

Rio medallist visits NHHS



Hannah Darling, bronze medallist from the Canadian Women's rugby sevens team, joined the student council and girls rugby teams from NHHS on Thursday, Sept. 22, to tell her story of making it onto the Olympic team in Rio. Darling, who is 20 years old from Warsaw, Ont., played all sports growing up through grade school and into high school. She played boys' hockey and transitioned into girls' hockey in Grade 8 and played for the Peterborough Ice Kats when her coach Mike Burke realized she was too aggressive for hockey and needed to find a more suitable sport. Darling was introduced to rugby at that time and played for the Peterborough Pagans and was asked to move to Victoria, BC, when she was 16 to try out and train for the national team. Although the decision was difficult to leave her family and friends she realized it was everything she wanted and was working for. The call came in June 2016 that she was going to Rio as the second youngest player with the rugby seven team. Darling talked about proper nutrition, balancing training and school work and also the importance of recovery. Coming home from Rio she realized how much rugby was blowing up with all the media at the airport. When asked about her experience Darling said, "I'm 20 years old inspiring adults older than me, that was pretty cool." It was truly inspiring to listen to another small town girl talk about training and reaching their dreams of playing for Team Canada and the one quote that rang true was, "practice is more important than games." After the question and answer period Darling took to the field to test the girls' skills, drills and endurance as she ran them through some of the training she does repeatedly six days a week. It was a great experience that both the junior and senior girls took part in and will carry their new skills onto the field.

/ MELISSA ARMSTRONG Special to This Week



