

Ryann Baker, a first-year student at Northland College, has already made a profound impact on campus while charting an ambitious academic and personal path. Majoring in psychology and social sciences with a minor in outdoor education, Ryann credits her unique journey to Northland's supportive community and the opportunities afforded by the Wisconsin Grant.

Ryann's passion for wilderness therapy emerged during her junior year of high school, inspired by a mentor who was a Northland alum. "My rock-climbing teacher saw potential in me and encouraged me to consider wilderness therapy," Ryann shared. "When I visited Northland, it just felt like home. I knew I needed to be here."

As a member of the Class of 2028, Ryann has already immersed herself in Northland's vibrant campus life. She serves as the student trustee-elect, a student senator, and is actively involved in the Skywatchers meteorology club, choir, and the Native American Student Association. Ryann also plays on the softball team, reflecting her enthusiasm for both academics and extracurriculars.

Ryann's academic experience has been equally transformative. She highlights courses such as Access and Diversity with Dr. Thomas Mackey and General Psychology with Dr. Olga Miočević as particularly impactful. "These classes aren't just about academics—they've helped me grow as a person and develop the skills I'll need for my career," Ryann explained.

The Wisconsin Grant has played a critical role in making Ryann's Northland journey possible. "The grant has been incredibly helpful," Ryann said. "It's given me the financial independence I've always wanted. For the first time, I feel like I'm standing on my own two feet. It's allowed me to focus on my studies and my future, and for that, I'm so grateful."

Looking ahead, Ryann hopes to pursue a career in wilderness therapy, where she plans to help teenagers and young adults discover the healing power of nature. "I want to make a positive impact on people's lives the way I wish someone had done for me. Nature is so important for mental health—it's a space where people can grow, heal, and thrive."

Ryann's journey to Northland wasn't without challenges. Reflecting on her high school experience, she recalls the difficulties she faced and the resilience she developed. "Northland gave me a second chance to be who I truly am," Ryann said. "This is a place where students can be themselves and find their path without judgment."

As Ryann continues her studies, she remains a shining example of the transformative power of education and financial support. The Wisconsin Grant not only enables students like Ryann to pursue their academic dreams but also helps them build the foundation for meaningful, impactful careers.

Northland College is proud to have Ryann as part of its community, and her journey exemplifies the spirit of resilience and opportunity that defines the Wisconsin Grant program.