

*"I can be changed by what happens to me.
I refuse to be reduced by it."*



PERSEVERANCE; as defined in the dictionary, perseverance is, "*steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement.*" That is verbatim from, "www.dictionary.com." I am going to explain to you why I believe I too define perseverance.

Since I have been in second grade I pretty much knew I wanted to be an elementary school teacher. I had a course of action to work hard and get good grades and go to college. I also had a very strong support system, mainly my mom and dad, who started telling me, early on, how important getting good grades are when it comes to getting into college. As I continued through my elementary years in school I was steadfast in my conviction to teach elementary students. While in elementary school I also started taking dance lessons. I loved dancing, and had a natural talent for it. My parents sent me for many lessons at a local studio where I progressed quickly and started competing. I had great success in competition and won many trophies and awards. Dancing gave me the opportunity to gain self-confidence and self-assurance at an early age. I continued dancing and competing as I progressed into Jr. High. My dance teacher, Maria Frick, became not only my mentor, but also a close friend, almost like a 2nd mom. Miss Maria, as I call her, gave me the chance to be a teacher's assistant in the studio and help the teacher for the beginner dancers. My students ranged in age from three years old to ten years old. Being a teacher's assistant sealed the deal for me when it came to working with pre-school and elementary aged children. I knew for sure going into my 10th grade year this is what I want to do in life.

Fortunately, my high school has a program that gives students interested in working with pre-school and elementary aged children a chance to pursue it in depth. It consists of 3 courses; the first in 10th grade called Child Development, the second in 11th grade called Early Childhood, and the third in 12th grade called Student Instructional Aide. I enrolled in this program to further explore my goal of working with children. In 10th grade the program gave me the opportunity to work in the Child Care Center in our district. I thoroughly loved this chance to work with pre-school aged children in an actual Child Care Center. After completing my 10th grade year I was even more convinced this is my path.

At this point in my life is where I believe I complete the definition of perseverance. During the summer following 10th grade going to 11th grade life started throwing me obstacles. Not just little bumps in the road, major pot-holes. It began on June 9, 2006. My dear friend and mentor Maria Frick died suddenly at the age of 37. I thought my life had turned up-side-down. Maria's funeral was June 14, 2006, the same day I had Finals for 10th grade. I had to get special permission from the Principal to attend the funeral. I knew I had to go on in spite of this monumental obstacle of losing my mentor. I made it through, what I thought, was the hardest experience of my life until, June 21, 2006. On June 21, 2006 my long-time boyfriend and best friend was on vacation in Cancun, Mexico with his family and was tragically killed in an accident. I went from my life turning up-side-down from the loss of Miss Maria to spinning completely out-of-control. But, I knew I had to overcome this tragedy, I had to keep working towards my path of going to college and working with children. I had to begin my 11th grade year without a mentor and best friend. This I knew was going to be difficult, but I had to do it. Time was moving on as well as the school year and then the bottom fell out in February of 2007 when my Dad was diagnosed with throat cancer. Now what do I do? I've lost two of the people I would always turn to for support. Fortunately, Dad's cancer was very treatable and my mom and sisters were there for me and helped me deal with yet another obstacle to overcome.

The reason I'm telling you about the obstacles I have overcome is because I believe I have the ability, determination and supporters to help me succeed in college. These sad occurrence since 2006 have had

an enormous effect on my school work. I had to take my 10th grade finals dealing with the death of Miss Maria, start my 11th grade year without my best friend, and prepare for and take my SAT's worrying about my dad every step of the way. My concentration and my complete focus was partially hindered by these occurrences, however my determination allowed me to continue on towards my goal.