

NIKKI BERG

Helping Others: A Life Filled with Hope

Graduate: Class of 2006 Occupation: Student, Psychology By Sarah Hopf, Spring 2010

Nikki Berg, a girl on a mission, has life mapped out in a new direction. The 2006 graduate of Forest Park will devote herself to others in any way possible. Having graduate school in her sight, Nikki plans to make her career in social work. Working to receive another degree, this young woman volunteers her time to anyone who needs a hand.

Because of her transition from being a student to a leader with advice, Nikki spent a large amount of time back in Ferdinand, Indiana. She volunteered at Forest Park Jr.-Sr. High School with special needs kids, allowing her to get a feel for her future. She also spent time volunteering at Memorial Hospital in Jasper with other social workers to help with preparation for her future.

High school, two words filled with many meanings, holds stories for many young and old individuals. Nikki's highlights from Forest Park include several dance state titles, playing soccer, and participating in academic or inspirational clubs. Attending sporting events helped boost her high school recognition with two trips to Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. During Nikki's junior and senior years, the boys basketball team went to state and collected two state titles. Working track meets and her days as a batgirl for the baseball team were events worth remembering with friends. Her favorite memories include getting along with peers and hanging out in the senior quad between classes.

The social aspects of high school carried her to bigger experiences at Purdue University, where she recently graduated after just three and a half years. Eligibility for early graduation came from the classes taken in high school counting as college credits at Purdue. Her attendance at athletic events in high school also transferred to her college days. While attending the Big Ten sporting events, she enjoyed the excitement and thrill that dominated the atmosphere. "Tailgating before games with parents and eating good food was a big change from the normal macaroni-and-cheese I made at my apartment," Nikki points out about these social aspects of college life.

College also allowed her to interact with other students, introducing her to diverse cultures and customs. “I was able to meet many people from all over the world and work closely with them in class,” she stated, “as well as live with them in the dorms for a year.” Receiving her bachelor's degree in liberal arts, majoring in psychology, and having sociology as a minor will allow Nikki to strive for reaching her dream of becoming a resourceful individual for those in need. She realized her goal would allow her to help various families or young people who need someone who cares. Purdue provided her with the chance to get a taste of her future endeavors. She relates, “Living independently and living on your own is very different from living with your parents. It really makes you learn responsibility for yourself and your actions.”

Now a college graduate, Nikki continues to pursue her career further by attending graduate school in Indianapolis and receiving her master's degree in social work. Creating better situations to help grief-stricken families obtain greater lives has Nikki working hard to strive for excellence. Some students never realize how much high school affects lives; Nikki shares a few words of advice, “Get as involved as you can and do not let others hold you back from participating.”