

Scholarship Opens Doors to First-Year Student



Earlier this year, Marie Spence was an exemplary high school student and captain of her varsity volleyball team, but a University of Denver education seemed out of reach. Today, Spence is excitedly preparing for her first year at DU, thanks in part to a Susie Ross Berry Scholarship for first-year students enrolled in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

“Berry Scholars” are chosen by the dean on the basis of academic merit, academic interest in a broad liberal arts education and demonstrable need for substantial financial assistance. The dean has also made support of first-generation students and students of color a priority in this and other AHSS scholarships.

“This scholarship made me realize that DU was an affordable option for me, and opened my eyes to how possible it is to pursue my passions,” said Spence, who pre-declared a major in psychology.

Having grown up in Lafayette, CO, Spence was well aware of the DU community.

“The emphasis that the University of Denver places on the importance of community reassured me that not only was this the right school for me, but that maintaining a connection with my local community was also the right decision for me,” she said.

Spence misses the bonds that were formed with her volleyball teammates, but she is eager to jump into new experiences with DU’s Social Justice Living and Learning Community.

“Listening to local leaders and being involved in bettering communities of every size is something I find very exciting. In general, community service is something I am thrilled to dive into,” she said. Spence also plans to be active in the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning and environmental sustainability programs on campus.

“I think saving the planet is about the environment and the people, so I plan to do my best to make an impact in both areas!” said Spence, who hopes that her psychology and sociology studies will eventually lead to a degree in social work.

Not only is DU a good fit for Spence, but Spence is a good fit for DU. According to her high school counselor, Spence “has a voracious appetite for learning, an ability to lead her peers, a warm spirit and compassion that she demonstrates both in and out of school,” desirable attributes of any DU student.

“I love expanding my knowledge, but more than that I love expanding my perspective,” Spence said. “Being able to hear about different thought processes and all the different ways there are to view and interpret things is something I think is such an amazing privilege, and I love being able to open my mind.”

The Susie Ross Berry Scholarship Fund was established in 2000 through a bequest from Richard D. Berry, BA '51, in honor of his mother, Susie Ross Berry.