



SCHOOL PROGRAM

ATHLETE STORIES

Joannie Rochette —
Courage // Grade 2-3

About Joannie

BORN January 13, 1986

BIRTHPLACE Montréal, Quebec

SPORT Figure Skating

OLYMPIC GAMES Vancouver 2010,
Turin 2006

FAVORITE RECESS ACTIVITY

Stretching and staying fit

ADVICE ABOUT BEING COURAGEOUS

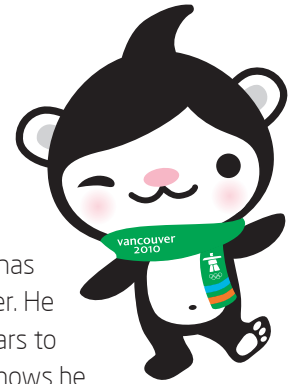
Always persevere, never give up

FAVORITE SUBJECT IN SCHOOL

Math, Biology, Chemistry



Joannie Rochette — Courage



Joannie Rochette's Olympic bronze medal hangs gracefully around her neck. It shines in the bright lights of Vancouver's Pacific Coliseum. As she looks down at the medal, Joannie remembers when she was little.

"I was suddenly a little girl again. I used to always draw pictures of myself winning an Olympic medal. Now that dream had come true."

A tear rolls down her cheek. Joannie feels happy, but she is also very sad. Just two days before Joannie began her competition, her mother, Therese, died of a heart attack. Therese had just arrived in Vancouver to watch and support her daughter.

"I knew I would still skate. My mother had been my main support. She always pushed me hard to be a great skater. It is hard to be a figure skater. She helped me get over many obstacles. I knew she would tell me to have courage. I dedicated my competition to her memory."

Joannie knows this was her mother's dream as well. Therese wanted to see her daughter on the podium at the Olympic Games. But it has not been easy to do that. Joannie is not from a big city where skaters have lots of support, or many clubs to choose from. She is from a small town. It would have been easy to give up. She has been hurt. She has made mistakes. She has fallen down. She has missed big jumps. Joannie didn't give up.

"You can't think about failure when you skate. You must prepare as best as you can. Doubt can help you train harder, but you have to fight against it. You have to be confident in yourself."

One time, Joannie had a problem with her long-time coach. They broke up right before a big competition. Joannie had to move to a new town to practise. Joannie's mother stepped in to help Joannie bounce back.

"She told me to be brave. She told me that the coach doesn't make me who I am as a person or a skater. I have to do that. It made me stronger to know that I had that responsibility."

Joannie looks into the crowd. She sees her father, Normand. He is a courageous man. He is sad but he has come here to cheer for his daughter. He has worked many jobs over the years to help pay for her training. Joannie knows he has helped her Olympic dreams come true.

Hundreds of cameras flash. All the fans in the rink want to capture the moment. Joannie's courage is the most moving story of the Olympic Winter Games.

"All the support was great, but it also added pressure. It was hard. Everyone was looking at me. Everyone knew what I was going through. For me, I had to try as hard as I could to lose myself in my own world."

That has not been easy. The crowds give her standing ovations every time she skates. TV stations have told her story around the world. She can't ignore the attention, she has to deal with it. Joannie has lived in the public eye for years.

"As a skater, I am all alone on a sheet of ice with a pretty costume and makeup. In hockey, if someone falls they just get back up. If I fall, everyone sees that. You have to be tough, even a little selfish to be a skater. You can't worry about what other people are thinking about you, good or bad. You have to be yourself."

The anthems begin to play. The flags of the top skaters rise to the ceiling. Joannie takes a deep breath and watches the Canadian flag. Everyone would have understood if Joannie had fallen down. They would have understood if she had left the competition. But Joannie showed courage and self confidence. She didn't quit. Now she is an Olympic bronze medallist.

Joannie thinks about the pictures she drew of herself when she was a child. In those pictures she is always smiling. Joannie does allow herself a smile now, to celebrate this achievement for herself and her family.

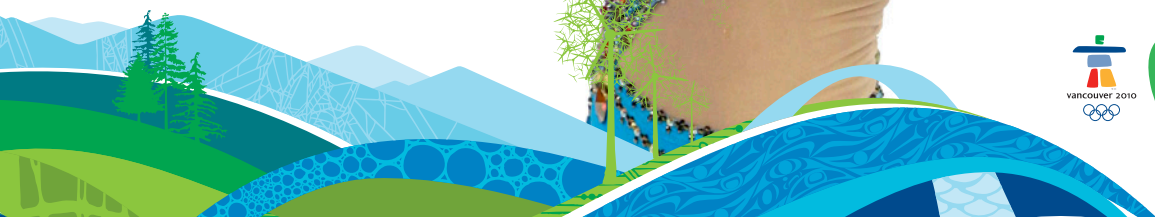


Joannie Rochette — Courage



1. Joannie's story shows us that difficult things in life help to make us stronger. Having courage is being able to face your fears and be brave. Now it is your turn, what does courage mean to you?

Courage is _____



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Joannie Rochette — Courage



2. Create a poster or collage of the people or things in your life that motivate you, help you persevere through tough times or that make you feel courageous.



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