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### Autobiography

To pin point one event in my life that has lead me to where I am today is unrealistic. I would like to think that most of the events in my life have transformed me from the premature adolescent, who believed the world was a perfect place with endless goods to offer, to a mature young adult. Yet each day, I seem to confront a new challenge, one which teaches me that I will never have life figured out and the older I get the more I will continue to grow and change into a person with different goals than the ones I may have had five years ago.

Twenty two years ago, on February 2, 1989, I was welcomed into the world by John and Caroline Frenette, two individuals who would continue to bless me by providing a loving environment day after day. Although I grew up with the misconception that life was easy and fun, I found myself surrounded by loving individuals whom I could count on no matter what.

Although we moved around a lot growing up, I never seemed to struggle socially. I always found my place and made multiple friends. Though I thrived socially, academically I would distance myself from interacting and engaging with material. I suppose this was my biggest struggle growing up. I never seemed to understand information the way other kids my age did. It would take me much longer to complete assignments, resulting in my losing interest in wanting to complete school work. I would mask my academic struggles by placing socializing before my school work. Although I was a good student who always completed my work, paid attention during class, and was always respectful towards my peers and elders, I never seemed to enjoy school. School was an unsafe environment, where I was judged for my lack of speed and motivation. I would literally get sick to my stomach at the thought of having to go

to a place where I would have to popcorn read, answer math questions, do timed reading, or spell words out loud. None of these skills came easily for me and not one of my teachers was willing to take the time to work with me and try to understand why I disliked these tasks, why they were so challenging and deflating, and why I was so far behind other students. I suppose looking back on it; that is one thing that affects the way I approach the children I work with in the classrooms today. The last thing that I want to do is to make a child feel as though they are dumb and incapable of completing a task. Children need to feel motivated, empowered, and challenged. Without these affirmations, children will feel discouraged and turned off by the thought of learning.

My experience in elementary school molded me into the person I continuously strive to be through my own teachings today. It took one individual to recognize that my struggles in school were more than just a lack of interest. I faced challenges that were rooted into much more than just the inability to understand what an assignment consisted of or how to properly complete an assignment. My fifth grade teacher recognized my discomfort with reading and detected this through time spent working one-on-one with me. She advised I be tested for a learning disability. Sure enough, the exam determined that I had a severe case of dyslexia. For the first time in my elementary years there was hope, with hard work and proper direction I could overcome these struggles I had been facing for years.

Middle school consisted of the awkward period where everyone seemed to struggle finding there niche; the group that they would hang out with and make friendships that were based off of appearance, popularity, and talents. Although I too found myself searching for my strengths, I never seemed to struggle with making friends and who my friends were for that matter. I had a good group of friends who I would maintain a solid friendship with throughout high school and college. Middle school consisted of the three years where kids are mean, dishonest, and harsh. I would learn where my true interests would lie and what I would involve myself in high school. I strongly believe that my own

experience in middle school is what has turned me off from wanting to teach grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. It is such an age defining period in kid's lives. Life changes are occurring; kids are going through puberty and becoming teenagers. It's a time that I personally choose not to relive.

By the time I reached high school I was involved in cross country and track, which consumed a good portion of my free time. For the next four years I would wake up bright and early in the morning and head to school for practice where we would run on average between 3-9 miles at a time. Track, which was a spring sport, had two a day practices. I found myself craving long distance runs to relieve any stress that I would take on. Most of my close friends were those who I ran cross country and track with. In finding my passion, I quickly found myself battling different struggles than I had in the past. For the first time I found interest in what I was learning. I was motivated to complete homework and learn. School was something that I began to enjoy, for the most part. I think the pressure of trying to excel in my running and academics caught up to me by the time I reached my senior year. I felt pressure of getting into the college of choice, the pressure to please and impress my parents, and the pressure to pursue my own dreams. For the first time I found myself at a breaking point.

Something I will never forget was the support I had from my dad. He believed with his heart and souls that I could do anything that I put my mind to and not only could I do it, but I could do it well. Something that I make sure to keep an open mind to in my own teachings today is the lifestyle that children may have at home. It's easy to assume that all kids live a happy life, possibly one like the one you grew up with, but more than 95% of time this isn't the case. Kids come from all different kinds of backgrounds. While I grew up with two loving parents who constantly pushed me to pursue whatever my dreams consisted of, I was masked from the troubles that existed. Like any married couple my parents had their issues. I knew growing up that my parents faced moments in their life together that were challenging, but I don't think that I was fully aware of the extent of these challenges.

I think high school was hard because for the first time in my life I was old enough to understand the depth of my parent's struggles and discontent in their relationship with one another. I found myself looking for the quickest way out by applying for schools that were far from home. Just as I have always known that life can take unexpected turns, I found the most difficult challenge striking right after I graduated high school. On June 11, 2007, my dad unexpectedly passed away and life as I knew it would change drastically forever.

My vision of what I had seen for myself changed. I would no longer attend a four year university my first year of college. I would not live in a dorm, but rather at home with my mom. A year after his passing I decided that it was time for me to go off to a four year university and try to live my life the way I wanted. I went to the University of Oklahoma for the fall semester for 2008. I lasted a whole 3 months before I would decide it was too much for me to handle. I moved back to Flower Mound, Texas to live with my mom and attend community college for one last semester to try and figure out where my head and heart was at. Answers finally came when I received my fafsa and acceptance from St. Edwards University. A short 2 months later I found myself living on my own in a new city where I knew no one. It was the scariest most exhilarating experience.

The following two years were full of defining moments in which I would come to learn what it was that I was wanting out of life. I realized that life isn't always perfect. It's full of challenges and obstacles that I would continue to force myself to overcome. Life has continued to prove that it is anything but easy. I have learned so much about myself in the past 22 years. I have come to learn my strengths and my weaknesses. I still seem to battle moments where I question where I am at and what I am working towards. But despite the trials I have faced and continue to work to overcome, one thing remains the same, this being the contentment that working with little children seems to bring to me.

Teaching is full of endless tasks, some less challenging than others. I have had the opportunity over the past 4 years to work with children in all different types of atmospheres. Each child has been uniquely different in their own way, needing different things. I have learned to approach each situation with an open mind and have the faith that anything is possible. If I can be the woman that my parents raised me to be then I know that there is at least one child out there that I can reach out to and create a positive impact in their life.

My mom has always provided me with the inspiration and motivation to excel in anything that I set my mind to. As I begin a new chapter in my life, my mom's words will remain in the back of my mind and close to my heart. I can honestly say that the 4 and ½ years I have spent in college have been life changing. Relationships with my friends and family members have been challenged, but in that I have learned who and what matters most. I can honestly say that without the support of my mom the past 4 and a half years, I would not be where I am today. She has been a visionary of how to confront battles that seem impossible and overcome challenges. She has been my rock. My mom is the woman I strive to be in my work place, a confident, successful individual. People say you are who you want to be. I chose to be the young woman who learns from each mistake, never turns down a challenge, and goes to sleep at night knowing that I have done my best. I may not be perfect, but I know I have the ability to overcome any challenge I encounter, so long as I believe in myself.