Consumer Makes The Grade!

Carey Services consumer Chelsie Salyers recently achieved a huge academic milestone as she works toward a lifelong dream. She made the Dean’s List at Indiana University for the fall 2016 semester at Indiana University East.

A junior majoring in English with a concentration in professional and technical writing, Chelsie maintained a 3.8 grade-point average. She hopes to graduate in the spring of 2018, and she has a long-term goal earning a master’s degree and then pursuing a professional writing career.

Chelsie was born with spina bifida, a birth defect involving the spine and membranes around the spinal cord. (Spina bifida is a Latin phrase meaning “split spine.”) She attributes her love of academic pursuits to her willingness and desire to prove to herself and others that a physical disability should not limit your dreams.

She earned a scholarship through the Indiana 21st Century Scholars program based on her high school career. That scholarship has allowed her to afford her tuition and books to attend college. After high school, she attended Ivy Tech, receiving a bachelor’s degree in library sciences in 2015.

When it came time to apply to, and enroll in, four-year institutions, she settled on Indiana University. She recalls how her IU application deliberately omitted any mention of her disability. "I just wanted to be treated as any other student, she said. “I want to climb that ladder of success alongside every other student at IU."

Her can-do attitude has inspired her fellow students throughout the years. She said that has pushed her and been a source of inspiration to study and work even harder to succeed. Her love of writing has also fueled her desire to succeed.

"Writing a good story is something I've always really enjoyed,” she said. “I have considered myself a writer since I was in elementary school. My first English teacher inspired me to use writing as a tool to explore the world with my keyboard."

Chelsie said her love of reading also allows her to travel the globe, learn about other cultures, and explore the universe, right from her home in Wabash. She chose J.K. Rowling, Edgar Allen Poe and Shakespeare as some of her favorite authors, the choice of the English poet and playwright regarding by many as the greatest writer who ever lived, coming after she attended a screening of *Hamlet* at the Cinema Center in Fort Wayne.

She did say that limiting her selection of a favorite author to just one person was a difficult task because she respected so many great authors.

When asked what she found to be her most challenging obstacle, Chelsie said continuing to stay motivated.

"Staying motivated even when my classes were really difficult and it seems as if the coursework is never ending is probably one of the greatest hurdles for me,” she said. “So just keep believing in yourself and don't be afraid to ask for help.

“My (direct support professional) helps me to organize my homework and to make all my due dates,” she said. “Try not to get overwhelmed. One of my classes this semester had 10 books!”

In celebration of her accomplishment, Chelsie received two tickets to see the rock band Journey in Fort Wayne this spring as a gift from her proud Mom.

"My favorite Journey song is *Don't Stop Believin*,” she said. "I believe I can make the dean's list again this semester.”

Just like the song says.