

Student Stories Project: Katie Ditzler

Audio version available at: <http://www.alumni.indiana.edu/profiles/students/ditzler.shtml>

[IU fight song]

Welcome to the Indiana University Student Stories Project, a production of the IU Alumni Association. I'm your host, Alana Salata. In this series, you'll get an insight into what it takes to be a student leader here at IU, from the perks –

“The Alumni Association here at South Bend had selected me to go to IU Bloomington’s annual LeaderShape training program for a week.”

– to the hard work –

“Time management: it’s hard because I love the group so much and I just – I want to volunteer for everything and I want to do everything.”

– to the memories that will last a lifetime.

“I’ve met so many people that have touched my life in so many ways.”

Join me on this journey through the lives of IU student leaders.

[IU fight song]

SALATA: Today we’re at Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne speaking with Katie Ditzler of the Newman Catholic group.

DITZLER: My name is Katie Ditzler. I am a senior here at IPFW. My major is dental hygiene, and I hope to get a concentration in dental sales and leadership. I am from Huntington, Indiana, and right now I’m the treasurer of the Newman Catholic Fellowship Group on campus. And in my spare time, I like to just hang out with family and friends, and I really enjoy reading.

Why did you choose to attend IPFW?

Actually, IPFW was the only school that I even applied to. It’s because they have a really good dental hygiene program and I’ve always wanted to be a dental hygienist. So I thought that this would be the best place for me to go to.

Tell me about a meaningful or enjoyable experience you have had at IPFW.

Last year IPFW went together with a couple different campuses here in Fort Wayne and had something called the Ultimate Prom. And it was just really fun, because it was just, like, a group

of my friends from the different colleges here and we all got dressed up, went out to dinner, and then went to the prom, and it was really fun.

What advice would you give to incoming freshmen and other students just starting out at IPFW?

I would tell them to make sure that they go to class. You know, a lot of people, when they first start, they don't think it's that important to go, and then you kind of get yourself into a rut and you have to work your way back out. So I think it's really important to go to class and meet new people while you're here on campus.

Tell me a little about the Newman Catholic group at IPFW.

Our group – we meet every Tuesday at noon and we have Mass here on campus, and then after Mass we eat pizza and just talk and hang out. And we try to do that once a week, and then the first Monday of every month we try to do it, too. And we also get together, like, outside, and do either community projects or just hang out on our spare time.

How did you find out about the Newman Catholic group, and why did you decide to become involved?

I found out through the priest at my church up here in Fort Wayne, St. Jude's. Father Tom told me that he was going to be saying Mass here on campus and he told me about the group. It was my freshman year and I didn't have very many friends here, so I thought I would just try to get involved into another group. So it was really fun, and I met a lot of new people.

Tell me about a Newman Group event or program that you were involved in that you are particularly proud of.

My freshman year we did a group event called Lenten Reflections. Lent is the time before Easter, and every Thursday at lunch we would get together and just kind of go over some prayers and things like that that we could reflect on. And it was just really meaningful to get to know more people that felt the same way. And we didn't just limit it to our group; we kind of opened it to all the campus ministry groups here on campus.

How has your involvement in the honors program enriched your college experience?

It's definitely made it more challenging. I really enjoy taking the honors classes because they're more, like, fast-paced, and it's nice to get to know more people that really care about going to college and take their degrees seriously.

What challenges have you faced during your participation in the honors program?

Like I said, it's really fast-paced. I think that's the biggest challenge. Going from one class, where you can slack off if you want to, whereas in the honors classes you really can't – you have to stay on task the entire time.

How have your leadership skills developed over the course of your time here at IPFW?

I have definitely become more confident, and I think that's a huge skill that anyone needs. I took a lot of organizational and leadership classes my sophomore year, and they kind of taught me how to, you know, speak up, and it's more of a management type of class. I feel if I reflect confidence, then my patients will be more relaxed and calm.

What organizations are you a part of here at IPFW?

I am in the Student American Dental Hygienists' Association here on campus. It's just a way for us dental hygiene students to get more involved in our profession. And outside of campus, I'm in Hoosier Christian Life and Dead Theologians Society. Hoosier Life – we meet on Thursday nights, it's more like a Bible study, group study type of thing. We pick a book that we want to read that has to do with theology or something like that and we'll all read it together and then talk about it. And then Dead Theologians Society is just, we pick either a saint or a dead theologian and kind of discuss their life, and it's neat to talk about those kinds of things and just see how we can model our lives after good people.

What are your future goals, and how do you think IPFW has helped prepare you to meet those goals?

My main goal would be to become a dental hygienist, because that's always what I've wanted, so... The teachers here in the program have definitely helped me, like, get prepared to pass my national boards that I'm going to be taking next year. We have written boards, and they just help us so much getting us prepared, making notes for us, making books for us, and just really helping us get ready to study for that. And then we also have a clinical boards, and IPFW actually has a clinic here on campus where we kind of practice and we learn how to get all of our skills together and work on patients.

What will you miss the most when you graduate?

I will definitely miss all of my friends. The dental hygiene girls in my class, we're together 24/7 when we're in the program, so I will miss them a lot. And then all of the friends that I've met in the Newman group, because a lot of them have already graduated and I'm going to miss the other ones when I'm gone.

We've been talking with Katie Ditzler of IPFW's Newman Catholic group.

[IU fight song]

This series was produced by the Indiana University Alumni Association, with special thanks to the IU Marching Hundred and director Dave Woodley. I'm Alana Salata.

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