



My name is Rose Hollermann

I am a 12-year-old girl living in southern Minnesota. In August of 2001 I was in car accident giving me a spinal cord injury.

In kindergarten I used to get mad when other kids wouldn't play tag with me because I was too easy to tag. Then in third grade I tried to play basketball at my school. They wouldn't throw the ball to me because I would fall over. But than I started swimming with Courage Center and found out there were other kids like me.

I loved swimming so much that I started doing other sports and soon was doing everything I could. I now do swimming, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair softball, track & field, tennis, sled hockey, archery and table tennis. Because we live about 80 miles away from Courage Center, most of my free time is now being spent traveling between practices and home. I spend a lot of time sleeping and doing my homework in the car.

Sports have given me the confidence to do other things as well. I have been asked to speak at different functions on behalf of Courage Center and found out I enjoy doing it. Some of the places I spoke at are the Federal Correctional Prison in Waseca, in front of about 300 people at a Rotary Club fund raiser and other smaller groups. One time I even got a chance to travel to the Twin Cities and speak on live TV.

As a member of our varsity basketball team, the Junior Rolling Timberwolves, I get to do a lot of demonstrations in front of different groups. I have even gotten the opportunity to play at half time of the NBAs Minnesota Timberwolves and at a University of Minnesota Golden Gophers women's college basketball game.

In school I belong on our sixth grade math team and am a peer mediator. I play the oboe in my band and I do crossing guard. So if I'm not doing sports I'm doing a school activity. I do the leadership academy through Courage Center and have completed their volunteer training class.

Since I have started competing in sports, I have met a lot of people and had a chance to do so many things I might not have done otherwise. My fellow teammates are my second family and I look forward to seeing them before each game or practice.

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Being involved in sports has helped me accept my disability. It has given me the opportunity to compete with other kids and learn self- confidence. My goal is to compete at the Paralympics and eventually become a coach. One of my other goals is to get the Paralympics on television, so other can see that our disabilities don't make a difference. Remember never let a disability hide your true ability.

Why I want to go to Beijing is to experience what the Paralympics are like and to help me decide what sports I want to specialize in.