

Graduating senior secures job, looks to the future

by Kaylyn Dallman - Tuesday, May 10, 2011

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With English as her second language, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh student Ka Mee Lee beat the odds as a first college graduate in her family. She is graduating May 14 with a degree in human services, none of which would have been possible without her mother's support.

"With my mom's encouragement I am able to succeed and achieve all my goals," said Lee .

Lee's traditional Hmong family came to the U.S. as refugees after her father was killed in the Vietnam War. Her mother struggled with two jobs to provide for the family, and they lived in poverty as her mother did not receive any benefits.

"Some of my relatives thought that I, the oldest daughter, could never go to college or complete high school because without a father's encouragement, I would not be able to go to school and be successful," said Lee.

Not only did Lee achieve her goal and will be walking at commencement, but she also secured a full-time job as an assistant manager at Wal-Mart prior to graduation.

The human services major department requires its students to complete three internships, and Lee interned at Christine Ann Center, Advocap and Career Services on campus.

"Each of my internships was a great experience and helped me gain a lot of knowledge and real life experience in the major that I am in," Lee said. "I am a self-starter, and the internships provided me with new challenges and opportunities to better myself."

The friendly staff and professors at UW Oshkosh became very influential in Lee's college career. "I will always have a soft spot for UW Oshkosh due to all of the support and care that I received from my professors," said Lee.

In the future, Lee plans to create her own business to help the elderly and improve the Hmong community, get her masters and Ph.d. in social work, counseling in higher education or law.

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