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## Stapleton fulfilling dream of impacting next generation

By AMY SMITH THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE  
May 30, 2023

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Taylor Stapleton, 4.0 GPA Central Hardin High School graduate, attends Western Kentucky University, Elizabethtown campus this fall to pursue early childhood education degree.

Submitted

### Getting to know Taylor Stapleton

Taylor Stapleton recently graduated from Central Hardin High School with a 4.0 GPA and will attend the Elizabethtown campus of WKU this fall where she will pursue a degree in early childhood education.

Siblings: An older brother

Pets: She has four dogs; two golden doodles, Murphy and Maggie, a great Dane, Gracie and a lab and beagle mix, Chase.

Favorite food: Mexican

Favorite color: Hot pink

Favorite music: Country

Favorite recording artist: Cody Johnson

Taylor Stapleton recently graduated from Central Hardin High School and has known since she was 7 years old that she wanted to be a teacher. Maintaining a 4.0 GPA while taking dual-credit courses at EC3, the fulfillment of that dream now is in sight.

“My third-grade teacher had a big influence on me,” Stapleton said. “She’s a lot of the reason I’ve pushed through with my dreams of being a teacher.”

Penny Best of Lincoln Trail Elementary School not only taught Stapleton but also her older brother.

“I can remember Taylor coming in at a very small age with her mom who was volunteering in my classroom and asking to grade papers, or help me with my classroom tasks,” Best said. “That’s when I knew that she had the heart of a teacher. She is a loving, caring, responsible young lady and every teacher’s dream student.”

Favorite restaurant: Mi Jalisco locally and the Shrimp Basket in Gulf Shores

Favorite vacation spot: A cruise

Favorite season: Fall

Favorite animal: Dog

Favorite memory: Our family vacations every year.

Advice to the reader, "Shoot for the stars. Try new things. I tell every little kid that crosses my path to pursue their goals and not let anybody tear them down. When life gets hard, I tell myself that it will get better. I've kept God my number one person and I've got down on my knees and prayed to him."

### To nominate a Tuesday's Teen

To submit a nomination for a Tuesday's Teen, email [asmith@thenewsenterprise.com](mailto:asmith@thenewsenterprise.com).

Best has followed Stapleton throughout her school career and has opened her classroom for observation hours.

"Even when she was in third grade, I would tell her, 'You are going to be the best teacher someday. One day, you might be just right across the hall,' " Best said. "Now this dream is so close."

Stapleton plans to attend the Elizabethtown campus of Western Kentucky University. The university will pay for a third of her tuition, and Hardin County Schools also will pay a third.

"I'm just left owing a third because they're in such need of teachers in our surrounding counties and Hardin County," Stapleton said.

Stapleton said it's her love for children and her desire to facilitate positive change that motivates her to teach.

"I've always had a heart for kids," Stapleton said. "I've always wanted to be the one to make an influence in the world, especially in the world we live in today, I feel we need influences for the younger generation."

Ellen Douglas, eighth-grade social studies teacher at East Hardin Middle School, witnessed Stapleton's outstanding work ethic in class.

"Taylor demonstrated a work ethic that clearly started from her early toddlerhood," Douglas said. "Taylor's extraordinary work ethic has defined her stellar student attributes."

Douglas also attends The Grove Baptist Church where Stapleton uses her teaching skill with the children's ministry.

"I create lesson plans for (the children) which usually involve arts and crafts," Stapleton said. "Honestly, The Grove has been the best thing in my life. I got saved going there and two months later, I was baptized. The Grove is awesome."

Douglas said Stapleton stepped up to serve a need in the church.

"She took a leadership role for the youngest children in our congregation, as a volunteer," Douglas said. "She saw a need and took on the task of a caregiver, teacher for preschool children."

Pastor of The Grove, Eric Oliver, also appreciates Stapleton's service and the example she sets to others.

"Taylor is mature, thoughtful and an inspiration to others," Oliver said. "She has shown great courage during some difficult times and loves her savior Jesus, her parents, family and all of those whom she knows. She truly is a blessing to those who know her."

Stapleton's desire to help others causes her to not only reach out to children, but to others in the community as well.

"Helping others is what I enjoy doing," Stapleton said.

Through Beta Club, she has volunteered at Feeding America, Kentucky's Heartland and other nonprofit organizations.

"Being a leader is one of the biggest things that Beta has taught me," Stapleton said. "I've had different sponsors and have learned from them and from the kids in the club as well. They have been a huge part of my life. Anyone that I cross paths with that needs to join a club, I always recommend Beta."

Stapleton, along with others in her church, helps with cleanup days and making cards for patients in area nursing homes.

"It makes them so happy," Stapleton said. "That's why we keep on doing it. Making an impact on other people around me is my goal in life."

In addition to Beta Club, Stapleton participates in Pep Club at CHHS, was on the student council and a member of the bowling team. She also works at TJ Maxx and loves spending time with her family.

"I'm a big family girl," Stapleton said. "I love my family. Spending quality time with the ones I love is a huge part of me. I feel like that's another reason kids have such a big influence on me, is I love to spend time with them."

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