

During the first four years of my life, I grew up in the rural village of Galena with my parents and two sisters. There are many things that stood out to me about my life there, whether it be the extreme temperatures, unique lifestyle, or cultural aspects. However, the most important part of rural Alaska that I noticed was the small and close knit Athabaskan community. From a young age, I learned the importance of being there for and helping one another and how to give back to those that have given to you. This experience instilled in me the desire to make an impact in the world and the community around me. These lessons that I learned followed me into the next chapter of my life, when my family and I moved to the Kenai Peninsula.

It has always been my dream since I was little to become a nurse, but I never fully comprehended how much they can affect people's lives in such a positive way. It wasn't until I truly understood how compassion and kindness can play such a big role in affecting the people you work with that I was sure that nursing would be the perfect fit for me. My older sister is an emergency room nurse, and seeing her be able to help others and truly love her job inspired me to follow in her footsteps and become a nurse as well. A couple part-time job positions that have impacted my desire to become a nurse were working as a Hippotherapy (horse therapy) Assistant for an Occupational Therapist and a caretaker for an elderly with Alzheimer's. As a Hippotherapy Assistant, I was able to work alongside kids with special needs and assist them in many activities that they participated in, including helping them ride horses. I enjoyed getting to interact with the kids and provide support as they stepped outside of their comfort zone. Another job position that impacted me was taking care of an elderly couple, one of which suffers from both Alzheimer's and Dementia. This position inspired me by showing how someone suffering from two terrible diseases could still have incredible happiness throughout life and display genuine thankfulness for the people helping them. These different experiences in my life, and the

joy and lessons I learned from them, helped me know that nursing was the degree I wanted to pursue.

For the next four years, I plan to attend Northern Michigan University to work towards this degree while running and skiing collegiately for NMU. I know there will be obstacles along my journey to become a registered nurse. Some of these obstacles will include adjusting to a college routine in a new state away from my family, balancing the workload of high performance in both academics and athletics, and financially providing for my education while being a full-time student. After I graduate from college, I would like to explore the world for a few years through travel nursing in order to gain more experience. Following those couple years, I plan to return home to the Kenai Peninsula to be with my family and work as a nurse locally. It is very important to me to give back to the community I grew up alongside, and a career in nursing will allow me to accomplish this.