Jess Lawrence

Hard-Working Grad Reels in Job at Fly-Fishing Lodge

by Edmund Frayer Myer

Twenty-five years after her mother graduated from WSU, Jess Lawrence followed in her footsteps as she walked away with a degree in Hospitality/Business Management, specializing in hotels and restaurants.

As a student, Lawrence held multiple jobs. She worked as a server at Banyans on the Ridge, a restaurant located on Pullman’s golf course. Also, she worked the front desk at the Marriot on campus, and was a student ambassador for the Native Programs at WSU.

Her favorite part of being a student ambassador for Native Programs was being a camp counselor for the Exploring College Emerging Leaders (EXCEL) program. EXCEL brings Native high school juniors and seniors to WSU for a weekend to experience life as a college student.

She really enjoyed being a part of the event, and seeing how excited students were about coming to WSU. Lawrence said EXCEL students have still been contacting her and asking her follow-up questions.

She is appreciative of the fact that the Native American Student Center has provided her a “community” that allows her to stay connected to where she’s from. Her advice would be to use the resources that are provided from the Native American Programs. “It’s nice to have a community of people to get to know and be a part of.”

Jess grew up on the Yakama Reservation and is a descendant of the Yakama tribe. Her dad Bill Lawrence trains animals, mostly horses, for movies and other various rodeo events. Therefore, Lawrence grew up around, and has always been interested in horses, and she loves being outside. While at WSU, she volunteered for Palouse Area Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH), where she would assist disabled children in horseback riding.

This summer she plans on spending a lot of time traveling and enjoying the outdoors. Along with going hiking, Lawrence hopes to get more into fishing, a trade she is learning a lot about in her first job out of college.

Lawrence is working at Rainbow Valley Lodge in Montana, a fly-fishing facility. She’s excited to be able to slow down and focus on one job and one aspect of life, since in addition to going to school, she has always had multiple part-time jobs.

She said that her end goal is to one day have her own vacation venue. She noted, “I’ve always really loved to do things for other people.”

Spring semester 2015, Lawrence studied hospitality at César Ritz Colleges in Switzerland. She said that living in a different country is something that most people talk about doing when they’re young, and to actually study abroad and go far away from home caused her to realize, “that there are no limits.” Realizing that there are no limits “has changed the way I look at life,” Lawrence said.