

Oki I am Lana Potts, I am Blackfoot from the Piikani First Nation. I grew up and worked in my inspirational community until I ventured to the city, when I decided to begin my journey to wellness; when I moved to Edmonton, Alberta and completed my Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the University of Alberta in 2005.

I was not a traditional medical school candidate and my background was varied. Prior to applying to school I spent a number of years figuring out where my path was. I worked as an outreach worker for a women's organization, an administrative assistant at an elementary school, a legal assistant and an emergency room nurse. Although my passion in life was to attend medical school, in the back of my mind I always felt I would not be able to succeed in this area.

As an aboriginal woman I could not have imagined that I would be accepted to medical school. When I applied, it was more wishful thinking than a life plan. However when I was accepted to school, I was overwhelmed with joy and humbled because I would be able to give back to my people that has helped me succeed in life. I moved to Thunder Bay, Ontario to attend the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. Attending medical school has been a lifelong dream.

I have chosen to go into health care for three reasons. Initially so I can give back to the women who could not take this journey. Many women have paved a way for me with their sacrifices and lives so I can have this opportunity. For me to say I accomplished this on my own is selfish and discredit all the prayers and hope that my community and family send me everyday I am also here for my aboriginal children and who did not have this opportunity. I want to be their voice and advocate and ensure they are never forgotten again.

Although the past two years has been successful I have learned that there are roads ridden with obstacles that I must overcome. As an aboriginal student within the program I find that I lack the connections and mentorship that non-aboriginal students have. I have learned to become a successful a physician there is a need to make your mark in the world. The world of medicine is new and foreign to me and I struggle in finding out where I must seek out knowledge. The hardest struggle that I must overcome is finding how to fit western medicine into my aboriginal belief and teachings. Financially this decision has been hard for me as I moved away from my family and my community. Emotionally the challenges of academics and distance have pushed me to find hope and drive. Through challenges, I have learned the value of balance and as my grandmother tells me nothing good in life is easy.

Overall I learned that if you believe it will happen. There are many days that I feel I am living a dream but know that it was hard work and determination that opened this door for me. My advice to you it to take a chance and do what you want for yourself, your only regret will be what you didn't do.