

I am a third generation harvester. I started harvesting with my family in 1997. While all of my friends spent their summers going to camps, I spent mine in the wheat fields. I remember counting down the days till we got to hit the road and begin our summer harvesting adventures. Getting to leave school earlier than all the other kids for the summer harvest season was also a big plus. I was five years old when we started and although I was too young to run any of the equipment, I always helped my mom out in the kitchen making meals for the hired guys. The most exciting thing was getting to celebrate my birthday every summer out in the wheat field. As I got older, I began to help out with more things. I started driving the service truck from one part of the field to another when I was twelve years old. My sister and I would drive it together; one was in charge of the gas and the other would steer. This may have not been the best approach but I was just excited to be helping out. Another great memory I have is helping my dad assemble reels for the header over spring break before the harvesting season began. I also remember getting up in the early morning to replace sickle sections so that the guys could start cutting, and going to fill the service truck with diesel. There were always jobs to be done and I loved being able to do whatever I could to help the business run. I learned how to drive combine when I was fourteen years old and it was always fun to cut wheat while the guys took a break to eat dinner. This past year, I filled in as a full time combine operator. I would get up early to go cut wheat until all the elevators were closed and we had to call it a night. I am proud to say that I can unload on the go and that I have learned how to road a combine.

I am currently a junior at Asbury University and I am pursuing a degree in Art with an emphasis in photography. Thanks to my experience with harvesting, I have learned that hard work is necessary to get the job done. I have also learned the importance of flexibility when it comes to operating and managing a business. I hope to use my experiences and lessons from harvest to one day open my own photography business. I am so thankful that I grew up helping out with the harvest because it has been such a big part of my family and has taught me lessons that I can carry over into all areas of my life.

Kaitlyn Wenger

