

# The cadence of Keegan Alberts

Contributed by Sam Riley  
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"You can call me Keegz, by the way," says Keegan Alberts, casually introducing himself. A spunky, outgoing Grant sophomore, Alberts has an intense and rather unrestrained passion for music that overrides the hurdles of multiple sclerosis, an autoimmune disease known more simply as MS. Even with this unpredictable condition, Alberts lives his life the way he wants to, on a day-to-day basis with an outgoing and enthusiastic outlook.

Alberts was born in Portland, Oregon on January 27, 1994. The second child of the Alberts family, he spent his early childhood in Vancouver, Washington. At the age of 2, Alberts moved from Vancouver to the large, sprawling desert city of Scottsdale, Arizona.

Growing up in Arizona was a challenge without any sort of transportation. The nearest supermarket was about three miles away, and due to his parents' work schedules, Alberts was forced to take the hour-long commute to school via school bus. When Alberts turned 7, the Alberts family moved to Florida for about eight months before returning to Arizona. At an early age, Alberts discovered an interest in music and took up the alto saxophone for his school's concert band. He soon realized he possessed a natural talent for rhythm, and quickly dropped the saxophone for a more suitable instrument, the drum kit. At the end of his first practice, he had already begun to develop his own unique musical technique and his intense passion for music.

"It's what I like to do. You don't choose your instrument, it chooses you. I know that's cheesy but it's true, it's distinct," he states.

Music remained a constant in Alberts' life, despite his family's moves and other challenges. The week before Alberts' 14th birthday he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS), a chronic, often disabling disease that attacks the central nervous system. Symptoms vary from person to person, from mild symptoms such as numbness of the limbs to more severe symptoms like paralysis or loss of vision. "To sum it up, basically your immune system is attacking itself. Sometimes I feel it and sometimes I don't, it's not predictable," he says as he takes another bite of his cheese pizza. He seems unusually mature and calm about such a large issue involving his health.

"It doesn't affect me every day, but whether it does or it doesn't, I embrace it as it is a part of my life and it's out of my control. You just have to take what you're given, I'm still going to live my life the way I want to," he says.

After Alberts' diagnosis and before his first year of high school, his family once again relocated, this time to Portland where they have resided ever since. As a freshman, Alberts soon became friends with fellow Grantonian and musician Henry Smith. Smith was involved in the Portland music scene, and he soon began taking Alberts around town to see all of the local bands, including Smith's own band—Blind Einstein. This was Blind Einstein's last show, the band was deteriorating, and Smith, as well as frontman and bass player Eli Hirsch, were looking for members to form a new band. After the show, Smith introduced Alberts to Hirsch. They quickly found they had similar interests and tastes in music, and the three teenagers arranged for a jam session. Upon first meeting Alberts, Hirsch described him as a "quiet little doofus."

But after a few practices and one gig a band was created, and it was time for Portland to "Meet Your Monster." The band performed their benefit gig downtown next to Saturday Market, with a modest crowd waiting for them to play. When they took to the stage and began their opening song, the high energy of the music quickly captivated the attention from all those who passed by.

As they went through the set list, the crowd only seemed to get wilder and more energetic—kids jumped up on stage to dance and tons mosh pits erupted, even during the soft piano ballad.

Meet Your Monster's members' age doesn't bind them to being "just another high school band." They have a sound and chemistry you see in great bands.

"I love working with Keegz because he's completely honest about everything, and that's why he is my best friend. He won't succumb and agree with me all the time and that makes him very easy to trust, whether it be on stage or on a more personal level," Hirsch explains.

Nowadays, Alberts and the rest of Meet Your Monster are hard at work on their new EP, which should be finished and ready to release by spring. "It's a long process, but we're getting it done. You should buy a copy," Alberts says with an enthusiastic smile.

With that in mind, we should all get ready for spring, when the flowers bloom, the rain still hasn't stopped, and it's time to finally Meet Your Monster.