

My name is Kristen Lumley. I was born in Greenville, Pennsylvania on January 22, 1997. I am the only child of Dennis and Rhonda Lumley.

I am involved in school, church and community activities. I have been volunteering since I was 12 years old. I worked with the animals at Strayhaven, played piano at St. Paul Nursing Home, provided conversation and company to cancer patients at UPMC Horizon, been a docent at the Waugh House in Greenville, participated in His Work His Way, and many others.

More recently, I have focused on spending time with children. Last summer I had the opportunity to work at Rustler Therapeutic Riding Ranch in Pierpont Ohio. The Therapeutic Riding Program engages children in working with horses in order to improve an array of skills like fine and gross motor control, balance and coordination, visual/spatial orientation as well as emotional, social, cognitive and spiritual growth. I was a "side walker", i.e., the person who walks along side of the horses holding gently to the riders for safety and security. Because consistency is important for the children, the volunteers are paired up with the same children for each lesson. I became particularly fond of the children I worked with each week and I believe they were as happy to see me as I was them. One day in particular, one of the boys, who have Down syndrome, hadn't seen me on the ramp assisting other riders mount horses until he started walking up the ramp toward me. When he saw me, he shouted to everyone "I love you Kristen" and ran up the ramp and gave me a big hug. He melted my heart.

I also spent part of my Christmas vacation last year at Give Kids the World Village in Florida. Give Kids The World was created as a place that could better serve the needs of families and was specifically designed for children with special needs. It is a 70-acre resort complete with 144 Villa accommodations, entertainment attractions, and whimsical venues that provide memorable, magical, cost-free experiences to children with life-threatening illnesses and their families. I had the honor and pleasure to serve children and families in the "Castle of Miracles" with their star fairy program. I also participated in a game of human Candyland, providing some TLC pampering in the La Ti Da Spa and helped families make memories with Mary Poppins as a Digital Photography Assistant. This was an incredibly awesome and humbling experience because I, too, was a former visitor to Give Kids the World Village. I had the opportunity of a lifetime to spend a week there in 2002 when I was 5 years old, one year after my diagnosis of leukemia, on behalf of the Make A Wish Foundation. It was a privilege to volunteer my time and service for these families.

I plan to become a Child Life Specialist. Child Life Specialists are trained professionals with expertise in helping children and their families overcome life's most challenging events. They focus on the psychosocial needs of children, collaborating with parents and members of the child's care plan team to promote effective coping with families during their journey.

Wheelock College's mission statement is to improve the lives of children and families. The school slogan is "Are you tough enough to inspire a world of good?" I know I am. I have a unique story to share with others. My passion for working with children cannot be matched. The joy I felt while volunteering at Rustler Ranch and at Give Kids the World Village was unlike any other. I am certain the career path I have chosen is meant for me. I will dedicate my life purpose to make a difference one child and one family at a time. Your gift of this scholarship is offering me the chance to contribute to Wheelock's mission to inspire a world of good.