

Living with asthma has had a major impact on my life and has directly shaped my decision to study kinesiology and pursue a career in health and wellness. While asthma has definitely brought challenges, it has also taught me a lot about resilience, determination, and the importance of maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle. Because of my personal experiences managing my condition, I have developed a strong desire to help others overcome their own physical challenges and reach their full potential.

Growing up, I always loved sports. I played OMHA rep hockey for ten years, joined school teams for volleyball, football, cross country, water polo, basketball, and more. Being active was a huge part of who I was, but my asthma sometimes made it difficult. There were times when I struggled to keep up or had to step back to manage my breathing. Even though it wasn't easy, I never wanted my asthma to define what I could or couldn't do. Instead, it motivated me to work even harder, to train smarter, and to learn everything I could about physical fitness, proper recovery, and personal wellness.

Through my experiences, I learned firsthand how important it is to have the right support. Coaches, trainers, teachers, and even my doctors helped me find ways to stay active safely, and that made all the difference. They inspired me to realize that health and wellness professionals aren't just there when something goes wrong—they are there to guide, encourage, and empower people to be their best. It made me realize that I want to be that person for others someday.

That's why I've decided to study kinesiology in university. I want to understand how the body moves, how to prevent injuries, and how to help people recover and strengthen their bodies. Whether I end up becoming a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, or working in sports medicine, my goal is to use my knowledge and experiences to support others—especially those who might feel held back by physical challenges like I did.

My asthma has also made me passionate about promoting an active lifestyle for everyone, regardless of their limitations. I know how scary it can be when your body doesn't seem to cooperate, but I also know how empowering it is to find ways to succeed despite it. Through my roles on the Athletic Council, as a Valley Advisor, and as a volunteer coach, I've already had opportunities to mentor younger students and athletes, encouraging them to stay active, believe in themselves, and work through obstacles.

Balancing school, sports, volunteering, and working two jobs as a lifeguard and swim instructor has also taught me how important time management and perseverance are. These experiences have pushed me to grow into a stronger, more disciplined person—qualities I know will help me as I continue my education and eventually start my career.

In the end, my asthma isn't just something I had to deal with—it's part of what inspired me to find my purpose. It taught me to never give up, to be patient with myself, and to see challenges as opportunities to grow. As I move forward with my studies in kinesiology, I'm excited to turn my personal experiences into a career where I can help others stay active, healthy, and confident, no matter what obstacles they face. ~ Jack Gibson