



Willowwind Alumni Spotlight

Name

Kristen Messerle

Graduating class

2009

Q: Which grades attended at Willowwind?

A: I was here for both 7th and 8th grade.

Q: What are you up to now?

A: I am a Junior at Central College in Pella. My major is in Elementary Education with endorsements in Special Ed and Reading. I want to be a Special Ed teacher, working mainly with younger grades, Kindergarten through 3rd grade.



Q: How do you feel WW impacted you as an individual? How did it impact where you are now?

A: Willowwind is a community and really helped me get better at communication and helped me find myself. I was always shy as a kid, and here I just felt like I could always be myself and be whoever I wanted to be. All of the teachers here were great. I still keep in contact with my 7th and 8th grade teacher; she was actually my tutor after I left Willowwind. The relationships that you build here with both your teachers and the other students, even those in younger grades, are so great. That community really impacted my life.

The small class size was really beneficial for me, I have always been most comfortable in smaller groups. I think that is partly why I ended up attending a smaller college. You have so many opportunities for leadership at Willowwind, both in the classroom and outside of it. I had always wanted to be a teacher, but I think having the chance to help other students at Willowwind really sealed that for me.

Q: What are some of your best Willowwind memories?

A: Definitely playing with the younger students. I was in the After School Program and loved playing house or something with the preschoolers. It was so much fun. Partners were fun too, being paired with a younger student and getting to do projects with them throughout the year. Building those relationships was really great.

Q: What stands out about your experience here?

A: That community building for sure. You would never get that in a public school because you're just another student. At Willowwind it's different, it's basically a family and I really loved that.

Q: What do you think are some of the benefits of attending Willowwind?

A: I wasn't all that great at school before coming to Willowwind. The education here is very individualized and that is what drew us here. I had people in my class excelling at school when I wasn't but I got the individualized attention that I needed from my teacher, and other students were very helpful too. I got a lot of help and really grew in every aspect of my education at Willowwind.

Q: If there was one thing you could share with a prospective family about Willowwind, what would it be?

A: I would say that the individualized attention students get at Willowwind is so important. At public schools you're just a face in the classroom, you don't really have an identity because of the large number of students. At Willowwind you are someone, you have a voice and you are able to express anything you want.