

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Local 8-year-old Hailey Dawson Starts Her “Journey to 30” by Pitching for the Padres**

*March 31<sup>st</sup> game marks first MLB park pitch in 2018 using her UNLV 3D-printed hand*

LAS VEGAS – March 14, 2018 – On March 31<sup>st</sup>, Hailey Dawson will throw out the first pitch at Petco Park for the San Diego Padres with her UNLV-created, 3D-printed hand. Her goal is to throw out the first pitch at all 30 Major League Baseball (MLB) parks. She has previously pitched for the Washington Nationals, Baltimore Orioles, and was even invited to throw the first pitch at the fourth game of the 2017 World Series.

Born with a rare birth defect called Poland Syndrome, Hailey has an underdeveloped pectoral muscle and missing or underdeveloped digits on her right hand. Her parents contacted UNLV’s Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering for help and, over the past three years, students and faculty have designed multiple 3D-printed hands which have enabled Hailey to grab, grasp, and even throw a baseball.

“We like the idea of a community-based design where we’re using our research and resources to help someone,” said Brendan O’Toole, mechanical engineering professor who continues to work on the project. “That, coupled with 3D-printing improvements in the last couple of years, made for some pretty good design opportunities. And it can make all the difference in the world of making Hailey more comfortable or safe.”

“Initially we looked at it like a functional type thing, but slowly it became a confidence builder for her,” explains Yong Dawson, Hailey’s mother.

Now Hailey and her family are using their love of baseball to draw attention to Poland Syndrome and cost-effective solutions for children. The first pitch Hailey threw out was at a University of Nevada, Las Vegas Rebels game when she was five years old. Last fall, when the [Bleacher Report](#) picked up Hailey’s story and Tweeted out a video asking MLB teams if they would help

her meet her goal of throwing out the first pitch at all 30 parks, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Hailey is currently scheduled to throw out the first pitch at 23 MLB parks between now and fall 2018, with additional teams still being scheduled.

Hailey's story has already inspired others. A local Las Vegas family, the Herreras, heard about Hailey on the news, contacted the college, and now UNLV engineering students are working with their daughter too, and building custom 3D-printed hands. Out-of-state followers online who have seen Hailey's posts have been moved to contact their own local colleges and are working with their university's engineering departments.

You can follow Hailey's adventure on Facebook at [@unlvengineering](#), on Twitter at [@haileys\\_hand](#) and [@unlvengineering](#), and on Instagram at [@haileys\\_hand](#). #journeyto30, #haileyshand, #unlvengineering

For a schedule of teams and games confirmed as of March 13, 2018, see attached.

#### **About UNLV**

UNLV is a doctoral-degree-granting institution of approximately 30,000 students and more than 3,000 faculty and staff that is classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a research university with high research activity. UNLV offers a broad range of respected academic programs and is on a path to join the top tier of national public research universities. The university is committed to recruiting and retaining top students and faculty, educating the region's diversifying population and workforce, driving economic activity through increased research and community partnerships, and creating an academic health center for Southern Nevada that includes the launch of a new School of Medicine. UNLV is located on a 332-acre main campus and two satellite campuses in Southern Nevada. Learn more at [UNLV.edu](#)

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