

# Beyond ASA: The Friend Factor

Written by Abby Druelle & Maddie Vos, ASA Class of 2020

Eighth grade brings many traditions: School leadership, designing the 8th grade t-shirt, Christmas caroling while delivering decorated sugar cookies, and May Crowning. As the months fly by, the reality of moving on slowly sinks in, and one very real question arises. Where is my best friend going to high school?

For Maddie Vos and Abby Druelle, this became all too real all too quickly in the spring of 2020. “Maddie and I had planned to go to West Catholic together for as long as I can remember. When I found out Maddie and I were attending different high schools, my stomach dropped,” Abby recalled.

Although Maddie made the final decision to go to Catholic Central after visiting, at the same time, she was terrified to go to school without Abby. They were each other’s best friend. So how did they do it? “Maddie and I made plans ahead of time. We decided we would set time aside on the weekends to get together and catch up. We picked out certain days of the year, like our birthdays, to spend together. Most importantly, we decided that nothing was really going to change, and that we would continue to make time for each other.”

There were hard times, though. “I missed Abby a ton that first year,” Maddie recollected. “I wanted to tell her so much about what was going on with school, friends, grades, everything. We even emailed each other during school to check up on each other. We still do that. Keeping that contact through the entire year was probably the biggest thing that helped us stay so close.”

Freshman year was difficult for

Abby, too. “I wasn’t a very outgoing person at the time, so it was tough for me to make friends on my own at first. It was hard to not see Maddie at school every day because I just wasn’t used to it. Even though I eventually stepped out of my comfort zone and made my own friends, I still missed Maddie. I realized that adding more people into my life wouldn’t ever change the spot I held in my heart for her. I think Maddie and I both agree that it felt weird not to see each other very often. Having to communicate over technology was hard, but we knew we had to make it work.”

Going to each other’s football games was another way they were able to spend time together. Taking time to catch a movie, going sledding, or grabbing some ice cream helped them stay tight. Once they were both able to drive, they found they could have quick visits with one another after school or at work. Going for drives while listening to music became a favorite way to catch up in the evening when they didn’t have other obligations. Fifteen minutes or an hour, touching base was what was important.

Both Maddie and Abby are getting ready to enter their senior years of high school. One is still at Catholic and the other is at West. Both can look back and admit they actually grew up going to separate high schools. “I see advantages to attending a different high school than your best friend because it forced me to get out of my shell and talk to other people. Without going to Catholic Central, I wouldn’t have made friends that I have today.” Maddie continued, “I feel like it also forced me to try other things

I wouldn’t have because I would’ve just stuck to whatever my limit was and what I was comfortable with.” Abby agreed with Maddie. “Going to separate high schools has made me step out of my comfort zone a lot. Not only with meeting new people, but also in school with presentations, group projects, etc. I think that being forced to try new things without any help from my best friend has improved me as a person. It has helped shape me into who I am today. Stepping out of my comfort zone has also helped me become more extroverted towards Maddie as well. Even though Maddie and I are already so crazy together, I think that a little more outgoing features added to our friendship and makes it just that much better.”

Their college years are right around the corner. What do these two see in their futures? “For me, I either want to go into school counseling or become a nurse. I feel like I’m leaning more towards the school counselor because I like to help people with problems and listen to people. I am doing the Nurse Teach KCTC program next year,” Maddie shared. Abby has some idea, too. “I’m not completely set on what I want to go into in the future, but I am leaning towards elementary education. I love working with kids, so I am thinking about second or third grade.”

And their future as friends? Maddie knows after the last three years, Abby and she have a true friendship. Abby was quick to agree. “We are still able to maintain a strong and healthy friendship together because we both put in the effort. Realizing this, I know at this point that Maddie and I can get through anything together.”