

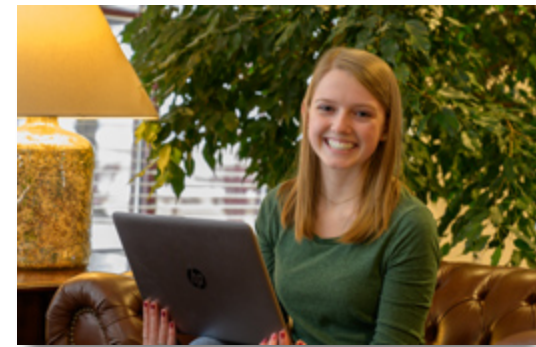
News Release

Seeking Full College Experience and Finding it Close to Home

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Wednesday, January 2, 2019

It is hard to believe it now, but University of Minnesota Crookston (UMN Crookston) freshman Karlie Brekken struggled with her college decision. One week on campus this fall eliminated any doubt the Crookston native had made the right decision.

"I was afraid of not having the full college experience," Brekken says. "I thought maybe it would be better for me to leave my hometown, but living in the residence halls on campus and going to school here turned out to be the experience she was looking for.



She follows in the footsteps of her father, Robin, a 1982 graduate of the UMN Crookston Technical College, and her grandfather, Roger Odegaard, a 1960 graduate of the Northwest School of Agriculture. Along with a host of other relatives, Brekken has a family legacy on the campus. She also chose a major with a family legacy.

Her mother, Karen, teaches in the Early Childhood Family Education Program in the Crookston Public Schools. Brekken credits her mother for inspiring her own decision to major in early childhood education. Working with kids and leading children's groups are something she finds enjoyable and rewarding. "And, playing is a lot of fun," she smiles.

Fall semester Brekken took all general education courses but looks forward to taking classes within the major next spring. "I took 12 credits through the College in the High School program," she explains. "I am excited to move into classes focused on what I want to do with my future."

A member of the Future Educators Club, Brekken is still considering how else she might get involved on campus because she knows there are a lot of options.

One of the highlights of her first semester is discovering great friendships with her roommates. "We are from different majors and different departments, but we really enjoy being roommates," Brekken says. "It makes living on campus even better."

If her major provides her any challenges, she says it would probably be around consistency and discipline in the classroom. "I am looking forward to learning more around techniques to manage the classroom and the many personalities of my future students," she says.

"My education will prepare to teach in my own classroom some day and includes three required student teaching experiences—third grade, kindergarten, and infants. We really graduate with a well-rounded experience."

Where does she see herself in ten years? Her answer comes easy. "I will be teaching probably close by, and if I could guess, it would be in the first grade," she says.

"I love to travel but I wouldn't mind living and working near home. I just know I want to be involved with kids and teaching them by doing things together. I think that's the best way to learn."

In the group photo, left are Odegaard/Brekken family grads and attendees including back row, left to right: Kevin Odegaard 1988, Karlie's uncle; Roger Odegaard 1960, Karlie's grandfather; Robin Brekken 1982, Karlie's father; and Karl Odegaard 1994, Karlie's uncle. Front row: Kylene Odegaard Lehmann 2001, Karlie's aunt, and Freshman Karlie Brekken.



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