

The dream to become an interpreter for the deaf began in elementary school for Katelyn Mandel. But realizing that dream took learning to navigate college loan applications, inter-university library loans when the Schaumburg High School graduate couldn't afford textbooks, part time jobs and a little help from Excel Beyond 211.

After four years at Chicago's Columbia College, Katelyn reached her long-nurtured goal, graduating with a 3.8 grade point average and a degree in American Sign Language to English Interpretation.

"EB 211 was invaluable to me, especially providing financial help during those first two years," Katelyn said. "My mentor, Bill Ludwigsen, was always there for me, helping with loan applications, advising me with class choices."

This May Katelyn took the Educational Interpreters Performance Assessment exam for certification as an interpreter. Next stop, Disney World, where she hopes to get an internship in the Disney College Program, and eventually work as a sign language interpreter there.