

## Shadowing Leads to a Career Path

Originally from a small town in Northwestern Ohio, Keri Slane ventured away from home and began her undergraduate degree in Albion, Michigan. She received her bachelor's degree in Economics and Management from Albion College where she played for the Briton volleyball team all four years. After graduating she spent two years coaching high school volleyball and landing the assistant volleyball coaching position at Albion for one year. She decided to move to Battle Creek after being accepted into the Dental Hygiene Program at Kellogg Community College.

“Dentistry always appealed to me probably because it was something none of my friends could fathom, having their hands in other people’s mouths and all. It wasn’t until I observed first in Dr. George Brown and Dr. Jon Eckhardt’s orthodontics office that I really realized what dentistry was really about. It really hit home for me about what I could contribute to the career when observing Dr. George Brown. At this point in his career he was retired and coming into the office out of the goodness of his heart to help with special orthodontic cases. This one case was special to me because I come from a family where dental care was not the number one priority because both my parents grew up in families that were lacking in knowledge the importance of dental care. A young boy living in a foster care home was in dire need of orthodontics and oral surgery to help him have a properly functioning mouth. So growing up in this home they didn’t have money for the treatment that was presented to them. Dr. Brown was working free of charge to help this young boy. It was amazing to watch the progress he made for this young child to have a healthy, happy smile. It really touched my heart that someone would be as generous as to donate their time to really help someone in need. I know that’s the person I want to be someday.”

Her advice is others thinking about pursuing a career similar to hers is to go and shadow , observe a dental office in action, see how the dentist, dental hygienist’s , staff and patients interact. It can be a rewarding experience to find the best solution for every patient and seeing the difference you can make in their lives.

**“What I enjoy the most is non-surgical periodontal therapy and following up with good patient education for proper home care. Seeing some of the patients I have, I realize that home care is the most importance part for them and seeing them come back with a success story about their care makes me realize I made a difference in their life!”**

Since becoming a member of the graduating class of 2013 at Kellogg Community College, Keri has been elected the Student American Dental Hygienist Association class president, taken part

in many community programs including providing fluoride treatments to pre-school aged children and informational sessions on dental hygiene care for parents and children, as well as the March of Dimes.

“Winning the Michgian Dental Association Foundation Scholarship allows me to pay back my student loads quicker than expected, and I am grateful for that opportunity.” Dental Hygiene will be an exciting career path, I look forward to a lifetime of helping people in need.