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Two graduated--one ready to begin

Summary: Three sisters from Sauk Center--Theresa, Cindy, and Sara Lahr--all chose the University of Minnesota, Morris.

(June 15, 2006)-When older sister Theresa graduated from the University of Minnesota, Morris in 2003, her commencement day was Sara Lahr's first exposure to a college campus. She remembers she was "busy taking it all in." In May, she returned for sister Cindy's graduation, and next fall she'll be back as a member of the Class of 2010.

Sara shares that Cindy and Theresa didn't pressured her to attend UMM, but they did provide a positive introduction to life on the Morris campus. She says, "When I visited, I got a good feel for the campus. I liked it."

While her sisters remained neutral on her college decision, they both suggested Indy Hall as Sara's first residential hall choice. "Theresa and I lived in Indy our freshman years," shares Cindy, "and my sophomore year and Theresa's senior year we were roommates." Jokingly, Theresa refers to that experience as "the longest year of my life," but adds, "I suppose that could have been because I was a senior."

The Lahr sisters grew up on a family farm outside of Sauk Centre and graduated from Sauk Centre High School where they all were members of the speech team. Theresa started UMM as a biology major. "But fortunately for me," she shares, "my first bio class wasn't until second semester. By then I had fallen in love with calculus and have not looked back." She graduated with a mathematics major and spent many hours as a math tutor.

After graduating in 2003, Theresa accepted a position with Epic Systems Corporation in Madison, Wisconsin, one of the leading electrical medical record systems in the nation with major clients such as Allina and CentraCare. She finds her work testing software rewarding: "It's great to be a part of an organization focused on improving the quality of patient care."

Cindy also started UMM as a biology major, then switched to English and eventually added secondary education. She says, "I've always liked reading and writing, and I like to think of myself as a grammar nut. I originally had no interest in teaching, but I began considering it after working at summer camps. People kept telling me I would be a great teacher." Cindy was a founding member of Sigma Tau Delta, an English honor society, and a writer, copy editor, head copy editor, and advertising manager for The University Register, as well as a writing consultant in the Writing Room.

This summer, Cindy will be working at a summer camp in Colorado and making plans for the future. She would like to teach or work for the YMCA. She shares, "I'm also interested in editing, publishing, or writing. Like most English majors, I have an idea for a book I plan to write."

While she still considers herself undecided, Sara is leaning towards a major in mathematics or computer science. "I simply enjoy learning about these subjects," she shares. "I guess I had good math teachers throughout high school."

Sara is just beginning. Theresa has adjusted to life beyond Morris, but Cindy's UMM career has just ended. She knows what she'll miss—"having pretty much everything I need at my disposal. I can walk to get food, work out, check out an athletic event, see a play, hear a concert, go to a dance, etc. All my academic, social, and cultural needs can be met in one place! And I'm going to miss the people and atmosphere."

And the new graduate has good advice for Sara, the soon-to-be UMMer, too: "Don't go to school with the intention of impressing anyone you'll impress people by being yourself. It might take you a while to figure out who 'yourself' is, but you'll eventually figure it out. Get into study habits early, so that you won't be kicking yourself later. Work hard first, so you'll have time later to have fun. Find an organization you really enjoy. Get to know the people on your floor. They can become your best friends. Also, it's okay to not know what you want to major in, and it's okay to change majors. And it's okay to go to school for five years, too."

Photo: Theresa '03, Cindy '06, and Sara Lahr '10

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.