

Sports and writing guide his life

LUISA ANDERSON
on **JAMES CHAVEZ**

James Chavez, then in the fifth grade, sat anxiously in his chair. He clenched a pen in one hand while capturing the words that fell from his grandfather's lips regarding the details of his life.

The school assignment was a paper on a relative. The experience set the direction of his future career.

"That was the first time I got to interview someone," he said. "I was nervous, but it was fun. It's cool learning about people."

His love for writing led him to articulate his passion for sports and directed him toward sports writing. James, a junior this fall at Madison High School, will be a sportswriter for his school newspaper, *The Constitution*. James, 16, plans to study writing in college with an ultimate goal of becoming a sports anchor for ESPN. He believes that he can achieve this dream by applying the same dedication and hard work he devotes to athletics.

As much as James loves sports — he has participated in hockey, football, basketball, baseball and track and field — he realizes that he will not become a professional athlete.

"If I were 6'5" and 250 pounds, I would definitely pursue an athletic career, but I'm not," said James, who stands 5 feet, 6 inches and weighs 150 pounds.

James says that keeping himself busy with sports has helped him avoid what he calls "the wrong crowd." He grew up playing sports with his cousin, who pushed him to become a stronger athlete. His father was also athletic and encouraged him to follow in his footsteps.

"He has had some sort of ball in his hand since he was 1," his father, Dave Chavez, said.

"He's always been extremely fast and athletic. I don't know if it is because he is small and he's running for his life, or what it is."

Having experienced both victory and defeat, James writes about sports from a personal perspective.

He recalls the first team he played on when he was 6, a hockey team called the Clackamas Storm.

"I scored my first goal and I still have the puck," James said.

One of his greatest sports moments took place his freshman year when his hockey team won a club league championship. The score was 3-3, and neither team scored in overtime. James watched the shootout from the sidelines as a teammate made a slap shot into the net.

"We won and it was one of the best feelings I will ever have," he said.

James has also felt the devastation of losing. No experience was more frustrating than when he played quarterback for Madison's freshman football team in 2007. The Senators trailed rival Cleveland High School 14-7 with a minute remaining on the clock. James threw a fourth-down pass deep to his receiver, who dropped the ball. Madison lost the game.

"I cried, can't lie," James said.

However, winning and losing is not the object of sports for James. He enjoys the adrenaline rush from the fast pace of competition. Perhaps more importantly, James enjoys teamwork.

"With track, it's only you," he said. "I don't like individual sports. I like that I can carry a guy on my back, and he could do the same for me."

For the past two years, he has been playing quarterback for Madison. However, since watching a Detroit Red Wings game at the age of 5, James has devoted the last 11 years playing his favorite sport: hockey.

Writing has become the path of his future, but James will never lose sight of his first love — playing sports.

"When I am playing I don't have to think about anything else," he says. "I'm not worried about school or friends... (sports) has helped me through a lot of adversity."

James Chavez



Embracing change

MARICRUZ GONZALEZ VAZQUEZ
on **CYNTHIA CHAND**

Cynthia Chand recalled the day her 11-year-old self stood on the driveway of Evergreen Middle School in Hillsboro. She adjusted her glasses, shifted her tiny feet and looked around. Her eyes scanned the yellowing trees, the gray sky, the unfamiliar structure and the excited people. Kids circled her, greeting each other and talking about how great seventh grade was going to be after the long summer.

Cynthia stood there feeling fearful of not belonging and hoping that one day she would.

When her family moved to Oregon from California, she says, she was the one who took the change the best. Cynthia was used to difference and change in her life.

The move to Oregon removed her from her extended family and exposed her to a new way of life. In Oregon there were no Indian parties. She couldn't hang out with her cousins and she didn't know anyone.

Now, Cynthia said, "I feel kind of left out because I don't have that time with them anymore...it's kind of sad."

She was already balancing her culture and the culture she had been born into. Both her parents were from the Fiji Islands. Her father, Yatish Chand, is Hindu, like his family in California. That means Cynthia grew



Cynthia Chand

up without eating beef or pork and eating completely vegetarian meals on Tuesdays.

On the other hand, Nunjale Chand, her mom, is Christian. Along with Hindu beliefs, Cynthia also grew up with Christmas and Easter. All her life she had heard both religions and was comfortable with the blend of traditions, just another part of her life. But balancing American and Indian culture leaves Cynthia feeling in-between.

"I never feel like I fully fit in," Cynthia said. With her Indian cousins telling stories about Fiji and speaking Hindi, she feels more Americanized. And her American friends don't understand aspects of her Indian culture, such as the level of respect she has for her parents.

Change also came early to Cynthia through school. In California her parents wanted a better education for her than the one her district was offering. Her new school was for kids with military parents. They move, a lot. Cynthia was always left behind to make new friends. It taught her to be more flexible with the shifts that life threw at her. Now, Cynthia says, "I get bored without change."

Born in 1992 in warm California, Cynthia grew up surrounded by both sets of grandparents and many cousins. Cynthia's family often got together to share their Indian culture. They were her world.

In Oregon, school became her new world. Cynthia joined a drama group. She

also became involved with a group of kids representing their school in Hillsboro. "I like feeling important," she said. "Knowing that people are depending on me feels good."

Now that she is 16 years old and soon to be a senior, she has branched out to different activities. In the fall she runs cross country. In the winter she writes for the school newspaper. In the spring she competes in track.

Next school year Cynthia will become vice president of Glencoe High. She and her team will be in charge of pep assemblies, which she wants to change to include the artists at Glencoe, artists like her. Cynthia has been playing the piano for about 10 years and says she will always play because it's a huge part of her life.

More change is coming. Next year, she will graduate from high school and hopes to go off to Lewis and Clark College, but she has no idea what she will major in. She has considered many jobs, like teaching or journalism, but "nothing sticks that long."

In journalism, she enjoys the people, the stories they give her and the atmosphere of Glencoe's newspaper room. Cynthia will make a choice by trying out the journalism summer camp.

Cynthia remembers the bell ringing that first day of seventh grade. It was time for lunch. People moved in a stream to Evergreen's cafeteria to eat. She stood in the middle of lunch tables wondering where she was going to sit. The place looked to her like a vast and intimidating sea of people. In the corner of her eye she saw an empty seat. Then she caught sight of a hand waving at her. She went over to a smiling girl and introduced herself, knowing that she had found an island she could hang onto for a while.