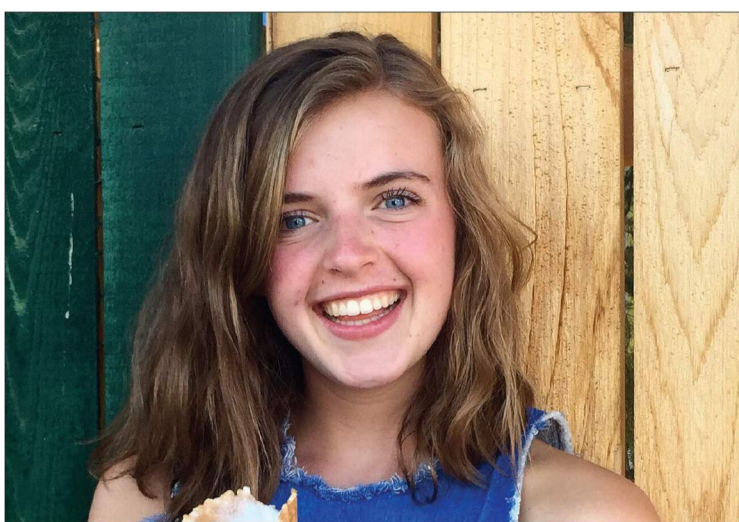


## SPONSORED FEATURE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Wood River rising junior Ellie Gorham. Photo courtesy of Ellie Gorham

# STUDENT EYES SOCIAL WORK

*'I want to be a person that people can talk to'*

BY JONATHAN KANE

Ellie Gorham, who is entering her junior year at Wood River High School and carries a 3.8 grade point average, wants to improve the quality of other people's lives. To that end, the National Honor Society member is also involved as a board member of Girls on the Run of the Wood River Valley and will start an internship this year with the Hailey-based nonprofit The Advocates for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

As a freshman, Gorham won the Citizenship Award at WRHS, and as an artist she created a multimedia artwork project for her personal project to help spread awareness for the endangerment of the African elephant.

"I'd really like to be a social worker," she said. "Being a counselor fits into the direction I want to take in my life. It can take on a wide variety of roles – from working in jails or in schools, for example. It may just be meeting with a person who has family problems and attempt to help them by listening to and discussing their issues."

"I really love people and sometimes think about other people's problems before my own. I also love to make people happy whether they are in a bad or good situation. I want to be a person that people can talk to and they will know that I am there for them. It makes me feel happy."

"At Wood River, there are so many different people from different families and they have all come from different places. I try to keep an open mind about their different situations and hopefully make them smile and get through a problem that I probably couldn't get through."

As an ETC [Every Teen has a

Choice] intern for The Advocates, Gorham helps other teens deal with serious problems.

"The teen years are the toughest because we are all growing up and finding out who we will be the rest of our lives. And there are a lot of issues that people don't see that teens have. Some are big and some are small, and we want to illustrate these issues and tell people that we are trying our hardest."

Gorham was one of a handful of applicants accepted for the internship. She has spent her summer on the job.

"It felt awesome to get it because I really wanted it. It works so well with what I want to do, which is to help people and to interact with the community to spread awareness for teen issues through the schools and community."

"Some of these issues are drugs and alcohol, bullying and how to have healthy relationships. I really feel that we can accomplish something and help spread awareness throughout the community."

Gorham also serves on the board of the 501(c)(3) organization Girls on the Run. "I started participating in fifth grade. When I was younger, I struggled socially."

"At Girls on the Run, I met a great group of girls and they really helped me a lot by boosting my self-esteem as well as keeping me in shape. It's also a way to empower young girls in a great way. I would highly recommend it to everyone."

*Editor's note: Anyone who would like to recommend a Blaine County School District student for The Weekly Sun's "Student Spotlight" feature should contact Jonathan Kane at [jkjonkane@gmail.com](mailto:jkjonkane@gmail.com).*

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