My Dad always says, “good things come to good people.” Throughout my years in high school and, even now in college, I’ve strived to be a good student inside and outside the classroom. In my mind, the harder I work now, the easier it will be later on down the road. And although I can’t wait to see all of this hard work later on in the future, it is certainly nice to see some of it pay off now in college! I’ve decided to officially try and triple major now at IU in Physics, Mathematics, and Astronomy. Studying these three subjects is difficult and time intensive, which makes any help I can get that much more important and meaningful to me.

Obviously, between studies, extracurricular activities, research, and spending time with friends, I don’t have a whole lot of free time on my hands. That unfortunately means that it’s difficult for me to get a job during the school year to help pay for my tuition. Although my summer job usually helps pay for groceries and other supplies throughout the school year, it wouldn’t be nearly enough for me to pay off my college costs for that year. So this scholarship also allows me to focus on my studies instead of needing to work during the semester.

Someday, I hope to attend Graduate School somewhere and study Astrophysics. I’m blessed to have these scholarships as they make my dreams and aspirations that much more attainable, and for that I will forever be grateful.

Sincerely,

Derek Sikorski

It really is difficult to express the sincerity of my thanks in a letter such as this. It has been my dream for years now to have the ability to study astrophysics in grad school. Like most other students, I was worried not just about maintaining a solid GPA in college, but also whether or not paying for possibly eight more years of higher education was realistic for me or not. Receiving this scholarship is a large part of why I still am able to have my sights set on grad school. As a hardworking student, receiving recognition from a successful person means the world to me. It shows me that I am on the right track in life. I’m excited for what the future holds and receiving this scholarship allows me to keep shooting for the stars.

I’m from Markleville, Indiana, which is a small town close to Anderson. I’m the middle child in a family of five. I graduated from Pendleton Heights High School in 2019. In high school, I wrestled, was part of the academic teams, volunteered, and was pretty busy all around. I also figured out that I loved learning about physics and, specifically, space.

Now I’m a sophomore here at IU. Although I came here as a direct admit into the Astronomy/Astrophysics program, I’ve officially declared Physics, Math, and Astronomy as my three majors. So far, I’ve absolutely loved learning about college level math and physics. I hope to continue studying physics in graduate school as well. Right now, I have my sights set on Astrophysics as that is also where I try and research the most. However, I would definitely be willing to consider studying other branches of physics later on down the road.

Outside of classes, I love to hangout with friends. When I’m not studying or in class, I’m usually trying to find something fun to do with my friends. I love to spend time outside as well. I’ve found all sorts of great places around campus to read! I also love to exercise. I usually try to either go on a run or bike somewhere after classes are done. I’m part of the Astronomy club and Quiz bowl team here at IU as well, which certainly gives me a lot to do outside of school!