

## Berhorst named OC-ADCAT Student of the Month

By: Neal A. Johnson | Source: Unterrified Democrat

Fatima senior Lauren Berhorst is known to be consistent on the cross-country course and track, and she applies that same approach to everything else, which led to her selection as the Osage County Anti-Drug Community Action Team (OC-ADCAT) Student of the Month.

"Lauren's got her priorities straight as far as schoolwork and athletics are concerned," said Chemistry Teacher Kurt Strope, who nominated Berhorst. "She's a good role model in and outside the classroom, doing what she's supposed to be doing. She can be a vocal leader when she needs to, but most times, she's a quiet leader. She motivates herself to do what she needs to do to achieve her goals."

Lauren was raised by her parents, Gary and Gina, to avoid drugs and alcohol, and they took it a step further. "They didn't really want us to do it, and then they would say they weren't going to buy us alcohol either," Lauren said.

Lauren's older sisters, Kayla and Amber, reinforced that message.

"Kayla was always the more outgoing one," Lauren noted. "She told me not to do that, and I looked up to her. I appreciate the advice she gave me. Amber played a role because she told me not to worry about my friends if I chose not to go to a party. She told me that wouldn't mess up my friendships, and she was right."

Lauren added that she doesn't mind attending parties but draws the line at partaking in whatever may be offered. "I'm more worried about what the consequences could be, and I don't care much about drinking anyway. I don't really want to know the effects of that."

She doesn't feel much peer pressure because her classmates know her position. "My friends still ask me if I want to go to parties, but I don't feel pressured to do it," Lauren said. "I also don't feel let out if I say no. I have great friends." As an All-State cross country and track athlete, Berhorst knows the consequences of being caught drinking are severe. In addition to the legal ramifications of being charged with minor in possession, there are penalties at school that would prevent her from competing.

"It's just one more reason to avoid it altogether," Lauren said. "I don't want to mess up my future or what I'm doing now. It's not worth it."

Berhorst is treasurer of Fatima's chapter of the National Honor Society and an FCCLA member.

With a GPA of 3.872, Berhorst is doing well academically and plans to pursue a college degree. However, she has yet to decide where she's going. She is considering a career in accounting or finance in the banking sector.

Berhorst isn't convinced that running is in her future. "I don't know if I want to run in college," she added. "People have reached out, but I'm undecided."

"No matter what she chooses to pursue, she will be successful," said Strobe.

OC-ADCAT Executive Director Lorie Winslow will present Berhorst with a certificate, and he will be eligible to apply for the annual Student of the Month Scholarship.

"I am so excited to showcase our seniors who have chosen to live a drug- and alcohol-free life," said OC-ADCAT Education Committee Chairperson Charlotte Bellsmith. "I know this is not an easy thing to do. The pressure on our teens to drink while still underage is still pretty severe."

For more information about OC-ADCAT, visit <https://www.ocadcat.org>.