

MAKAYLA LABOUCAN



“ONLY I CAN DEFINE WHAT I CAN DO”

Valedictorian Makayla Laboucan delivered the farewell statement to the class of 2018. “When I received the letter indicating that I was chosen to be NLC’s valedictorian, I was shocked. I called my family to let them know because this is a big deal for me,” Laboucan exclaims.

A member of the Sucker Creek First Nation, Laboucan lives in High Prairie. She graduated from the Social Work Diploma program in May 2018 and is focused on her future. “I will be returning to University Studies at Northern Lakes College this winter before I apply for my degree in Social Work at the University of Calgary for the fall of 2019. I also have plans to continue my studies after my BSW, to pursue a Criminology degree,” she explains.

Laboucan choose to study at NLC because she was not ready to move away from her family. Northern Lakes College made it possible for her to stay connected with her family and maintain the support system already in place. “I do not think I would have been as successful if I was four or six hours away from my family and friends,” she says.

She credits her family members, who have been extraordinary examples, for her laser sharp focus on her future goals. “The reason I choose the Social Work Diploma program is because my family was a foster family. While I was growing up, I saw many different faces move in and out of our home. I also grew up watching my mother help clients; she works as a FASD worker in High Prairie. My sister also completed her Social Work Diploma with Northern Lakes College and has recently graduated from the University of Calgary with her BSW. My life goal is to help, guide, and be someone to turn to for those in need. I want to support those who want change in their lives,” she states.



Laboucan’s advice to others who are considering Social Work as a future career is to, “be open-minded. There will be things that you may not agree with but, as a future Social Worker, you cannot judge or make decisions based on your own opinions.”

The opportunities to work in a Youth Assessment Centre and with Alberta Health Services during her practicums provided her with wonderful experiences and she is extremely grateful for them. “If

you would have told me two and a half years ago that I would be the valedictorian and give a speech in front of an audience, I would have laughed at you and said 'yeah right.' This is a huge accomplishment. As an Aboriginal woman, it has taught me that anything is possible and that only I can define what I can do."