

My name is Elleanna Lausch and I am 18 years old. I go to Jamestown High and I have a dream of becoming a Social Worker.

My whole life I've struggled with my health. I have Gastroparesis (a stomach disease), Traciobrancomalattia (a Lung disease), Asthma, Chronic Migraines, Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, Mast Cell Activation Syndrome, Water Urticaria, and Dysautonomia.

I was extremely sick when I was in grade school and middle school. I missed multiple days of school causing me to fall behind. I had multiple doctor appointments that felt like it took up half my life. Speaking of doctor appointments, I have had doctors dismiss me and say that I'm faking my symptoms because they seemed insane. In grade school, I was not able to advocate for myself, luckily I had a wonderful mother who advocated for me, and as I got older, she taught me to advocate for myself.

Living with Gastroparesis, you throw up a lot. There are certain foods I can't eat. Gastroparesis means that your stomach mobility doesn't function as it should. I control this tightly with a diet and sometimes medication, I have been hospitalized several times due to flares, and maintaining my weight can be a challenge. This means, for me, when my friends go out to eat I can't go with them because the restaurant doesn't have anything I can eat. It can be a huge struggle, especially at school. I always have snacks in my locker and my Kate Farms drink with me at all times. Kate Farms is a nutritional drink for people with gastroparesis. Instead of going out to eat, my friends and I will cook something that we all can eat.

Traciobrancomalattia and Asthma have greatly affected my life. These are lung diseases. I have 80% closure of the Trachea and 30% closure of the left bronchus. I get infections easily and can become quite sick when I do. When I get sick with a lung infection I am unable to work because my oxygen is too low. This has made it hard for me to keep up with my classmates, whether that's in gym class or just in general. I've learned that I need to give myself a little grace because I need to be careful I don't have an Asthma attack, I also take extra precautions when being around other people.

Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome affects my joints. Randomly throughout the day, my joints will sublux or dislocate, this causes me severe pain. I have knee, ankle, and wrist braces for when this happens.

Water Urticaria, and Mast Cell Activation Syndrome. This causes me to be allergic to water and causes hives wherever the water touches my skin. It can be tears, sweat, tap water, and even distilled water. Living with this I learned the best times to shower, what to specifically wear, and that I can't swim without breaking out.

With Dysautonomia, I have to eat or drink lots of salt, otherwise, I will pass out. I also need to drink a ton of water. Dysautonomia causes fatigue and sometimes spells in the afternoon. There are good and bad days. On the bad days, it can be so bad that I need to stay home and rest, it also impacts how late I can stay up and do things with friends. I've learned through all this that I need to keep my body healthy and give myself grace because there are going to be good and bad days. I also plan out my day based on how I'm feeling that morning, and I don't stay out late hanging with friends.

This is why I plan on going to Bismarck State, majoring in Social Work, and minoring in Sociology and Psychology. So I can help people. I want to help people who have been through the same, or close to, the same things I have gone through. I want to help them manage their symptoms. I want to help guide them to the life they were meant to live. A life where they don't have to constantly worry about their health, a life where they can live to their fullest potential. Whether that's working with foster kids or in a health care atmosphere. I will just go where God leads me.