

MADDIE VALENCIA



INTERVIEWING junior Katie Turner for the Of People For People instagram account, senior Maddie Valencia asks questions about Turner's 3 knee surgeries within the last year on Sat. Jan. 26. "It's an Instagram page of people for people to share different people's stories and I just liked the meaning behind it and it stuck with us ever since."

By Abby White

TO SHARE PEOPLE'S STORIES, MADDIE VALENCIA AND HER FRIEND CREATE AN INSTAGRAM

After house sitting together this summer, senior Maddie Valencia and De Soto senior Chase Culver decided to create an Instagram to feature individuals with interesting life stories. The duo started their Instagram "Of People For People" in July of 2019.

Valencia and Culver started their page as a way to give others a platform to tell stories about anything, from the loss of a parent to journaling.

"We were trying to figure out some way that we could connect further with people," Valencia said. "We meet so many different people on a daily basis who are going through so many different things that you would never know about."

According to Valencia, they didn't originally plan to start an Instagram.

"We thought about doing a podcast or something," Valencia said. "Then we came up with the idea of an Instagram page to share people's stories. It's progressed from there."

Culver and Valencia found sources in the area with ease.

"We have a ton of people that direct message us and say 'Hey, this person has a super interesting story, belief, vision or passion,'" Culver said. "They're devoid, so their voice should be heard."

After agreeing to be featured, junior Katie Turner discussed her knee injury and journey of rehabilitation with the duo.

"A lot of people don't know what the process is like. It was a whole year of recovery," Turner said. "I think what they're doing is really cool, and it's really good for them to tell people's stories."

While the pair used the page as an outlet for creating connections with others, Culver enjoyed its ability to allow him to collaborate and build his friendship with Valencia.

"We are from different schools, so when we do collaborate, it's fun because we haven't seen

each other in a while," Culver said. "It's cool to interact with her on a shallow level and just have fun, but also seeing her passion for sharing other people's stories."

Recording some people's deepest thoughts and stories, Valencia's work allowed her to gain an insight on how to positively impact others.

"It has made me more aware of other people and their emotions. You never know what someone's going through. When I meet people, I'm more open and I'm not as negative; I try and just listen to them," Valencia said. "So many people just want someone to listen to them talk."

With Valencia and Culver heading to college, they are focused on expanding their vision.

"We're just going to spread more and hopefully grow bigger and just share more stories," Valencia said. "With our page we wanted to create a community of people that have different voices and people can share their voice."

By Avery Liby