

Making a Difference

On an early warm March morning, I arrived in the conference room at the University of Nebraska at Kearney to attend my very first Nebraska Youth Leadership Council meeting. As the youngest member of the Nebraska Youth Leadership Council – Advisory Board, I was extremely nervous to meet so many people with various disabilities – who turned out influencing my life so much. Being diagnosed myself with a hearing impairment; I chose to join Nebraska Youth Leadership Council, so I could improve my leadership skills, meet people with different disabilities, enlighten others to the needs of students with special needs, and plan my future.

Being a member of the Nebraska Youth Leadership Council for three years, I have learned so many ways to improve my leadership skills and accept others. At most meetings that I attend we discuss how to make lives of students more successful. For example, we watch videos of scenarios involving handicap students in different situations. We give our opinions on how to handle the situation and have discussions. Other activities that we do are giving presentations and panel discussions at schools and businesses. I enjoy doing this because we get to speak our minds to facilitate learning for those who work with kids with disabilities. These people and experiences have influenced my life greatly.

These amazing people that I have met influenced me by teaching me that all people have something to offer. How could they help me to know myself? Well, spending time with this unique group of teenagers, I have been learning who I am. I am a caring, strong, independent and helpful person and love to make changes for the better. Meeting a young beautiful girl from southern Nebraska had changed my life so much because she proved to me that anyone can have a positive attitude. Although she was born with no arms or legs, she can do many things independently and carries a smile wherever she goes. I have learned how to be more open minded about the needs of others. Along with the opportunities I have had in Nebraska Youth Leadership Council and from my own childhood, I have been drawn towards a career involved in helping people with medical needs.

I have been thinking about going into the medical field for my career. Being in Nebraska Youth Leadership Council has influenced me to pursue a career helping those who would benefit from physical rehabilitation. Since there are so many careers in the medical field that can help people with disabilities, I have been leaning towards physical therapy or occupational therapy. Physical therapist can provide help to people who have been injured, have disabilities, or have a limited mobility. Nebraska Youth Leadership Council has been an avenue for me to explore possible career choices.

A great thanks to Nebraska Youth Leadership Council for making such a huge impact on my life. This scholarship would be a great asset to my education and goals to make a difference in the lives of others.

By: Alecia Knust