

Sprinkles of Selflessness

It was the beginning of the school year at East Chambers High School. A lonely freshman walked through the doors, overwhelmed with the sights surrounding her. The halls were packed with upperclassmen proudly sporting their letterman jackets, girls giggling about their summer flings, and teachers desperately trying to herd students into their first-period classrooms.

Before she even had the chance to panic, a sprinkle of hope fell on her as she saw a familiar face in the crowd.

Kaitlyn Hale was the face Kelli Neuman saw in the hall that day.

"She gave me her code to her locker," Neuman said. "That way I could put my books in her locker because the freshman lockers were so far away."

This moment is a true testament to the person Hale is, who many describe in one word: selfless.

Starting at a young age, Hale was naturally more concerned about others than she was about herself. Hale's younger sister, Courtlyn, often witnessed her sister's giving personality, sometimes in unique ways.

"When I was a baby, she would let me pull her hair just to make me laugh, even though it hurt her," Courtlyn said. "If that isn't proof of what an awesome sister Kaitlyn is, I don't know what is."

Hale's childhood was filled with memories of spending time with her two younger sisters. Whether it was folding laundry or making scientific crafts such as flubber, the three were often smiling and laughing no matter what they were doing.

The Hale family grew up in Winnie, Texas, a small town with deep Cajun roots. From this town stemmed Hale's connection to agriculture, especially by being actively involved in her FFA chapter throughout high school. Even in her FFA involvement and other endeavors, Hale's selfless attitude shined brightly.

"Whenever I was in high school, she was the

one that held everything together," Neuman said with a reminiscent smile. "She held our FFA chapter together. She held our UIL journalism team together. She held our friends together, but no one knew it."

Neuman explained that Hale was always the girl who did the most work but never got recognized for it.

"She was the one that would completely plan a party, but wouldn't stand up and introduce herself as the hostess," Neuman said.

After Hale left high school, her legacy in her FFA chapter remained. She passed down all of her old files and materials to Kelli, who in turn passed them down. Those files are still being used to this day. Many current members probably do not even know where those files came from.



"I think they invented the phrase 'behind-the-scenes' about Kaitlyn Hale," Neuman said.

While in high school, Hale's attendance at an FFA convention hosted at Texas Tech sparked her passion for the university. At this event, she fell in love with the campus, met someone with an agricultural communications major and was instantly hooked.

"Going into my sophomore year of high school, I said, 'I'm going to Tech, I'm going to major in ag. comm, and there's nothing you can do to change my mind,'" Hale said while laughing at herself.

Hale graduated from high school in 2008, where she went on to pursue a Bachelor of Science in agricultural communications at Texas Tech University. Throughout her collegiate years, she was an active member of the Sigma Alpha sorority and Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow. Even though Hale had many things on her plate with activities, school and work, she still managed to always put others above herself.

In her undergraduate years, Hale willingly edited papers for friends, friends of friends, and even complete strangers. Without hesitation, Hale would always be ready, red pen in hand, to edit someone's paper if asked.

"I will be forever indebted to Kaitlyn just because of

how many papers of mine she's edited," Neuman said. "Kaitlyn is definitely my go-to. She's my mom in Lubbock."

During her time at Tech, Hale also snagged a student position working on the website in the University Career Center. Jay Killough, director of the center, quickly noticed Hale's impressive skill set and work ethic. When a position came open right before Hale graduated, she was interviewed and hired as a full-time employee.

Even though most people in Hale's position have a media and communication degree, her agriculture degree makes her unique and is an added benefit for the center.

"The friendliness and personality of the College of Agriculture Sciences and Natural Resources really fits Kaitlyn," Killough added. "It really fits our office nicely."

Hale is now an assistant director at the University Career Center, where she undertakes many responsibilities. She serves as an information technology career representative, as well as for parts of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. Hale is also the alumni liaison for the University Career Center, in addition to managing all social media and their website, and is partially in charge of all marketing aspects.

"Kaitlyn is a silent leader," Killough emphasized. "She has opinions on things that go on in the office, but she won't force them on anyone. I like that about her."

Working at the career center really gives Hale's giving and caring personality the chance to flourish.

"I love helping people," Hale explained, which is why this job fits her perfectly. Students come in with a product, either themselves or their resume, and Hale

helps make it better. This is a very rewarding and fun experience, she noted.

Hale's desire to truly help others is apparent when she talks about working with students.

"There's always that non-traditional student who has put themselves through college, and they have done it all on their own," Hale said, smiling at the memory.

"That's definitely one of those times when I leave after the student and say, 'I just had a really amazing student, and I hope they go on to do amazing things.'"

Outside of work, Hale continues to sprinkle love on everyone around her. When she is just baking for fun, which is one of her favorite hobbies, she ends up bringing her goodies to the office to share with everyone. Hale's butter beer cupcakes, a flavor from the Harry Potter book series, are a popular office favorite.

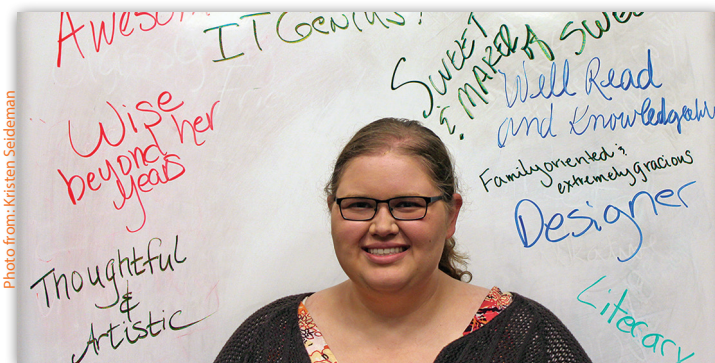
Kelli Neuman summed up everything up about this amazing woman.

"I can't think of one single instance where she's put herself in front of others, although very rightfully so, she should have many times." **T**

Keegan Langford
Farwell, Texas



Hale and a student are all smiles as she critiques his cover letter



Power words describing Hale written by co-workers