

Where you *discover*

what it means to be *you*



Waldorf

COLLEGE

André Franco *Senior, Wellness, Morenci, Arizona*

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Growing up with dyslexia, I always thought I was stupid. By the end of my high school career, all I cared about was wrestling. Academics were on my back burner—as long as I slid by to stay eligible to wrestle. I won the Arizona State Title at 160 pounds my senior year and was being recruited by colleges from all over the nation. I knew I wanted to go to college to wrestle, but I still didn't care about the academic end of things. When people found out that I was going to college, they all tried to talk me out of it, telling me that I wouldn't make it. Yet, if I loved wrestling as much as I thought I did, I knew I could make it.

When I arrived on campus as a freshman, my coach introduced me to the Academic Achievement Program. I was able to receive the accommodations that I needed to succeed through the program. They provided me with tutors that helped me find out the ways that I learn best. No one had ever taken an interest in my ability in the classroom; instead, they always focused on my disability. Finally, I realized that I was not stupid—I never had been.

Waldorf helped me become a student-athlete and opened my eyes to the importance of a quality education. I am now a senior pursuing a career in Children's Wellness and am still active on the wrestling mat. I went from having the mindset that I only need to pass classes to wrestle to wanting to excel as a student. I even made it onto the Dean's List last semester. Without Waldorf, who knows where I would be.



Abbie Bergdale *Senior, Creative Writing, Mason City, Iowa*

Summer 2007: My first son was 3 years old, and I was preparing to be married in August after living as a single mother for quite some time. I knew that I wanted to go back to school, and I had thought the nursing program at NIACC made the most sense. You see, I had completed almost all of my courses needed to enter the program, and so I sent out applications to various community colleges in the area. Yet something didn't feel right. Although I knew that nursing would be a financially secure career for my family and me, I wasn't sold on it. I wasn't certain that was what I had passion for.

Writing had always been comfort food for my soul and a necessary outlet for things I had endured thus far in my life. The things I endured prior to Summer 2007 weren't always positive; and I was ready to make a clean start: to devote my time and my energy to finishing my degree.

What better path to take than a creative writing major at Waldorf College? Forest City was only a 40-minute drive from my hometown, Mason City, and the commute, my husband and I decided, would be well worth it. Turns out, we were right. The creative writing program at Waldorf College has exceeded my expectations. At the age of 25 I hadn't been sure I could blend in with the typical college student in the traditional college atmosphere. But the students and the faculty at Waldorf have done nothing but encourage and support me. I have never felt outcast here, and the campus environment supports learning.

September 2008: Not being one to pause for too long, my husband and I had our first child together, my second child. With support and encouragement from the Waldorf faculty, I continued on my educational path with no interruptions, making the transition back to school with my new baby with ease. I am looking forward to graduating with my degree in creative writing this May. I can think of no better place to have achieved this goal than Waldorf College. It truly has been an honor.

I was born in Okinawa Japan on April 2, 1987, and at the age of 2 years old was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. I am one of five children, and my parents had to contend with my disease plus four other children to raise.

Living with mild cerebral palsy every day makes it hard to do many things such as walking across campus or doing any sort of physical stuff. This includes handwriting because this disease, at least my version of it, affects both my gross and fine motor functions. It has even made me realize that I may not get to do something that many take for granted: drive. So, as of now, I am forced to basically walk everywhere unless I contact my parents or siblings when they are in town. This disease also limited—at least in my parents' minds—my ability to go away to college; and therefore, I could only search for ones that were local which was upsetting to me. Fortunately, my circumstances led me to Waldorf.

Waldorf has given me a place to belong, a place where I know I am accepted. The professors here have taught me that my disease isn't what limits me, but that I limit myself. The Theatre Department specifically taught me how—when it came to being cast in role—to adapt my disease so it works with me to build my characters. So I guess what I am trying to say is that Waldorf helped me finally realize who I am and how I can embrace my disease while learning to adapt it to what life throws at me.

Even though my everyday life at Waldorf can be very frustrating at times, I've learned valuable lessons: If you work hard and learn how to adapt to your unique situation, you can accomplish anything.

Steven Van Overbeke *Senior, Theatre, Forest City, Iowa*



As a freshman I decided to try living in the dorms after just putting my mother in the nursing home, because my stepfather had just had heart surgery and could not help take care of her. My mother needed care due to a stroke/aneurism she suffered in 2002 that left her blind and paralyzed. The second day of my freshman year at Waldorf I walked to my home just down the street from Ormseth Hall and found my stepfather dead in our living room. Consequently, my twin sister, Wendy, and I both missed the first week and a half of classes and would continue to miss things because of responsibilities related to my mother.

