

News release



Everett Public Schools

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H.M. Jackson senior awarded *Unbeaten* medal

Before Saturday night's free showing of his inspirational film [*Unbeaten*](#), Cascade High School 1976 graduate and the movie's producer, Gregory Strom, recognized seven Snohomish County residents for their [*Unbeaten Spirit*](#), for never giving up and for rising to the challenge of seemingly insurmountable odds.

H.M. Jackson High's Nicole Oliphant is a senior who exemplifies the *Unbeaten Spirit* in her academic and personal achievements. Nicole is an honor student who has already been accepted at Oregon State University, but who is patiently waiting for her results from her application to the University of Washington. She has been taking AP classes for two years and has a GPA of 3.6, which is no small achievement for someone who has to work twice as hard as her able bodied peers. Nicole depends upon her wheel chair to navigate through her social and academic world.

Nicole was born with *Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenital* (AMC), which is a rare [congenital disorder](#). AMC is a non-progressive condition which, in Nicole's case, has affected all four limbs. Nicole has had over 14 surgeries, is a very strong self-advocate and makes her own decisions on her surgeries. In addition, she has scoliosis which does not slow her down one bit! She uses her wheel chair with great expertise and successfully attends school with the assistance of her paraeducator, assistive technology, her computer, software and the support of a loving family.

Nicole's family stresses that she has had amazing support through Everett Public Schools, from Silver Firs Elementary, to Gateway Middle School and now H.M. Jackson High School.

Nicole's parents have raised her no differently than her siblings, Kyle and Cassidy. They are very flexible. When her family faces an accessibility challenge, they figure out how to adapt it to meet Nicole's needs. For example, when her family would go ice-skating, they adapted her wheel chair so she too could be out on the ice.

Nicole is well-rounded, very social and has a great group of friends. She is very outgoing and involved in many volunteer activities such as Girl Scouts, Youth in Government, and she is an ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Nicole has to work harder than able-limbed students, and she uses speech-to-text technology and accesses her computer with the use of a head mouse.

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She truly is an exceptional student with a strong spirit who comes from an exceptional family. She has stood up to her physical limitations and has turned them around to a remarkable belief in herself which will certainly result in her accomplishing whatever she wants in life. Nicole intends to go either University of Washington or Oregon State University and complete her undergraduate studies in biology or psychology.

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