

Dear Sponsor of the Isidor Desser Memorial Scholarship,

My name is Katherine and I am a 25 year old Metis student studying in Edmonton. I am in the third year of my Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in Music and minoring in Arts & Cultural Management. This is a unique degree offered by the University of Alberta in collaboration with MacEwan University so I attend classes at both institutions but will technically graduate from the University of Alberta.

When I was 21 years old, I started my own business, a music education studio, in the rural community of Edson, Alberta. At the time I had recently graduated from Red Deer College with a diploma in music, and saw this as a chance to put the knowledge I'd learned to the test in the real world. My business was more successful than I could have ever predicted and my community showed an incredible amount support in my business and personal ability. I ran my business for three and a half years and in that time, I expanded my hours to the absolute maximum to try and accommodate as many students as possible (usually teaching 55 students a week). Beyond teaching I also completed all necessary administration and accounting. By pursuing my business, I learned what belief in my goals can achieve and what I can accomplish with hard work and dedication. What I didn't expect to learn was that as a mentor and teacher, I helped create a ripple effect in my community that has continued to have a positive influence even since closing my studio to return to school. I returned to university last fall with the goal of returning to run my business following graduation and hopefully expand my studio to include employees and other branches of arts education in rural communities. I am specifically taking courses in my degree that will both help me run a business more efficiently such as management, accounting and public relations as well as classes that will broaden my abilities as a teacher and musician.

While running my business, I worked to build up a savings in the hopes that I could attend university without having to deal with excessive amounts of student debt. Regardless of these savings, I am very aware that in order to continue my studies, I would need financial support somehow. I have planned an accelerated course of study that includes spring semesters in order to graduate as early as possible. Unfortunately, this heavy course load means that working a part-time job during the semester is not an option due to lack of time and the possibility of it negatively affecting my grades. This course of study also limits the amount of time in the summer months I have available to work. Your financial support means so much to me! I cried when I received the email telling me I'd been awarded. This scholarship will go directly into my tuition and living expenses to sustain me while I stay dedicated to my studies and work towards graduation.

Thank you so much for your generous support!

All the best,

Katherine Ahlf