



Shiani Hughes is the daughter of Wendy Hughes and Taff and Connie Hughes of Hughes Harvesting of Ellinwood, Kan.

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No one ever claimed that harvest was easy, and I'm definitely not going to be the first.



The hours are long, it's always hot, and the labor can be exhausting. For a high school student, the situation is even escalated. There's no time to hang out with your friends, summer sports programs are out of the question, and even summer camp and county fairs are difficult to manage. Yet, I wouldn't choose anything else. The perks of

working on a custom harvest crew, including travel, camaraderie, and getting to help feed the world, far outweigh the challenges.

Harvest has become so much more than a summer job — it's a part of me. My life has revolved around harvest as far back as I can remember. Watching my dad run the huge machines through the field as a kid, I yearned to drive my own combine. Nothing made me happier than getting to steer the combine while sitting on his lap. As I got older, the dream grew with me.

Eventually, I got to go from passenger seat rides to running grain cart. After a few years there, my dream of operating my own combine finally came true.

I have built friendships on the harvest road that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. Your crew becomes your family, no matter where they're from, brought together by hours spent working as a team in the field. Many of the customers you work for also become close family friends. Custom harvest really is a way of life that only a lucky few understand. The feeling of pride that comes with sitting in the pilot seat, knowing that I am a part of something so much bigger than myself, is a joy I can't compare to anything else. This is why I love harvest; because through all the struggle and hard work there is a comfort and a sense of accomplishment in knowing that I am harvesting the crops that feed the world. There is nothing better than knowing the value of your work, and custom harvest is the greatest job there is. I have been truly blessed to be able to be a part of the harvest community, and of USCHI.