



Tailhook Scholar

Keira Woods

New Freedom, Pennsylvania

Sponsor: CDR Jeffrey Woods

College: Penn State University

2024-2025: Freshman

Major: Biobehavioral Health

Academic & Extracurricular Highlights:

- Unified Track & Field
- Team U, President
- Varsity Cheerleading
- Competitive Cheerleading Team
- Link Crew Member
- VFW Post 7012 Volunteer
- Child Life Volunteer at Penn State Hershey Childrens Hospital
- Tasteful Occasions Catering



Children need to believe in themselves, especially when they are sick. In August 2018, I was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia- Chronic Myeloid Leukemia. Since it is typically found in older adult patients, research in pediatrics is minimal. However, in the autumn of 2022, my cancer cells became abnormally high. A Bone Marrow Transplant became my only option. While hospitalized, I became extremely close to one of my nurses, Nicole. Combining her clinical knowledge and emotional intelligence, she was able to be the calm in my storm. Life with cancer was not fun, and I wanted no part of oncology, but she became my inspiration to give back and become a pediatric oncology nurse. This scholarship would really help me to get the education that I need in order to achieve my goal. Even with insurance, we have had many expenses that weren't covered, and my mother was unable to work due to the incredible number of medical appointments required during my six years of treatment. Receiving this scholarship would definitely help to relieve us of some of that burden. It will also lead to me achieving my goal of helping other children affected by cancer. I look forward to being in the hospital, and using my experiences with my patients because I understand what they are going through mentally and physically. In addition, outside the hospital, I could use my knowledge to continue fundraising. Only 4% of all federal funding goes toward childhood cancer research. I want to change that statistic. Ultimately, I understand the impact of what phenomenal nurses can do, and receiving this scholarship would allow me to pay it forward.