

HOW I GOT TO DENTAL SCHOOL

MICHELLE BLOEMERS

Michelle Bloemers is a third-year student (DS3) in the pre-doc DMD program. She grew up in Brighton, Michigan, about 45 minutes west of Detroit and 20 minutes north of Ann Arbor. She has always been a helper and considers listening to be her greatest strength. "If I can solve problems, or make someone feel better, it is so gratifying. I also love to draw and paint. Dentistry allows me to create art and help people at the same time. It was the obvious path for me," she said.

Michelle's mother is a general dentist. In high school, Michelle was an assistant in her clinic. She had this to share about her experience working there, "My mom was an assistant before becoming a dentist as well, and she showed me how to be a team member, rather than only 'the boss.' There is no task that she wouldn't do in practice. If her assistant was running behind on sterilization, she would jump right in and get it done. She is such a good role model of the dentist I want to be. I guess you could say that my mom is the reason that I am becoming a dentist!"

In 2014, Michelle and her husband, Jonathan, traveled to Portland, and they fell in love with the city. While on the trip, they were engaged at the top of Neahkahnie Mountain, located on the Oregon Coast. In 2016, they moved out to Oregon, and Jonathan started optometry school at Pacific University in Forest Grove. OHSU was Michelle's top choice; in fact, it was the only school that she applied for.

When asked what the most challenging part of dental school is, Michelle said, "Trying not to cry...just kidding. But honestly, sometimes it feels that way. I think most of us beat



Pictured above: DS3, Michelle Bloemers & Elliot the Dog

ourselves up too much because we care and want to be the best that we can be." Michelle shared that when she and her friends catch each other being down on themselves, they say, "Hey! Don't talk to my friend like that!"

Michelle's favorite part of dental school is her cohort. "I love my classmates!!! They are a great group of people. I even met my very best friend in dental school, Rachel Wittenberg. It's so important to have people to lean on," she said.

Now that Michelle is in her third year of school, she knows a thing or two about dental school. Her sage advice for the classes of 2023 and 2024 is, "It's so important to take care of yourself first. If you can't take care of yourself, how are you supposed to take care of others? It's like what the flight attendants say during the safety presentation before takeoff. Always put your oxygen mask on first before you help others."

