

My curiosity and desire to learn has been a constant drive throughout my life. This desire led me to create a strong passion for the field of dentistry. As a kid, I looked forward going to the pediatric dentist because the hygienists in the office were so friendly. They always seemed to love their job, and I thought that being a hygienist would be the best job ever. It became more appealing to me after I made the connection that a hygienist is the nurse in dentistry. My mom has always been my role model, and since she was a nurse, I would tell people for the longest time that I was going to be a nurse, too! But after considering the enjoyment in visiting these lovely ladies compared to nurses who gave me painful shots, it was easy for my heart to become set on dental hygiene at such a young age (of course, after I ruled out firefighter, astronaut, vet, etc.). It wasn't until my mom's general dentist asked me, "Why not a dentist?" when I began to consider becoming a dentist. At the time, I honestly did not know the difference between a dentist and a hygienist. I was still going to my pediatric dentist, and to me the only difference between these two professions was that the hygienists spent the most time with you while they cleaned your teeth and checked for cavities, and then the dentist would come in at the end to pull out any loose teeth, "fix" a cavity, and give you a shot to make your lip feel funny. I was intrigued by this perplexing question, so I talked with him to learn more about the professions and the differences. After these discussions and researching more on my own, I became excited about the additional duties and responsibilities of a dentist, and I wanted to learn more. I later observed him and his staff on several occasions, and followed with observing a diverse group of dental specialists. These experiences inevitably increased my passion in and interest for dentistry as I became more excited about the numerous potential possibilities.

This curiosity and desire to learn remained during my undergraduate and dental hygiene education. These traits have been helpful when developing ways to educate patients about their oral health. I have learned that there's not just one way to "teach" a patient why it's important to floss and brush. Rather, I discovered that it needs to be formatted on an individual basis and requires adequate interaction with the patient to gain access for motivation. At times, it can be a challenge. However, I consider these interactions to be an educational experience for me to learn from and improve to become the best health care professional for my patients. I have also integrated other aspects of dentistry rather than clinical; such as research, public health/outreach, and leadership. In research, I was able to learn experimental protocols, assist other researchers

with their experiments, conduct my own experiment, present my findings at the Dental School's Research Day, and now I am building on that experiment to increase the knowledge of myself and the scientific community. I have also become involved in the Scholars Program in Dental Leadership. Through which, I have been working with a classmate to implement an oral health program at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit, MI. After planning for several hours and visiting the site to adequately anticipate any necessities, I am excited to see if we will be able to make a difference for these visitors and be able to correctly implement to allow continuation of the program. This drive to assist others has been a part of me since I was 7 years old. From then on, I have been active in my community, mostly because I was a member of 4-H until I turned 19. I have assisted the elderly with their lawns,... In 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade, a co-member and I initiated the Linus Blankets program in Washtenaw County. This program provided blankets to kids (pre-meets-18yrs) with a "Security Blanket" that could go with them into surgery. This drive to assist others and be active in the community had also been present in my dental hygiene education. I have been involved in outreach through the dental school by volunteering at Give Kids a Smile Day, being a member of the "Smile for Life" Relay for Life Team, and Scholars Program in Dental Leadership member. My curiosity and desire to learn continues to be a force driving my passion to pursue this career and especially use this career as a way to assist the community. After traveling to Detroit for a mission trip, my life goals drastically changed. Growing up in rural Dexter and traveling to Detroit on occasion for sport games, I always knew about the conditions in Detroit; but until visiting for this trip, my eyes were opened to the severity of the situation and the numerous health disparities present within the city. My desire to learn allows me to take rigorous classes at the University of Michigan and further my knowledge about such health disparities throughout the country and world. One of the objectives for Healthy People 2020 is to eliminate health disparities. In the past, I have enjoyed helping others and giving back to my community, even if it was on a relatively small scale. As a dentist, I want to open/work at a Dental Clinic in Detroit, MI to do my part to encourage this national change. I have enjoyed every aspect of dentistry, especially the clinical and research portion, and I want to use my passion for this profession as a way to provide services to my community in a harmonious fashion.

Other than dentistry, community service is a strong passion of mine.

Becoming a dentist is a difficult process, however, I view every challenge as an opportunity to learn and grow. I credit this viewpoint to my strong work ethic.

My strong work ethic instilled in me from growing up on a farm and being active in 4-H has been very complimentary to my desire to learn, and I'm confident will be a beneficial characteristic as a dentist. This characteristic allowed me to develop certain difficult skills, such as sewing, crocheting, and fly tying, which I enjoy and inadvertently increased my desire to become a dentist. I discovered through these hobbies that I am detailed oriented and I love creating and manipulating objects with my hands. These skills have proved useful during my dental hygiene training in the clinics and have provided a sense of relaxation when faced with a difficult challenge in the oral cavity.