

Customer is allowed to have objects outside of the margin.



finding your IDENTITY

designer a. byrd

photographer m. chantepie

A transgender teen discovers himself

The hurt in his eyes couldn't compare to the hurt in her heart. His mom only wished he had told her sooner.

Although the high school experience can be less strenuous for some, **Jay Gulick**, 10, has faced more difficulties than most in trying to find his identity.

The summer after fifth grade, Jay moved from Illinois to Mount Pleasant with the idea that he was going to tell his parents he is transgender. But with the complications while at Catholic Middle School, Jay was forced to wait for three years. His freshman year, Jay finally had his chance to find his identity as he made the courageous decision to go from 'she' to 'he' as a transgender boy.

"Basically I went upstairs to my mom. I didn't even say a word; I just started crying. And she was like, 'What's wrong? Do you like girls?' I shook my head. She said, 'Do you feel like a boy?' It was her second question, and I nodded and that was it," Jay said.

When Gulick told his mom, she was deeply shaken. Not because she was upset that Jay was transgender, but because he had kept it from her so long and had to suffer alone, Jay said.

"It did hurt a little bit, not because he told us, but because he'd been hiding it for so long and suffering by himself. So it breaks your heart that they felt that way but didn't feel comfortable telling anybody for so long. That they had to hide," **Lisa Gulick**, Jay's mother, said.

After coming out, Jay's self confidence soared, helping him to become more active in the Spectrum community, and the president of the Spectrum club at Wando, which supports LGBTQ rights.

"He's a really great person and a really great president. He works so hard for the club. Every week he makes a PowerPoint and he's

introduced a bunch of new suggestions this year and he tries to include times so that everyone can talk about what's going on," **Kate Fairchild**, 12, said.

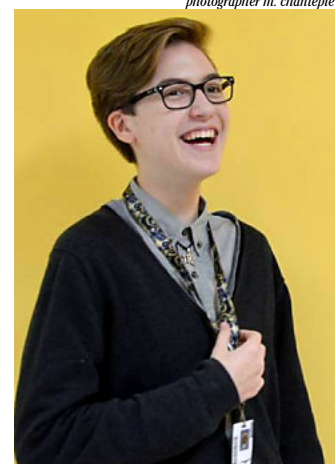
Many people have accepted Jay for who he is now, especially his family and close family friends, as well as many people who go to Wando. Jay said there are always those who will belittle and not accept Jay for who he is, but Jay just brushes aside the harsh commentary and remains confident with himself.

"There's always that one person that just thinks I'm not masculine, (and that I'm) lesbian, when I've never, I've only dated a girl once, I think. And then there's those people that will come up to you and just be like, you're sinning, etc., and all that sort of thing. I'm okay as long as people have their opinions, but just don't push them upon other people," Jay said.

Jay encourages everyone to come to Spectrum whether they are gay or straight as long as you support it, because it is just a safe place for those to feel taken in and never left out.

"In the hallways I'll hear sort of rude remarks or something that I don't necessarily prefer, and then I'll be able to tell someone at Spectrum and they'll just comfort me and calm me down, and they'll be going through the same thing, so it's like you're not alone," Jay said.

-Emily Scruggs



Jay Gulick

TRIM LINE

TRIM LINE