

Candice Russell: *Tualatin Rockstar!*

Everyday Heroes

By Jenny Lind Conlee

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Candice Russell is not just the girl next door. At the age of 24, this life-long resident of Tualatin is pursuing her dreams of becoming a recording artist. Her angelic voice combined with her melodic hooks will have you rolling down your windows in your car, turning up the volume and drinking in the summer air. As the daughter of a pastor, Russell has spent her whole life singing in church.

If Candice looks familiar, it may be because she's done work as a model and has been in newspaper ads for Fred Meyer. She was also on season eleven of American Idol – going several rounds, making it to the very difficult “Hollywood week”. Strictly speaking statistically,



Russell's chances of success in the music industry may be far greater because she did not win the now cancelled singing competition. Other artists

of note that did not “make it” on this show include Colbie Caillat, Hillary Scott from Lady Antebellum, Amber Riley of Glee, Mary Lambert and Tori Kelly. Let's not forget Oscar and Grammy winner Jennifer Hudson who made it to the competition's top ten, but was eliminated.

Things haven't always come easy for this young artist. In 2010, Russell was diagnosed with Graves' disease, which is an immune system disorder that results in hyperthyroidism. Because thyroid hormones affect many body functions, the symptoms are wide-ranging.

Russell's symptoms included rapid heartbeat and a bulging of the eyes. She underwent radioactive treatment for her thyroid, essentially killing it. Then, she underwent grueling procedures to repair the bulging of her eyes. These procedures not only removed tissue from the eyes but also chiseling of bone around the eye sockets themselves. Her painful recovery took months and left her with double vision for two months with no guarantee that she would be able to see without double vision again. Thankfully, this was not the case, and Russell made a full recovery and is just as beautiful as ever; no one would ever know what she's been through.



Today, a happy and healthy Candice Russell works a day job as a pre-school teacher while she awaits the release of her upcoming EP titled *Ignite*. You can find her first album *So Much More* available on iTunes, as well as a video on YouTube for the title track made by the Make-A-Wish Foundation for a special young lady named Blue who has cerebral palsy and wished to star in a music video with her family. For more about Candice and her music, visit her website at candicerussell.com.

Candice's journey is a life lesson of overcoming obstacles wrapped up in a beautiful blanket of harmonious music, reminding us to never give up.



Jenny Lind Conlee is the wife of a Tualatin pastor, mom of twin boys, actor, singer, comedian and lover of donuts. You can follow her on Twitter @ [jenny lindconlee](https://twitter.com/jenny lindconlee) or on her blog: thefivestages.wordpress.com.