

Teenage Pregnancy: How one student manages school, work and motherhood

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spread editor

Balancing school and work can be hard enough, but one student does it all while being a mother. Senior Allison Smith discovered she was pregnant with her boyfriend's (Jonah Voorheis) baby at the end of her sophomore year.

"It was a wave of emotions. You're scared, you're worried, you're thinking about your future and how it's going to affect you and everybody around you," Smith said. "I remember sitting in the car with Jonah and crying on him because it was so overwhelming to think that I, being a sophomore at the time, was having a child. It didn't seem ideal at all."

Her friends were all shocked when they heard the news and were skeptical at first on how Smith would figure out how to balance her schedule.

"At first, I was scared for her because I didn't know how she would handle school, work, her boyfriend and life," senior Hailee Nelson said. "I didn't know if she would be able to come back to school or go to college."

At 16, Smith had to make a decision with what to do with her pregnancy after she found out. She turned to her close friend senior Hannah Campbell for support and advice during this time.

"I didn't want her to be pressured with her decisions," Campbell said. "I didn't want a ton of people to be like 'you need to do this.' I wanted her to do her own thing."

Soon, reality set in, and Smith made peace with the fact that she was pregnant and started to become excited that she was going to be a mother.

"It started to sink in that it's okay and it's more accepted today than (before), and it's more about the fact of having to work out our schedules around it, having to work harder than usual, and having to mature faster," Smith said.

While most sophomores worry about a grade they got or what they are going to wear to the next football game, Smith was focused on dealing with her morning sickness during classes.

"Sitting in class and feeling nauseous is the worst feeling in the world. Especially when you don't want anyone around you to know it yet," Smith said.

Then, the next school year meant that Smith had to face going to classes with a baby bump.

"When I started showing at school, I kept looking through my closet for things that would fit me a little looser so that I wouldn't be like a balloon under my shirt, but there was nothing my closet that would fit me like that," Smith said.



Photos contributed by Allison Smith

Reese Smith was born Jan. 9, 2018 in the middle of Allison's junior year at Northwest. Adjusting to being a mom and a student was difficult, but her support system has made it possible.

"So I said, 'I'm just going to go to school and what happens happens.'"

The first day back her junior year was full of stares, but soon students became used to the fact that there was a pregnant girl at their school.

One of the most important things for Smith during her pregnancy was her support system, especially from her teachers.

"All of my teachers were very supportive, especially Mrs. Bost," Smith said. "She still is very supportive of me."

Overall, Smith says her pregnancy was healthy with the exception of going through morning sickness until the third trimester. However, going into labor was a different experience.

"I wasn't expecting to go into labor that night, and I did," Smith said.

The nurses had told her that she was going to go into labor the next morning after her second induction.

"I kept feeling like I had to pee really bad and I remember having to get up 10 to 15 times in an hour," Smith said. "The last time I went to the bathroom, I thought that I was peeing but my water broke and I didn't know that."

The nurses thought that Smith wasn't having any contractions and faking pain, when really her monitors on her stomach weren't on properly, so they couldn't pick up anything.

Smith was in delivery for 45 min-

utes, and on Jan. 9, baby Reese was born.

The life of a teenage mom is drastically different than that of a typical teenage student.

"Once you have a baby, it literally changes your life so much where you're not a carefree teen anymore; you're an adult at that point," Smith said.

Smith attributes Voorheis for being there for her at hard times.

"Jonah is my rock, and I don't know what I'd do without him," Smith said. "I told him that I know this is hard and I know that this isn't ideal for us but I know that our love can get through anything."

For her senior year, Smith is currently taking four classes so that she can leave when she needs to.

"Principal (Ralph) Kitley knows that I have a lot going on and he told me himself that he was very proud of me and happy to have me as a student and to have me at this school," Smith said. "It made me very happy because you don't get a lot of that support sometimes."

Being a student, part-time worker and a full-time mother can be a lot, which is why Smith relies on being flexible.

"School, work and taking care of Reese go day-by-day," Smith said. "It's a lot to take on as a senior, but I can do it."

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take these college classes and instead, takes four classes at Northwest. Because she was out of school from Sept. 7 to mid-October, she missed much of the year.

"I really do try to get my work done. Am I always successful? No," Karly said.

Thanks to her loving family and friends, Karly was able to have her work delivered to her while she was in the hospital.

"My family as a whole has done a great job making this the easiest it can be," Karly said. "They go out of their way to make me happy."

She even described how her brother walked all the way to the grocery store to get her pickles because that's all she wanted to eat.

As of Oct. 15, Karly announced she had completed Chemo. She says she missed the structure and routine of school and her friends.

"I missed going to school a lot sometimes, especially in those first few weeks," Karly said.

With a positive outlook and comfort of family and friends, Karly has made the best of her situation.

For more information on ways to help Karly, please visit her GoFundMe page at <https://www.gofundme.com/5u9i4ds>.