



# Gearing Up For Your Transitions

## Staci Forrest's

### Personal Story

Meet Staci a student at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania majoring in Special Education. She aspires to obtain a Ph. D. in Disability Studies and an Ed. D. in Special Education. Forrest plans to use her education to help her become the Executive Director of a national non-profit focusing on disability issues.

**Q: What are you currently doing now that you have left high school?**

*A: Currently, I am a senior at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. I am majoring in Special Education and Elementary Education with a minor in Women's & Gender Studies. I am involved in disability rights and awareness organization at both the national and state levels. Nationally, I served on the Board of Directors for the National youth Leadership Network (NYLN). Locally, I serve on the Family SHADE (Support and Health Care Alliance Delaware) Advisory Board. I have received a variety of national awards for my work within the disability community.*

**Q: What were your challenges and successes as you went through the transition process?**

*A: I think the main challenge I had when going through the transition process was actually believing that I could be on my own and be independent despite my disabilities ( I am partially sighted, have chronic illness and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Once I started to believe that, everything just seemed to fall into place.*

**Q: Were there any specific programs, agencies or persons which were helpful to you and your family/caregivers during your transition process?**

*A: Specifically, I found the transition coordinator of my high school (Ms. Debbie Scott) to be extremely helpful in the transition process. She introduced me to the world of self-advocacy, self-determination and leadership for young people with disabilities when I was a junior in high school. During that time I had the opportunity to travel to and speak at a variety of transition conferences and to really learn what self-advocacy is all about and how I could apply it to my life. I think that all of these experiences played a role in helping me become a successful young adult and a budding professional focusing on youth leadership for students with disabilities.*

**Q: What is your anticipated path for the future?**

*A: In the future, I hope to continue my involvement in the disability community to the fullest extent possible. My future academic goal is to obtain a Ph.D. in Disability Studies and an Ed.D. in Special Education. I also hope to become the Executive Director of a national non-profit that focuses on disability issues.*