

Family values influence student's choice of non-profit leadership

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Editor's Note: *This story is part of an ongoing series about student excellence at the university. To read more about some of ASU's outstanding students, [click here](#).*

To say that community service is a family value for Devin Oakes and his family would be an understatement.

At a family reunion recently, about 60 members of Oakes' extended clan gathered at an elementary school in northern Arizona and built planter boxes for a community garden. As he grew up, outings with his parents often involved helping others.



Devin Oakes
Photo by: Andy DeLisle
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In that respect, it's not surprising that Oakes enrolled at ASU this fall as a major in nonprofit leadership and management. What's unusual is the route he took to get here.

After graduating near the top of his class at Mesa's Mountain View High School in 2009, Oakes deferred full-ride scholarships at ASU and Mesa Community College to go on a two-year mission in Idaho for his church. When he returned he was tempted to enroll at ASU, but he felt he might get more quickly involved in leadership and service at MCC, where his father is director of service learning.

He became president of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society, helping coordinate a Relay for Life team to raise more than \$10,000 to fight cancer. He put in hundreds of volunteer hours at Banner Desert Medical Center, the Arizona Science Center and the Special Olympics, and he was recognized as one of the 20 most outstanding community college students in Arizona, as a member of the 2013 All-Arizona Academic 1st Team.

He also was named a Coca-Cola Gold Scholar and a Phi Theta Kappa Guistwhite Scholar, one of only 20 in the nation.

But he never lost sight of his longer term goal, which was to get a degree from ASU and then attend medical school. Oakes' desire to become a doctor was influenced by his having had spinal fusion surgery and open heart surgery as a child.

"I signed up for the MAPP (Maricopa-ASU Pathways Program) as soon as I started at MCC," says Oakes. "I knew it was super important to start out with a plan for what I was going to do, so I wouldn't

waste any time. I stayed in close touch with my adviser the whole time, so I was taking the classes I needed to transfer to ASU.”

Oakes wants to gain a deeper understanding of the role of non-profit organizations, training to become a physician and eventually moving into hospital administration. He applied for and was accepted as a research assistant at ASU's Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation as soon as he arrived on campus.

“The nonprofit leadership program here is fantastic. It was a big factor in my wanting to come to ASU. I want to become a doctor to treat patients, but I can impact a wider range of people in a leadership position.”

Sarah Auffret, sauffret@asu.edu
Media Relations