

How Disability Has Shaped My Educational Goals

At the age of 16, I was hospitalized for the first time due to my mental health. I felt frightened, lost. I didn't know what was wrong with me. As the week went on, I felt trapped. Trapped within my own mind. Trapped with my thoughts. Isolated from the people I care about. I started my hospital stay in the adult psychiatric ward and was eventually transferred to the children's ward due to a safety risk. As I was transferred upstairs to the children's ward, I looked at what seemed like the never-ending rows of hospital rooms. I then realized that I was not alone. There are many other kids like me, suffering within their own minds. Not only are there other kids like me in my city, but there are also thousands, even millions of children across the world suffering from mental illness.

The day I was discharged, I met with my psychiatrist, hospital psychologist, and hospital social worker. My psychiatrist then gave me the diagnosis. I had been diagnosed with ADHD, PTSD, social anxiety disorder, schizoaffective disorder, and eventually OCD at the age of 17. This was not a huge shock to me as I was very aware of my symptoms. I was not surprised by diagnoses, but I was quite nervous for my future, surrounding this disability. Little did I understand that I had fought my whole life with no treatment and no professional help. Now, I have the support of so many family members, friends, and professionals. I've found the correct dosage and types of medications, and I regularly see a counsellor. I feel as though I am in a great point in my life, and I know that this would not be possible without my hospital stay.

When I look back, one of the main supports that got me through my hospital stay was the hospital social worker. He is one of the most positive people I have ever met to this day,

and he made me feel welcome. I didn't feel as alone in the hospital whenever the social worker came to visit. He helped me understand that I am not any less of a person because I experience my symptoms. I realized that my brain is just wired a bit differently. I know now that there is nothing wrong with that. I know that I am not alone in my struggles. I would've never come to these realizations without the help of the social worker in the hospital. I will be forever grateful for his kindness, empathy and generosity.

Now that I am in a healthier place, I wish to help others. This is why I am going into social work. If there is any way that I can lessen the suffering of children, I would do it in a heartbeat. When it comes to what I went through my whole life, breaks my heart to know that there are so many other children who are going through similar experiences. I cannot express how much I want to take away the hurting from other children. The supports around me are the reason I am still here today. I would like to one day become a support for children that are suffering. I wish to one day save a life because I know how difficult it can be to live with a mental illness.

My experiences and symptoms have allowed me to develop a better sense of empathy towards others. In some ways, my disability has held me back. In other ways, it has brought me skills and qualities that I will take with me for the rest of my life. Although I am healthier than I was a year ago, I'm still quite nervous for what the future holds for me living with a disability. I am confident however that I will make a difference. Even if it's a difference in one life, it is worth it to me. I am very excited to begin my education and career in something I am so passionate about. I would never have gone into the Bachelor of Social Work program without my disability, and I am so grateful.



New Student Registration: Bachelor of Social Work

MRU



Mount Royal University Mar 24

to me ▾



New Student Registration Bachelor of Social Work

Hello Kyra,

Congratulations on your offer of admission to **Mount Royal**! We're so excited you've chosen to join the MRU community this fall.

To help you feel confident and prepared to start your studies, we're running a **virtual advising and registration session** for new Bachelor of Social Work students on April 8. Join your academic advisor to learn more about your program, register for classes and start connecting with your future classmates.

You will receive a calendar invite with a Google Meet link for your specific program session. We recommend using a device other than a cell phone during the session as it will be easier to register for

Chinook High School

259 Britannia Blvd West • Lethbridge AB Canada • T1J 4A3
Ph • 403-320-7565 Fx • 403-381-7414
Email: chs@lethsd.ab.ca



June 12, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter at the request of Kyra Tamke and in support of her DCCI scholarship application. I am not aware of a more deserving graduating senior. In the time I have known Kyra she has consistently known her WHY, Aimed For Growth and Taken Ownership in her academic and extracurricular pursuits at the same time as working through a number of challenging mental health challenges which require continued and ongoing efforts on Kyra's part to manage and take care of.

Here is a brief summary of some of Kyra's achievements and involvement in our school and in our community during her time here with us:

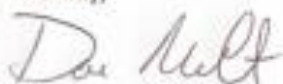
- Member of our schools Jazz band since spring 2021
- Two years as a teen mentor with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Lethbridge mentoring little one on one at the end of the school day.
- Respite worker with a 12 yr. old young person with down syndrome once a week for a few hours each week since March of 2021.
- Maintaining yearly academic averages between 88% and 93% for each year of her studies including receiving a grade of 100% in Biology 30 in the same year of a required hospitalization.
- Reached out, connected with and is set to begin an internship with Students with Psychosis following her 18th birthday.

One of Kyra's most impressive contributions to our school began last school year when, following her discharge from Lethbridge's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Program, Kyra demonstrated courage in sharing her diagnoses with others at the same time as sharing her desire to take steps to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues in our school community. When the opportunity came up for Kyra to participate in the Mental Health Commission of Canada's Headstrong virtual summit (An anti-stigma initiative) she jumped all in. Following the summit Kyra reached out to Headstrong and provided them with a written testimony of her experience of the summit and then took action through creating a video of her personal experience with various mental health challenges. She shared her story with our school community, worked with our leadership class and other headstrong participants to organize an agency fair and through these actions contributed greatly towards increasing our communities awareness of mental health challenges as well as a number of resources and supports available to support and assist and in sharing her story has reduced some of the stigma that continues to exist around the same.

We Aim to Grow

Kyra has been accepted to the faculty of social work at Mount Royal University where she will begin her studies in the fall of 2022. Kyra will no doubt continue to make a difference in the lives of individuals, families and communities as she has already demonstrated the ability to do. Kyra has my full support in her DCCI scholarship application and I trust will be given strong consideration for the same.

Warmly,



Dan Nault, RSW
Family School Liaison Counsellor
Chinook High School



Alberta High School Diploma

is awarded to
Kyra Brenae Tamke

who has fulfilled the requirements prescribed by
Alberta Education for graduation from high school
in the Province of Alberta, Canada

Alberta Student Number: 1276-8216-9

Credential Number: 16890-18211

2021-2022
School Year



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Adrienne LaSangre".

Minister of Education

Dr. Foluso Ademola
MBBS, DCP, MSC, MRCPsych, FRCP
Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist

2022-May-09

To Whom It May Concern

RE: Kyra Tamke
DOB: 2004-Jun-27
PHN: 32476-3031

Diagnosis Letter

This is to confirm that Kyra is known to me. Kyra has been my patient since April 2021 and has the following diagnoses:

- **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**
- **Schizo-Affective Disorder**
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**
- **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Combined Presentation (ADHD)**
- **Social Anxiety Disorder**

Kyra is currently on a combination of medications to manage her symptoms; along with attendance at psychotherapy/ counselling on a regular basis. Any supports that can be provided by your service is appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,



Foluso Ademola, Consulting Psychiatrist
MB BS DCP MSc MRCPsych FRCP
FA/sk

Alberta CANADA

**CERTIFICATE
OF BIRTH**

VITAL STATISTICS

NAME

Tamke, Kyra Brenae

SEX

F

PLACE OF BIRTH

Edmonton

REGISTRATION NO.

2004-08-018867

DATE OF BIRTH

Jun 27 2004

REGISTRATION DATE

Jul 05 2004

DATE ISSUED

Oct 25 2004