

Major Accomplishments

Added by **By CASSADY EDWARDS** on October 19, 2017.

OXFORD—You take a deep breath and count to four. You can't see the crowd because of the stadium lights glaring down into your eyes, but you know there is a full friday night stadium staring at you. You keep your head high and your eyes set to kill- and you're walking out onto the field. Every step, breath, and movement is being watched. It's show time.

This is the life of a Talawanda Marching Band member. They spend ten hours a week or more rehearsing the same show step by step from July to November—every movement has to be perfect. Now imagine that entire band of rapidly moving, counting, and playing musicians relying on you. You are the one thing keeping them in time. All those hours of work are worthless if you mess up. This is the life of a drum major.

One of your 2017 Talawanda High School drum majors is Gus Lake, a Talawanda senior. It's a role that must be filled by someone new each year, having the constant pressure to not only learn how to lead the band, but how to top last year's show not only visually but musically and discipline-wise. "I want people to understand that being drum major is a huge responsibility but so is being a member and so we all have important roles within the marching band," Lake says. As you watch the focus and precision he has as he conducts the band before him, you can tell how unified the program is. It's not Gus leading his mindless band of marionettes, it's Gus, a marching band member, standing with the family that's supported and built each other up for his entire high school career. "The most striking thing that I've seen throughout my four years in band is the family that it is," he says. "We all respect each other which allows everyone to be themselves. Band's meaning changed for me as I became older because I made more friends and took a larger part in the organization."

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Lake has led one of the most successful generations in recent band history, winning multiple awards and scoring very well at competitions: "We've won best percussion in all competitions, and in one competition we got third overall. Gus and Jay are hella great and inspire us to do better while still being like friends or family," says a 4-year band member who has watched the progress of the program as a whole.

Their 2017 show is called "Shadows And Light." I remember looking up at the conductor at concerts and performances when I was younger and thinking they were just a figurehead; that they did nothing important. However, the work they do both on the field and behind the scenes is monumental, and I hope that the next time you hear the rumble of the announcer introducing "Your Talawanda Marchingggggg Braves," you will think about the family and incredible work that's working together and playing out on the field.

Featured Photo Cred: Camry Winsted-Neeley