



New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight

Hagerman's Herrera Leads Bobcats on Several Fronts

By Jeff Jackson

Emi Herrera seems to be in the middle of everything at Hagerman High School. The 18-year-old senior is on the volleyball team, cheerleading squad and serves as Student Council president.

With all of her involvement, Herrera considers herself a school leader.

"I am the president of student council in my first year of being a part of it," she said. "A lot of people come to me and then tell me they look up to who I am. I've never been in trouble. Anytime I'm in the principal's office it's because he has a question about something."

Volleyball is going well for Herrera and the Bobcats, who had won seven of 12 matches entering Tuesday's match against Tatum. She roams all over the court and does whatever is needed in a match. When not playing volleyball, she's cheered on the football team, which has won four straight games.

Volleyball is the priority between the two activities if there is a conflict, but she has managed to juggle it all.

"I honestly play everywhere, wherever I'm needed. Normally volleyball is my priority and, when that's done, I go into my cheer life," she said. "We work hard at practice. We like to get things done so we can get home. We get out as early as we can because some of the girls have to go to work. We all know we have to work hard to get out, to go to work or cheer practice or something." Herrera and her family moved from Mexico when she was seven years old and have moved around from Hagerman, Dexter and Roswell in those 11 years.

"Hagerman was the place where my parents found a home that was a settled home for us and it was the closest to the school. I liked Dexter pretty well, too. They're small schools and being in a small school is good."

Dexter is where Herrera found her church, First Presbyterian, and developed an interest in serving people through an activity more important than volleyball, cheerleading and even student council. She's a missionary and travels to assist needy families in underdeveloped, rural areas. Her church work has taken her to Fort Defiance, Arizona, Springfield, Colorado, and most recently Laredo, Texas.

Some of the people she helps are in need because of a fire or other disaster to their homes, but much of the time the goodwill she delivers is reciprocal.

"It goes both ways. When we plan a trip, our plan is to go there and help them but when we get there I feel like most of the time they help us by noticing what is different about our lives," Herrera said. "We sit down and talk about it and we figure out ways to help them. The last family we went to, we helped them expand their home because their home from before got ruined and they were living in a bad place. We wanted to help them start a new home."

Herrera and her youth group, 12 in all, are hoping to make a long-distance mission adventure and even want to continue with missions while she attends college and beyond that as a long-term goal.



“Absolutely, yes. I’m actually thinking that when I get out of high school. I want to go to college and major in event planning and minor in accounting. I’ve always had that goal of helping people. I want to plan now to have a trip to Kenya, with a mission trip that goes every year.” Herrera lives with an older brother and her mother, Sanjuana, while several brothers and sisters also reside in the area with families of their own. So family life presents another challenge for her to face and conquer.

“My dad passed away when I was 14 but I have a lot of brothers and sisters. There are nine of us. I’m the youngest in the family,” she said. “It’s definitely a challenge trying to get stuff paid and trying to get everything together as a family. It’s complicated.”

“My mom and dad raised all of their kids to always help people and to always make sure we have what we need before we have what we want. Around the house, my mom’s not really like ‘I have to have chores done.’ She’s happy with me going to school, doing sports and having good grades.”

When she finishes high school Herrera wants to attend Colorado Christian University or stay close to home and study in Portales at Eastern New Mexico.

“Right now I would say high school is one of the most important things; trying to have good grades and have all the stuff that I need to be able to move on with my life,” she said.