of you!
Love,
Mom