The spring after our stepfather passed away we moved our mother to a nursing home in Prairie City, Illinois. We lost our Forest City home—a Habitat for Humanity home we had helped build. Fortunately, Colleen and Jerry Jacobs have given us a place to call home for the past two-and-one-half years.

I should probably explain that my biological father has never really been a part of my life. He lives in Norfolk, Nebraska, and I've only seen him twice in two years. Before that I had not heard or seen him in seven years.

When some people hear our story, they think: "Wow, they don't have either of their parents [around]."

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Whitney Cobb *Junior, Education, Forest City, Iowa*

I guess one could look at it like that, but to me, I have several parents, and being at Waldorf College has helped me see that. Through everything that has happened, Waldorf has always been there. I can always find someone to talk to. Whether it's about school, work, politics, sports, or a specific problem, they are always willing to help determine the best way to help us financially, academically or emotionally. Waldorf College seems like a big family to me.

Waldorf has changed my outlook on life completely; in fact, in high school I suffered from depression. Now, I look at every day as a new opportunity to help someone else, a day to praise. A big way Waldorf has helped me is through service—teaching us that there are people out there that need help, and we are going to do what we can to help them. Through what I've experienced at Waldorf, I feel like I can pass on the service of giving to others because I have been given so much. I feel inspired here, because Waldorf gives me a sense of hope. Being here makes me feel like everything is and will be all right.

Reflections

Dr. Nicole Anslover, assistant professor of history, on
Amanda Schlumpberger
'08, *History/Political Science, New Ulm, MN*

When I met Amanda in the fall semester of 2007, it was immediately clear that she was incredibly bright. Her writing was at the level of a graduate student, in both analysis and structure. Her passion for history was also clear. The only thing Amanda lacked was confidence in herself. The faculty at Waldorf spent a lot of time discussing the prospect of graduate school with Amanda—we knew she had the necessary skills, she just needed to trust herself. We explained that she needed to articulate herself in the classroom in the same way she did on paper.

As the semester concluded, and Amanda worked on her graduate school applications, she seemed to become more and more convinced that she had found her vocation. She began participating more in class discussions and other students began to turn to her as a leader, another resource they could use. At a conference in March of her senior year, Amanda presented a paper to professors and graduate students at the Missouri Valley Conference on History. The positive feedback she received helped her gain more confidence. Amanda is now not only a graduate student in History at the University of Kansas, but was also selected as a teaching assistant, entitling her to a stipend and free tuition. A combination of encouragement from her fellow students, faculty, and self-exploration helped Amanda be an inspiration to many at Waldorf.

Rev. Charlene Cox, campus pastor, on
Josh Enderson
'07, *History, Albert Lea, MN*

Josh came to Waldorf College as a quiet, shy, reserved sophomore, transferring from a sister institution. He was unsure if college “was for him,” unsure of his vocational future, and uncertain about how to realize his dreams. Yet, he graduated with a History Major and Religion Minor three years later: summa cum laude, recipient of the Waldorf College President’s Award and recipient of Luther Seminary’s prestigious Presidential Full Tuition Scholarship. At Waldorf College, Josh Enderson found himself. His gifts were unearthed and nurtured as he grew in ways that were possible because of how Waldorf College “does” whole-person education.

At Waldorf Josh began to spread his wings; and when I asked him at the end of his first year to serve as the college sacristan, he quietly but eagerly agreed. This role, and its accompanying responsibilities, opened his many gifts. Through this role, Josh became a leader; and early in his junior year, he assumed full responsibility for Waldorf’s worship space. He became an integral voice in the planning of campus worship and a vital presence in its student leadership. This gave him the courage to become part of both the choir and the wind symphony. He also earned membership in Alpha Chi, and his Inquirere research project on Joseph Sittler was accepted into the permanent collection of the Joseph Sittler archives, managed by the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

As his potential emerged at Waldorf, Josh—who is now thriving as a Middler at Luther Seminary—grew not only into his own abilities but also into a profound sense of purpose. And as a pastor, he will be a tremendous gift to the church and the people he is called to serve. This is because of what Waldorf did for Josh, and because of who Josh became at Waldorf College.