

The Path of Opportunity

By Chesney Eschbach

When I told people that I was going to a community college, their response was always, “There’s nothing wrong with that” or “You’re so smart for doing that. It’s so much cheaper.” Why did everyone make me feel like I was choosing a path of disappointment? Community college is for the people who want to give further education a chance, no matter their current state. Community college is for everyone, and after my experience, I know that community college is for me.

I moved two and a half hours away from my hometown to attend Kishwaukee College, and it was scary leaving a place I’ve known my whole life. It’s enough to deter anyone from chasing their dreams, but with the help of the community that welcomed me, I discovered what it’s like for a new town to feel like home. My high school, like Kish, was in a small, quiet town surrounded by corn fields where everyone is friendly with one another. This sense of familiarity helped me adapt quickly to the abrupt transition from high school to college. My comfort during this transition wasn’t just due to the similarities Kishwaukee College shared with my high school but also the supportive faculty and staff.

Kishwaukee’s staff has helped me navigate through all my academic ups and downs. As my biology teacher from my first semester at Kish said, “I think the staff here at Kishwaukee is much more humble and helpful than the professors and doctors at four-year institutions, who use teaching as a side job while they research the cure for cancer.” As I continued my education at Kishwaukee, I found this to be true. Addressing my teachers by their first name and feeling comfortable enough to talk about the stresses in our lives while simultaneously receiving an outstanding education was something I realized I would struggle to find at a large university. At

Kishwaukee, I am not just a number. I am a person, and my teachers are committed to student success.

As my first year at Kishwaukee College comes to an end and I reflect on what I have accomplished, I can without a doubt say I would not be the person I am today without the help of Kish. Their smiling faces and guiding hands taught me how to navigate through the intimidating world that lies beyond the walls of my community college and provided me with a path of opportunity I am eager to take.