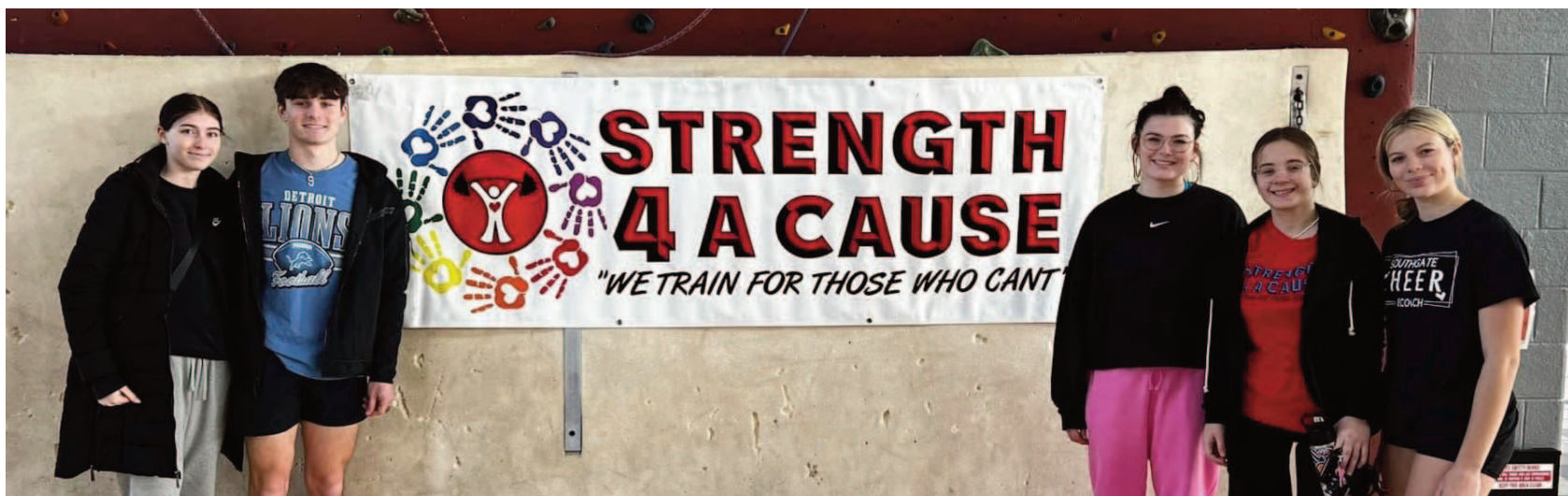


Elina Villemure: Lesson in Courage!

by David C. Butty



Each student who graduates from Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD), has a unique story to tell. Stories may be about what brought them here; what kept them here; the programs; the faculty who inspired and helped them; and most of all, the close proximity of the campus to their neighborhood.

We would like to share just a few of these wonderful and heartfelt stories with you as we celebrate their success during this season of commencement. There are those who have overcome profound hardships, those who are first generation college graduates or those who have an established family history. We celebrate the success of all our graduates and encourage you to read their stories as a way to inspire your own educational journey.

Most children, by the time they graduate kindergarten, will already

know the most important things one needs to succeed: how to read, how to write, how to share and how to use their imagination. In today's world, it is how to manipulate the cell phone with all the different ring tones and apps.

However, 19-year-old Elina Villemure, adopted when she was around five or five and a half years old, was born without both legs. "I am comfortable with it. I have had amazing opportunities and experiences because of it. I've also been able to impact lives through it as well," said Elina, who is featured in this year's WCCCD's "Special Recognition" article. "I do CrossFit, ride horses, climb mountains, ride bikes, etc. it's been amazing being able to learn these things and inspire people," she added.

The 19-year-old does not hesitate to talk about her experiences. The double amputee was adopted when

she was just five and a half years old from her native country in Bulgaria, Eastern Europe. "My story is unique," she said. I will be receiving my Associates Degree and will walk across the stage at this year's graduation ceremonies.

There will be a house-full of cheering crowds at this year's graduation ceremonies of the Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD). The program will be held at Ford Field in Detroit on Saturday, June 8th, 2024. This year's keynote speaker will be Hill Harper, Actor, Author and Humanitarian.

"I want to empower those with adaptations through fitness, love, support, and faith, she said. Elina Villemure, who will be receiving her Associate's in Science degree, is planning to attend Eastern Michigan University to major in elementary education.

"I want people to take advantage of any opportunity that comes their way. I am so fortunate that I took the opportunity in high school to do the Early Middle College Program through WCCCD. It pays off," said Elina, whose hobbies include playing the guitar. "I love playing the piano and doing CrossFit, too."

The WCCCD's Virtual Middle College (VMC) is designed to help high school students jumpstart their college education as they prepare for their career programs.

The GYM where she works out has on its wall these words: "We rise by lifting others." A reminder of the importance of community and the positive impact we can have when we work together to help each other like "Mighty Warrior CrossFit," in Brownstown Charter Township, Michigan.



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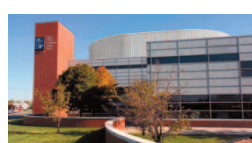
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