

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Media Contact: Cheryl Bella  
702-895-3965 (o) 702-499-3930 (c)  
[cheryl.bella@unlv.edu](mailto:cheryl.bella@unlv.edu)

## **Eight-year-old Hailey Dawson Completes Her “Journey to 30” at Los Angeles Angels Game on September 16, 2018**

*UNLV’s 3D-printed hands have traveled the United States as Hailey has thrown out the first pitch at all Major League Baseball parks*

LAS VEGAS – September 14, 2018 – What started out as a hopeful but crazy dream will become a reality on September 16<sup>th</sup> thanks to the perseverance of a little girl and her parents, the heart of the MLB, the dedication of a UNLV graduate student, and of course, a tweet by Bleacher Report!

“What we’ve realized through this journey is that it takes a community to help a girl reach her goals,” said Yong Dawson, Hailey’s mother. “Hailey’s journey started at five-years-old when a wish of throwing out a Ceremonial First Pitch for the Baltimore Orioles was granted by the team. Now here she is with pitch #30, the final pitch of her journey to throw out the first ball for all the MLB teams.”

Hailey was born with Poland Syndrome which caused the fingers on her right hand to be underdeveloped. Faculty and students from UNLV’s Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering have been working with Hailey over the past four years to design and print robotic hands to help her grab, grasp, and throw.

“Watching Hailey, she’s just a little girl doing her thing and having fun – proves to anyone that there are no excuses; anything really is possible,” said Maria Geradi, mechanical engineering graduate student who has been working on Hailey’s hands since almost the beginning. “It’s a great feeling to know my four years of hard work have led here. I’m so humbled.”

Hailey and her family have used their love of baseball to draw attention to Poland Syndrome and the potential for cost-effective, 3D-printed prosthetic solutions for children. Hailey threw out

her first pitch at a UNLV Rebels game when she was five-years old. Pitches for the Baltimore Orioles and Washington Nationals followed. Then, last fall, the [Bleacher Report](#) picked up Hailey's story and Tweeted out a video asking all MLB teams if they would help her meet her goal of throwing out the first pitch at all 30 parks.

They all responded "yes," and the Dawson family spent spring and summer traveling around the United States, celebrating America's favorite pastime and educating the public about Poland Syndrome.

"It took this community of people to help a then five-years-old build her confidence and self-esteem to where she is now at eight," said Dawson. "It took this community to help Hailey inspire other kids and adults. UNLV did this for her. Major League Baseball did this for her. All 30 teams, the players, and staff did this for her. Her family and friends did this for her. Hailey's confidence and positive spirit will continue to grow and the possibilities are endless for this kid born with Poland Syndrome."

Because of the publicity Hailey's story has received, other families are now working with UNLV and their own local universities to develop solutions for their children.

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, Hailey will complete her "Journey to 30" when she throws out the first pitch at the Los Angeles Angels vs the Seattle Mariners game at Angels Stadium.

### **Celebration at Rebel Homecoming Festival**

UNLV will continue to celebrate Hailey's achievement with alumni, staff, and the public on Thursday, October 18, 2018 during UNLV's [Rebel Homecoming Festival](#) from 6-9pm. Drop by the College of Engineering's booth on the Academic Mall between 7-8pm to celebrate with Hailey, and any other time during the festival to see the hands and meet students and faculty who have worked on them.

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

**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](http://UNLV.edu)

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