

Northeast Community College Foundation

Spring 2021



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Alumni Spotlight - Victoria Ohlfest

A Path To Education Filled With Immense Support

A path to education filled with challenges and immense support. That is the best way to describe Victoria (Beckman) Ohlfest's path to obtaining an Associate of Arts degree with a concentration in Business Administration from Northeast Community College.

Ohlfest chose Northeast based on affordability and proximity to home. A great online program and the ease of applying to multiple scholarships at one time were also large selling points, according to Ohlfest.

"I started at Northeast in 2015 when I lived in Pender," Ohlfest said. "It was my plan to become a certified nursing assistant and medication aide. When that was accomplished, my plan was to obtain a degree in nursing."

A week after completing the medication aide exam, Ohlfest's life was presented a new challenge – a severe automobile accident.

The accident resulted in Ohlfest being ejected from the vehicle's sunroof. She was immediately taken by life flight to the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha to receive intensive care. Stabilizing rods were inserted in her left femur and sacrum. She also required a partial reconstruction in her jaw and under her eye. Her injuries left her bedridden and later wheelchair bound.

"After my treatment at UNMC," Ohlfest said, "I was sent to another hospital closer to home, but I couldn't stay there long. Because I no longer had insurance, physical therapy wasn't really an option," she explained. "I had to re-teach myself how to walk."

Support and blessings began to flood Ohlfest's life shortly after the accident. Two weeks



Pictured: Victoria Ohlfest with her husband, Jeremy, and son, Kyler.

before the accident Jeremy Ohlfest and Victoria started dating. During her stay at UNMC, Jeremy visited her each day. Through the entire journey of learning how to walk again and to manage chronic pain, which is still present today, Jeremy has been by Victoria's side.

The two were married in 2017 and welcomed their son, Kyler, shortly after.

While recovering and enjoying a new marriage and son, Ohlfest placed her education on hold until fall 2017. During this time, she pursued online courses related to pre-professional nursing as a full-time student. It was then determined to place her education on hold one more time to enjoy more time with family.

With resiliency yet again, Ohlfest returned to school in 2019. With her traumatic brain injury and other medical concerns, she sought support from Northeast Disability

Services Advisor Connie Meyer.

"Connie was great. She helped walk me through the steps to determine a plan for each class accommodating my specific needs," said Ohlfest. "She even checked on me multiple times a semester."

Ohlfest was accepted into the Fall 2020 nursing program but had to decline when a medical episode occurred at work. She was no longer cleared to wear a N-95 face mask – a requirement of many nursing homes and hospitals during the pandemic.

"I felt so lost, but Connie and my advisor, Taylor Christensen, helped me explore my interests," said Ohlfest. "I changed jobs and majors."

Throughout all the challenges, Connie Meyer has praised Ohlfest.

"Victoria is absolutely amazing," Meyer said. "She has overcome so many obstacles to get where she is today. Despite the obstacles, she always finds a way to stay positive and be successful. She has been able to be very successful in her classes while not only working full time, but also being a wife and mother. Her determination is to be admired," said Meyer.

Being a business administration major and earning high grades allowed Ohlfest to qualify for some Northeast Community College Foundation scholarships. Ohlfest was the 2020-2021 recipient of the Scherer Accounting Scholarship, Stan & Cindy Christensen Family Scholarship, and the McMill CPA & Advisors Scholarship.

"My scholarships covered most of my tuition and allowed me to purchase a few different things for school such as books and a

computer with a webcam and microphone,” Ohlfest said. “I do have two student loans, but they are not as high as they would have been without scholarships. Having scholarships has been a huge relief.”

Ohlfest also worked full-time as a Human Resources Assistant at Astec (formerly Kolberg-Pioneer, Inc.) in Yankton, SD while completing her education at Northeast. She continues employment with Astec today and reports to Human Resources Manager Rhonda Kocer.

“Victoria is a great addition to our HR Dept,” said Kocer. “She immediately demonstrated dedication to her position, works hard, very willing and flexible to do whatever is asked of her, came with excellent computer skills, and is committed to completing her work tasks correctly. She quickly learned our onboarding

process for new employees and is a wonderful, professional ambassador for our company with the new employees coming into our company. We are glad to have Victoria with us and appreciate her help very much. She is on her way to having a long and successful career,” said Kocer.

Today, Ohlfest lives in Bloomfield with her family and pets – a dog and rescue cat. She will return to Northeast in August 2021 to complete her Associate of Science – Academic Transfer degree and then consider a bachelor’s degree in accounting.

“There’s times where I still am not strong enough for the day’s activities,” Ohlfest said, “but I persevere. I’m so very thankful for all the support I have received from everyone.” ■

Graduate Report

98%

of 860 graduates in the 2019-20 academic year, are employed or continuing their education

91%

of Northeast graduates are employed in Nebraska

This data is collected from graduating classes during the 2019-2020 academic year. For more information visit northeast.edu/career-services/graduate-report

Tuition Relief Programs

Northeast has announced several new financial programs to assist students this summer and fall. The aid is on top of Pell Grants and other scholarships that students may have already received. Review the tuition relief programs below and begin your success with Northeast.

Learn more today at northeast.edu/tuition-relief

Free Summer Tuition

Tuition assistance is available to anyone who registers for credit classes at Northeast this summer. This includes high school students who want to get ahead, current students or students from other colleges who want to transfer credits.

Northeast’s next summer session begins Monday, July 12.

Debt Forgiveness Program

The Debt Forgiveness Program is a one-time opportunity, meaning it’s a chance at erasing your prior college debt, earning your degree or certificate, obtaining a fulfilling career, and/or transferring to a four-year college or university.

This Debt Forgiveness Program will run for one year starting Fall 2021 and applies only to debt accumulated before January 1, 2020.

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)

More than 80% of students who applied for the FAFSA are expected to be eligible to receive HEERF resources.

Northeast will provide any eligible student attending with an expected family contribution of \$15,000 or less with a grant of up to \$2,500 attending in the Fall 2021 semester.

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Opening Soon

New agriculture facilities at
Northeast Community College
scheduled to open fall 2021.

*Veterinary Technology Building
Large Animal Handling Facility
Commodities Storage*

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