

## Alayna Milby, B.A. English, Literature, 2014

By Abigail Raley

### Hope Harbor Director of Community Engagement

*"I will defend English and the humanities because that really created my ability to recognize that people's experiences create who they are."*



Alayna Milby graduated from Western Kentucky University with a BA in Literature in 2014. She is currently the Director of Community Engagement for Bowling Green's sexual trauma recovery center, Hope Harbor.

Milby always knew she would attend WKU. Both of her parents attended WKU, and it only seemed natural that she would attend as well. Since most of her classmates from high school went to MTSU, Western Kentucky University seemed against the tide, but Milby chose to follow the family tradition handed down from one generation to the next. Initially, Milby enrolled in WKU thinking that she wanted to be a teacher, but upon realizing that she was better suited for something more creatively oriented, she quickly switched her major to be literature-focused.

Milby found her job at Hope Harbor, a non-profit crisis counseling center for sexual abuse victims, their families, and their friends, after volunteering with the organization after graduation. "My passion for this work is what made me stand out" Milby said. "I'm very fortunate that I found my dream job so quickly." She moved up from volunteering to volunteer coordination, eventually ascending to her job as Director of Community Engagement. Her job entails organizing fundraisers, community events, and even services outside of counselling for Hope Harbor clients. Milby has recently become officially certified as a yoga instructor and plans on bringing those new skills to the center for clients and community members.

"I'm hoping it'll help assist in transitioning clients out [of treatment]" Milby said. "We don't have the capacity for these large caseloads, so that was my idea of how yoga could be beneficial."

While Milby has a BA in literature, most of her coworkers majored in social work or psychology. Milby believes that her experiences in literature give her a fresh perspective in her work, and that her experience in English makes her better at her job. "I think [my major] had a huge impact on my ability to empathize with people and especially marginalized groups"

Milby said. Milby's abilities to empathize in literature translate into real life, making her a better organizer and advocate.