



Local Teen Inspires Others Through Music



By **PAIGE JARVIE**
Special to **The Outlook**

Adelle Higley, an eighth-grader at La Cañada Preparatory School, began her quest to make junior high school a kinder place by posting quotes of encouragement on her Facebook page.

Her message: "Stay different! Your difference may be exactly what this world needs to become a better place."

"I wanted to help people stay strong," Higley said. "At my old school, people were being put down just because they were different."

According to school adminis-

trators, Higley has been embraced at her new school for her optimism. But this had not always been the case.

Adelle is different, too. She spent the first year of her life in a Vietnamese orphanage. She was missing her right leg, a full set of fingers and battled life-threatening illness. Needless to say, her resilience was tested from the start.

After countless surgeries, she now has a prosthetic leg — but don't think for a moment that it holds her back. Higley was a starter on the school's volleyball team; she starred as a "Who" in LCP's 2009 spring musical, "Seussical"; she is a cheerleader, rides horses, takes Tae Kwon Do lessons and loves running.

"I can't wait to run track in high school!" she shares.

Despite her demanding schedule, Higley has always made time for her friends, particularly those old classmates of hers. Yet what began as reaching out to them is now approaching "pop star" status, according to teachers.

A composer-friend read the quotes she was posting on Facebook and suggested they collaborate. The quotes became lyrics; the lyrics were set to melody; a full

recording studio session later, "Love Me for Who I Am" was made.

The album cover's inscription perhaps sums it up best: "Songs for anyone who's been on the outside looking in."

This summer, she found herself getting a taste of the rock-star life: spending more than six hours in a recording studio and 40 hours filming a music video.

"I thought a song would be a good way to reach out because the lyrics get stuck in your head. And then the message will sink in eventually, you know, like math." She pauses and laughs. "Um, maybe that's a bad example," she adds with a smile.

Her music video is currently on YouTube, and the song, along with "Nothing's Gonna Stop Me Now" and "Let's Celebrate," is available on iTunes.

Higley continues to write new lyrics in her spare time. Her next project: a Christmas album. While she hopes her music will make its way around the globe, becoming the next Miley Cyrus is not her main aspiration.

"I want to focus on school, be a vet one day, and write music as a hobby," she said.

Adelle Higley has battled a life-threatening illness, but the La Cañada Preparatory School eighth-grader's new song is available on iTunes. She also stars in a music video.