



## *A Dedicated Grizzly*

How many of us can say that we get to do something every day that we absolutely love? Mesa Ridge freshman Dacia Loconte definitely can! Her passion is figure skating, a sport she has grown to love since first starting at seven years old.

Her training regimen is rigorous. Dacia wakes up at 4:30 AM every day to attend practice before school and even attends another practice after school some days. She learns two programs each season, both with complicated choreography and athletic jumps. She competes around the country against some of the best athletes in the sport. In fact, her family moved to Colorado Springs, also known as “Olympic City, USA”, in part to have access to some of the best figure skating coaches in the country.

One of the most amazing aspects of Dacia’s training in figure skating is her recent work developing a nationwide adaptive figure skating program. Adaptive figure skating provides an opportunity for differently-abled individuals to participate competitively and to receive feedback from judges, rather than just a score. This program is new to US Figure Skating and Dacia is one of its pioneers. She was the first skater to participate in the United States and has helped to promote it by sharing her experience with others on social media and official websites (you can [watch Dacia](#) on the [US Figure Skating website](#)).

Dacia’s dedication to her sport is what drives her to keep working hard. “If you don’t really love what you’re doing, you’re not going to perform as well. Find something that you love in whatever you’re doing.” Even in figure skating, there were times Dacia felt like giving up. Her advice to those who feel overwhelmed:

*“Don’t give up. When I pushed through it, it ended up being worth it.”*

Although it’s no surprise to those who know Dacia, many students and staff at Mesa Ridge will be surprised to learn that they are working alongside a trailblazer in youth figure skating in the United States. She is kind, passionate, studious, and determined - a Mesa Ridge Grizzly Great forging a path ahead in her sport for others to follow.