

Written by Amanda Antolik '14, who was recently offered a position as Director of Social Services at Mt. Carmel Bluffs in Dubuque, Iowa

I've known that I wanted to pursue a career in Human Services since I was around 18 years old. During my time at St. Francis, I began noticing that I was a little bit different in comparison to my peers. I would see most of my friends starting to write papers or work on class projects days in advance, meanwhile I'd be writing my papers in the car while driving to school or staying up all night to finish a project. There were also times where I would be studying for hours to try and do well on my tests but if I wasn't remotely interested in the topic my mind would just go completely on the blank day of the test.

After graduation, I pursued getting evaluated and I was diagnosed with ADHD. That one diagnosis truly changed my life for the better. With the services and counseling provided to me, I ended up graduating from Loras College a semester early with a double major in criminal justice and psychology on top of working three jobs to help pay for school.

Just seeing how much of a difference services and counseling made I knew I wanted to be able to provide that kind of help to others. Plus, I love how dynamic the human service field is and thrive in environments that are constantly changing or presenting new challenges to solve.

Since graduating college, I've spent the past several years serving my community in positions such as a correctional officer in a male maximum security prison, a child welfare social worker, program coordinator of two group homes for individuals with severe behaviors, a Quality Improvement Facilitator that oversaw the quality of services being provided in 80 care facilities across 8 counties, and a LTSS service coordinator managing a caseload of individuals with disabilities receiving Medicaid services.

I love the daily challenges and the successes that my career path allows me to see. Nothing is more fulfilling to me than being able to be a part of another individual's success or progress which is what I'm looking forward to being a part of in my new position as Director of Social Services/Resident Services Director.

I realized that I truly loved being a part of something bigger than myself during volunteer opportunities at St. Francis. Whether that was tutoring families that lived in the neighboring complex to the school or participating in the school's toy/food drives, etc. I learned that I love being engaged with my community and continue to be engaged to this day.

Currently, I volunteer with talking to teenagers about careers within the human service field at schools that are typically located within rural communities.