

On Feb. 10 I had a chance to sit down with 21-years-old Karla Hudson in the Fine Arts building to learn more about her life, how she grew up, and she came to be a student at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Karla got her name accidentally when her mother found that she was girl instead of a boy. Her mother had the name “Carlos” ready, but when she was born her mother named her “Karla” instead. Karla grew up in a multicultural home. Her mother is Hispanic, and her father is White-American, which is why she bears the English last name “Hudson”. “A lot of people ask me why my last name sounds ‘white’ when I obviously look Latina and that’s the reason why. I have to explain it all the time,” she coyly sighed. Karla’s 15-years-old half-brother is half Nigerian and relates more with his African heritage while she identifies more with her Hispanic upbringing. This makes Karla’s home very blended and has taught Karla to accept cultures different than her own.

Karla is currently studying Journalism at the University of Texas at Arlington and is a transfer student from Tarrant County College. She developed a love for writing and research after watching numerous documentaries that led her to stumble upon journalism. When she heard that UTA had a good journalism program she decided to attend since it was close enough to commute from her home in Grand Prairie and knew some high school friends that were attending here, too. Graduating high school was a turning point for Karla.

“I was very antisocial and had severe anxiety during my high school days and I struggled with my education in general then,” she said. Karla developed anxiety in her second year of high school and had it officially diagnosed around 17 when she experienced an episode where she couldn’t breathe and had rapid heart beatings. Initially, she thought she had heart issues but found that symptoms only got worse as she progressed to her senior year. “I procrastinated a lot

and I isolated myself from everyone. I began to eat every time I was stressed and started 'harming' myself to cope. I felt trapped. I dealt with consistent stress then," Karla explained, "I was at my worst." When Karla finally graduated, she decided to get proper help by talking to her family about her struggles and picking up healthier coping habits.

"I guess when I left high school, I wanted to leave my 'old' self behind. I wanted to be a better me," she smiled. She started going to the gym, running, and eating healthier. Drawing also helped Karla to express her emotions through art. Karla also made new friends and has developed herself to be more open socially.

Karla describes those times as dark moments but prides herself in coming out of those moments strong as ever. "Before I couldn't talk to anyone. I probably wouldn't make it through this interview," Karla laughed, "but now I speak to anyone, anywhere."

Recently Karla experienced a loss of a close friend but decided to cope with the loss in the healthiest way possible and not let her anxiety control her. She revealed that there are words that she lives by to remind herself that she is important. "I believe everyone is here for a reason, you are in someone's life for a reason. And that is how I look at myself and others. We are here and we deserve to be happy. I learned that the hard way, but I wouldn't trade it for the world," Karla concluded, "Nothing at all."