

Panther

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Post

Playing Dress up
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'Bell' of the Box

Sophomore conquers obstacles on path to fitness training

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The teenage boy lifts the heavy weights over his head during a cross fit workout, breathing in and out slowly, concentrating on the movements of his muscles. Because of his diagnosis of Cystic Fibrosis, it can be hard for him at times, but that doesn't stop sophomore Evan Bell from doing what he loves. As he pushes himself to his max, lifting the weights at a steady movement, he ignores the pain he feels physically and internally and pushes to make himself better — as well as those around him.

"When I started cross fit I already was pretty healthy," Evan said. "Doing cross fit blew me through the roof of health, and the doctors are astounded by how healthy I am."

Despite having Cystic Fibrosis, which affects the lungs, Evan is on a path to becoming a fitness trainer at SIC, Strength in Christ, which is a gym near the Bullard Brookshires. Cystic Fibrosis is a genetic disease that causes lung infections and limits the ability to breathe, so Evan's ability to do such a level of training isn't common.

"Hardly anyone with CF is working out or doing cross fit," he said. "Cross fit posted a video of a guy with CF and he has to carry an oxygen tank around with him while working out. I don't have to do that, luckily!"

Evan is at SIC every day from the time he gets out of school to the time it closes. Even though he's up there as a trainer he is not fully certified yet. He has completed a seminar and other requirements, but has to wait until he turns 17 in May to take the certification test in Dallas.

"To become a trainer I've been doing a lot of shadowing and I'm still working on 250 shadowing hours," Evan said. "I had to go to a cross fit level one certification course in Dallas, and that took a whole weekend. It was quite the experience."

Although Evan has Cystic Fibrosis, it hasn't stopped him from doing everyday things and even a little extra. He plays golf for the school and does homework like other kids his age, but it's where he spends most of his time — the SIC gym — that plays a major role in his life right now. He said it has helped him with his CF.

"It helps a lot breathing wise," he said. "It has made my PFTs (Pulmonary Function Tests) go up several points, maybe 5 to 10 points, which is a lot. It allows me to be active while still able to breathe more normally."

Evan started working out at the SIC gym more than a year ago and has been working on becoming a trainer for about six months.

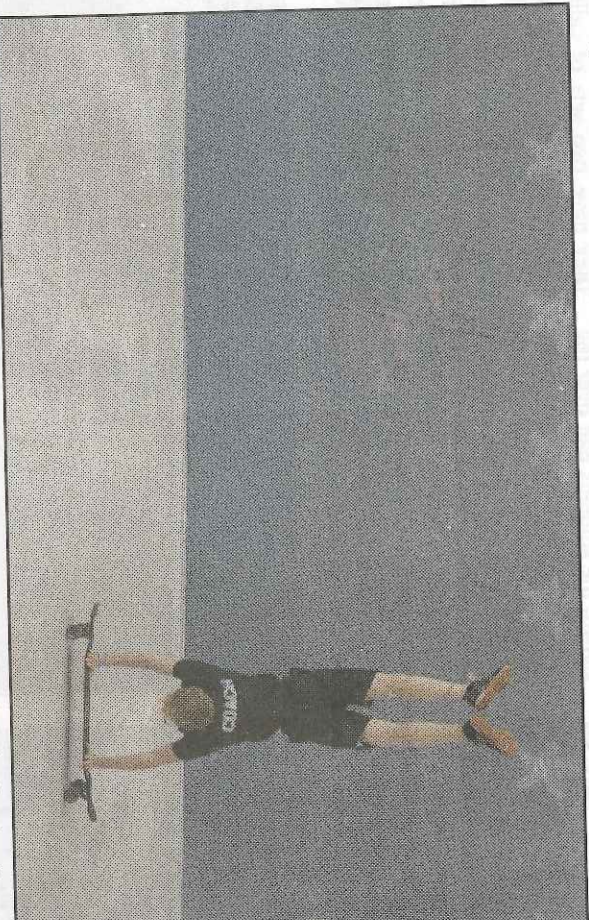


Photo by Freedom Bennett
Sophomore Evan Bell handstands while skateboarding at SIC. A cross fit gym is usually known as a "box" to its members.

"The opportunity came to me from my coach. We were growing fast getting more members monthly," Evan said. "He was becoming understaffed and I had already been going there for almost a year, he trusted me and saw that I was more responsible than other teenagers my age. He needed an employee so he asked me if I wanted a job, and that's when the process started."

Evan has learned to coach people of all ages. SIC is known to be as working together as a group, where people depend on each other. Algebra teacher Susan Paddock has been going there for more than a month now.

"Evan gets great pleasure of training me," Paddock said. "It's hard because he is seeing me at my weakest moments, but at the same time it's also inspiring because if he can do it, I know I can do it. I tell him all of the time that algebra is not as hard as what he makes me do so he should take it easy on me, but he's not doing it."

Evan has to keep up his health to do the workouts and to help people train. Throughout his life his mom has been going through everything to help him stay healthy. His breathing treatments can last 15-20 minutes in the mornings and 30-45 minutes at

"Cystic fibrosis affects me personally because I have to do my breathing treatments every morning and night," sophomore Evan Bell said. "I luckily never really had it very badly, I've been going to a lot of doctors since I was little."

Cystic Fibrosis is a life

Get the Facts on Cystic Fibrosis

*It is a genetic disorder caused by mutations in the gene code. People with CF have inherited two copies of the defective CF gene -- one copy from each parent. Both parents must have at least one copy of the defective gene.

* People with only one copy of the defective CF gene are called carriers, but they do not have the disease. Each time two CF carriers have a child, the chances are:

- 25 percent (1 in 4) the child will have CF
- 50 percent (1 in 2) the child will be a carrier but will not have CF
- 25 percent (1 in 4) the child will not be a carrier and will not have CF

*Is not curable, but treatments are used to ease symptoms and to reduce long term damage from lung infections

* 1,000 Americans are diagnosed each year and 75 percent are diagnosed by the age of 2

*There are approximately 30,000 people in America diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis

*Nearly half of the CF population is age 18 or older

*You can't tell that a person has cystic fibrosis from looking at them

*People with Cystic Fibrosis have really salty skin, wheezing or shortness of breath, and poor growth or weight gain in spite of a good appetite

Source: Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

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