

Well, I've been doing music since I was in sixth grade. Been in band for a really long time. It's something I really enjoy. I can play like 10 different instruments, and I've taken the time to learn every instrument that was available to me. They started out being kind of like a hobby. I wasn't sure what it was for me I can just kind of did it for fun. And then when I was going through a tough time in my life, I started focusing on music as kind of like a coping mechanism, just like something I look forward to and after realizing how much it meant to me and how much it helped me get through things I thought it would be a great skill to like fully learn and then come back to the community and bring that back and set a positive example. Because think that's really what our community needs. I play tuba I have performed in New York in Carnegie Hall for Tuba and went to state festival as a tuba solo. I got a superior rating which is like first place. It was like number one tuba player in the state of Montana. Which I guess didn't I didn't realize you know would kind of get me out there, but I got a letter in the mail saying that they had received my name and that I should audition for this program that takes high school students to perform in Carnegie Hall if they can pass the audition stage, so I wrote up a little essay about myself and I had to send my recording of my solo that I performed at state music festival and they were like, 'congratulations, we think you're really good.' and come be a part of our program and then when I got there it was kind of like culture shock because the only Native American there, and then I was the only kid from Montana. But they had kids that were from like Korea and just all over the world this was just it was like people that I didn't even know existed you know my band we're small. I don't know if you know anything about like the reservation or Browning, but basketball's kind of the cool thing to do so nobody really does band, which is kind of sad but it's just like those of us that do it, we find more of like an enjoyment to do it. I always hear stories of like how like the band used to be the main core on the basketball games and people used to be really into it and. I guess now it's kind of turned into a thing where like basketball is everything and bands not cool. But I hope that with me showing that it's more than just playing an instrument like, it's something that really is cool. It can be other things too. Like I said I did face a tough time in my life. I mean I guess you know being a bigger girl, I've always, you know, get teased you know like this and this kind of having my own struggles with being confident in myself and learning to love myself. I developed a lot of anxiety and being nervous about things and anxious. But also, my sophomore year high school, my best friend passed away from suicide and it was tough for me because, you know, we found out there was bullying going on and just a lot of different things that played out and it caused a lot of depression. It was hard because, like I said, she passed away and then it was like the state music festival was like right after so it was just hard for me because I couldn't stop everything that I was doing, because if you haven't noticed, I'm an overachieving person and in a lot of things, so I definitely like didn't take the break that I think that I probably should have been taking. I just kept going doing thing after thing, like it was just to take my mind off of how sad I was. Yeah, I think it went on for a long time before we hit quarantine for covid. I'd find myself just sad, you know, just realizing that I never really took the time to be sad and just. You know, it caused a lot of feeling alone and especially when it was a time where we couldn't go anywhere. I guess me over coming that, is just never stopping. You know, the quarantine kind of gave me a break that I needed. It was just me being able to continue doing the things that I love to do, even though I was struggling mentally. I'm very proud of the band and being able to represent the food pantry. Another big thing I'm proud of is that I'm a cheerleader at Browning, and I'm very passionate about you know, kind of breaking the stereotype that you don't have to be mean to be a cheerleader or don't have to be skinny to be a cheerleader. That's something I've always kind of been proud of is my community involvement. A lot of what I do is for my community and even though it's not

just like one thing, because I do so many things, it's just the overall concept of being able to show that I'm Native American and I am on a successful path will pass that you know breaks my stereo type of being somebody that's not going to be successful and you know, being able to, I guess, break down those barriers.