

My name is Sara Wieber. I am a junior at Portage Northern High School. I live in and grew up in Portage, Michigan along with my sister, Rachael, my brother, Eric, my mom, Janet, and my dad, Dale. Growing up, several people influenced me and made me the person I am today. One of these people includes my sister. Naturally as a younger sibling, I wanted to be like my big sister, which caused me to dress like her and behave like her in many ways. She was always academically talented and made me want to perform well at school too. Eric was also an influence on me, but in a very different way. As my older brother, he liked to tease me and boss me around. Although this sounds negative, these interactions taught me how to stand up for myself, and take care of myself. Without these role models and the help they gave/still give, I would not be who I am now.

Throughout my school career, I always strived to be the best I can be. Whether it was getting good grades, or getting along with the other students, I worked hard and succeeded. From my years in school, my thoughts on my future careers have changed dramatically. At one point I wanted to be a teacher, soccer coach, author and artist all at the same time. My mom would ask me how I would manage that and my response was always that I would teach during the day, coach after school and write and draw in my free time. As I grew older, my ideas matured a little bit and led to me to believe I wanted to be a marine biologist. That thought quickly died when my parents told me I would have to go into the ocean and work with other animals besides dolphins. Then I reached freshman year of high school. This is when I discovered accounting. At first I was unsure but once I started the class I found it to be interesting and that I was fairly talented at it. Outside of my business class, I enjoy band and math. My love of math is what led me to explore accounting in the first place. Math for me has always come easy and it made sense. I enjoyed the fact that there were only one or two correct answers to each problem. Outside of normal school subjects, I absolutely love band. Once I began playing percussion in sixth grade, I never wanted to stop. I love making music and working with a team where no one is valued over another and everyone gets to participate. Most of my time in the fall is spent in band

because that is marching band season. Once marching band season ends though, soccer season starts. I play center defense and defensive midfield on the soccer team. However, when I am not in band or playing soccer, I participate in and help lead Interact Club, focused on community service, help lead Fellowship of Christian Athletes club (FCA), Spanish Club, and Collegiate Club. Each of these activities has contributed a valuable skill to me.

Despite all the activities and accomplishments in my life, there have been times in my life where I was challenged. My eighth grade year, I joined a different soccer team than the one I had been on for the past five years. I thought this new team would provide more of the development I sought, but what I found was much more than that. Although I improved my skill level that year, my confidence took a hard hit. My coach rarely ever played me and when I did get to play, I was so unsure of my abilities that I felt I was getting worse. This led to me losing confidence in other areas of my life such as, band, school and friendships. I played quieter in band, I stopped raising my hand as much in class, and I was always scared that my friends secretly disliked me. All this added up to me becoming a shy and quiet person. However, the next year of soccer I had a new coach who understood me and how I felt; he encouraged me when I did something well and gave me constructive criticism when I needed to improve something. Between that and joining marching band my freshman year, I was able to be more like myself. People in band are so outgoing and eventually, I began talking to more people, opening up more easily, raising my hand in class and playing out in band. Sometimes I still feel the shyness that overtook me in eighth grade, but now I know better. I continue to put myself in situations I would not normally participate in such as being a leader in Interact Club, and FCA, and being a part of our Link Leader program at school. Coming back from this experience is my biggest accomplishment in life. It taught me not to listen what others have to say about me and to believe in my capabilities. Although it was the hardest year of my life, it made me more aware of others' feelings and believe in myself again.

Thinking ahead, I hope to be graduating from college in five years. I hope to have a degree in accounting and to start my search for a job. Eventually I plan to become a forensic accountant although I do not believe I can start out right away in that area. After another five years has passed after graduating college, I wish to have a stable job in forensic accounting where I will get to travel every once in a while, but not too much that I will not get to see my family. My main focus will be to balance work and family. I want to work a full week, but still be able to attend family events and other things.

Each of these different parts and times in my life has helped shape me into the person I am today. Without the influence of my family, I would not have been so successful in my school career so far; without the hardships I have faced, I would not have learned how to get past it and be the strong person I am. Everyone in my life up until now has prepared me and shaped me for the things to come.