

My grandpa, Melvin Eyster, started harvesting in 1958. My mom, Lori (Eyster) Wenger, grew up going on harvest each summer. When she was fifteen, my dad, Joe Wenger, came out from Ohio to work for my grandpa for one year. They kept in contact over the years and when my mom went to college in Pennsylvania, she drove to Ohio to visit my dad. In 1988, they were married. I was born in 1989. I first went on harvest the summer of 1997. My dad decided to start coming on harvest because my grandpa was starting to consider retirement. His last year to go on the harvest was 2001. My dad has been operating Eyster Harvesting LLC since then.

Since then, harvest has become a big part of my life. I have always enjoyed traveling and I love seeing the country. I have also made many close friends with other harvester's kids, and our workers have included people from all over the world. When I was younger, I stayed with my mom during the day and helped cook and look after my three younger sisters. When I was 13, my dad let me start moving service trucks from field to field and operate the combine every now and then. Since I've gotten my license, my dad has had me take in the fuel trucks to get them filled up before taking them out to the field. I've also gone out early with him to change sickle sections, check oil, and grease the combines so that everything is all ready by the time the guys get to the field. I've operated combine when needed including full time for two weeks during the absence of a crewmember. This past year, I learned how to drive our semis.

Growing up on harvest I thought I was missing out on summers with my friends, but over the past few years, I've realized how much I've gotten to experience because of harvest. I've traveled and seen more than most kids my age. Growing up in Ohio where it is much more populated, most of my peers have no idea what it's like to be in a thousand acre wheat field much less operating a combine in one. I've also enjoyed being a part of the different churches that we attend in each town we stay in.

Next year, I plan on attending a liberal arts college. I'm undecided on a major as of right now. I enjoy Biology and I have thought about going into some form of health care. I am hoping that my career choice can be used for service in another country. I have also been planning on doing a cross-cultural study through the college I attend so I can travel while applying my studies. This summer I plan on working for my dad on harvest before going to college in the fall.