My love for, and years of experience working with, children has not only increased my passion for working with children, it ultimately led me to study Child Development at Chico State University. The program provided many different opportunities in the field of Child Development and in the field of Child Life. The program helped to increase my knowledge of children’s developmental needs, psychological effects of trauma, and how medical issues and hospitalization can affect the children and their families. Through the program I had the opportunity to interact with two Child Life Specialists from Sutter Hospital. I was able to ask them questions and they provided information about books and websites where I could continue my research of the field of Child Life.

 When I was introduced to a Pediatric Emergency Room Child Life Specialist at Stanford Hospital I had no idea how much my life would change. She became a mentor to me by allowing me to shadow her and answered my many questions. After 20 minutes of shadowing her I knew the field of Child Life was where I wanted to spend my life. This knowledge led me to volunteer at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital Oakland and their Child Life department. My volunteer experiences there gave me the opportunity to work in the playroom and also to work one-on-one with children during bedside visits. One of my bedside experiences forever changed my life, and continues to add to my desire to attend Mills College and complete the Child Life program. During this bedside visit I comforted a baby who was suffering from cancer for three hours. This experience opened my eyes to how much I could help these children and their families.

The Child Life program at Mills College will teach me the skills I need to succeed when working with children in the hospital setting. By continuing my education at Mills College I will learn how attachment and loss can affect a child psychologically. I will gain field experience in hospitals as well as knowledge of medical information for children in hospitals and clinics. This program will give me not only the skills I need to be prepared for a future as a Child Life Specialist, but also the confidence to know I can help these children and families.

When I began studying Child Development at Chico State last year, I knew that when I graduated I wanted to continue my education and become a Child Life Specialist. Once I made this decision I was constantly researching different schools that offer Child Life programs and I learned about the Mills College Child Life program. While volunteering at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital in Oakland, I had the opportunity to interact with many current students and alumni from Mills College. Based on my research and the recommendations from the students and alumni, I decided attending Mills College would be the best thing for me. I am now about to graduate from Chico State and cannot wait for my journey to begin and I want that journey to start at Mills College.