

A full-length portrait of Haven Shepherd standing on a set of metal stairs. She is wearing a dark blue blazer with a red circular patch on the left lapel, a dark blue top, a green and blue plaid skirt, and black thigh-high socks with black shoes. She has long dark hair and is smiling at the camera. The background consists of a red wall and a blue wall.

HAVEN SHEPHERD

Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Team Member
2019 World Para Swimming Series Silver and Bronze Medalist
2018 World Para Swimming Series Gold Medalist
2017 Can-Am Open Gold Medalist

 @havenfaithshepard  @havieshep



HER STORY

Haven Shepherd was born on March 10, 2003, in the Quang Nam province of Vietnam. When Haven was only 14 months old her parents made the fatal decision to use an explosive device to end their lives and the life of their child. Their reasoning behind this decision remains unknown, but the explosion killed both of Haven's parents and flung Haven almost 30ft from the blast site. There are conflicting local reports that say that Haven's parents had her out of wedlock, or that they were unable to marry. Either way, Haven was never supposed to have survived that explosion nearly 20 years ago.

Haven was adopted by Rob and Shelly Shepherd in November of 2004. Rob and Shelly already had six children, but they could not shake the feeling that their family was not complete. They went on a trip to Vietnam with one of their friends to help facilitate the adoption of a Vietnamese baby who was involved in a terrible accident, Haven. Haven was to be adopted by another American family, and Rob and Shelly were just there to learn more about the adoption process. However, the other family decided that Haven was not the right fit for them, and the Shepherds welcomed her into their family with open arms.



Haven started swimming at age 10 and joined a more competitive swim team at age 12. Just one year after she joined the more competitive team, US Paralympic scouts were already tracking her as a potential team member for the national team. She started adding weights to her regimen and spent much more time in the pool. Haven occasionally traveled to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado and began to see her times get better and better. She started to see that the Paralympics were a distinct possibility in her future.





In 2020, Haven qualified for the Paralympics in Tokyo in the Women's 200m Individual Medley. In this event, she finished 5th overall and was incredibly happy with this result. Haven described this as the "ultimate dream come true" and continues to train full time and compete in hopes to qualify for the next Paralympics in 2024.

One of Haven's passions is giving back to those who have helped her like the Challenged Athlete Foundation (CAF) and the Endeavour Games. She meets with young kids and encourages them to try adaptive sports and stay involved with CAF so they can be a part of the amazing activities that this program has to offer.

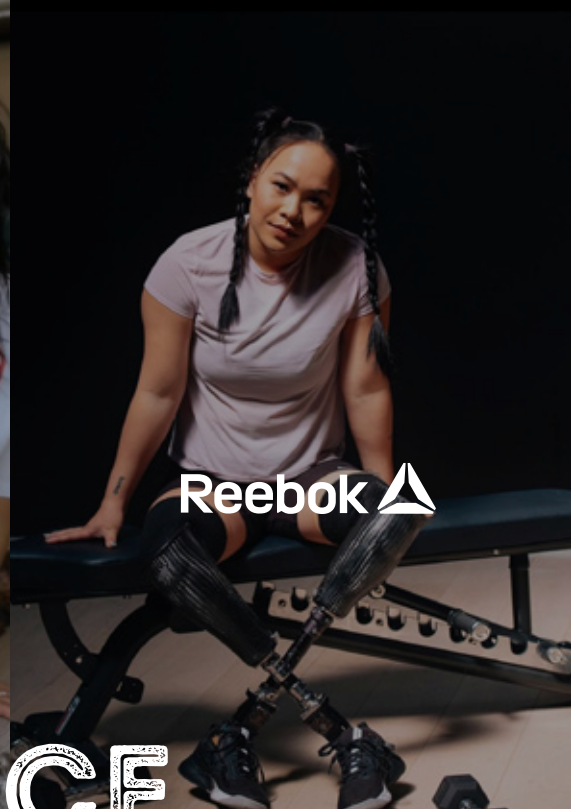
When she isn't swimming, Haven loves spending time with her family, and with six older siblings her extended family has grown to 38 people!

Haven and her family live in Carthage, MO where she loves hanging out with her friends, going to movies, and everything a 19-year-old loves to do.





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