



Chauna Hanson

Class of 2018 at the University of Alberta

Masters of Business Administration

Bachelor of Commerce AD, Accounting – University of Alberta, 2000

Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration and Management – Brandon University, 1996

Chartered Professional Accountant – CPA Canada, 2007-present

From of Tuktoyaktuk, NWT

Following her completion of high school in the 1980's, Chauna felt that the possibility of going to university was slim, as she was unaware of any funding sources and would not be able to pay the cost of tuition on her own. She got married and moved with her husband, a member of the Canadian Forces, to Europe where he had been stationed. Before they were posted overseas, Chauna learned about Accounting (on ledgers rather than with technology) from a colleague, and became interested in that field, but was unable to pursue that education because of the move. When they were posted back to Canada, she learned about funding through the Canadian Government, and applied to receive that funding which helped her as she enrolled at Brandon University in the Bachelor of Arts program, majoring in Business Administration and Management and minoring in Psychology. Following her completion of her BA degree, her husband was then posted to Edmonton, and she was able to enrol at the University of Alberta, where she obtained her Bachelor of Commerce After Degree, majoring in Accounting. During this time, she found out about Freehorse and received sponsorship funding for the first time for that degree. After that, Chauna went through the process of becoming a Chartered

Accountant and received her CPA designation in 2007, which made her the first Inuit Chartered Accountant in Canada, a tremendous honour. Her latest academic success includes receiving her Masters of Business of Administration from the University of Alberta, for which she received sponsorship from Freehorse for the second time.

Chauna has an immense passion for learning, and has always loved the learning process. She acknowledges the importance of receiving an education and how it is connected to breaking the cycle of poverty, especially coming from a non-wealthy family. She states that motivation to better yourself and your family will extend beyond you as a person and will help uplift those within your community. Chauna is currently finishing a project with the Government of Alberta, and has been working in Disaster Relief for the last few years, specifically restoring First Nations communities following the 2013 floods in Southern Alberta. She is looking for opportunities to make a difference in the lives of those around her—those who need help and would benefit from the knowledge and expertise that she has.

She states that one big lesson she learned during her many years of education was that having a goal and knowing what you are working towards is so important for those tough moments, and really helps when you have to bite the bullet and push through. To those who are thinking about going into post-secondary, Chauna would encourage them to be realistic, understanding that university is not a walk in the park, and that you will have to work hard and give up a lot of your life that you may be used to pre-university. The end goal is worth it though; surrounding yourself with supports, and *using* those supports will also help you reach your end goal of graduating. Having those doubts about whether you can make it through post-secondary is a common fear for students considering continuing on in their education, but Chauna wants to encourage students to do away with that frame of mind, and instead realize that everyone has a different perspective which is so valuable to your future field and career. She would inspire students to give things a shot, even if you think you would be no good at it, because realizing what you are able to overcome is powerful, and will help you as you work through your post-secondary experience. The advice that Chauna would give to current post-secondary students is to be resilient. Focusing on your end goals will help you stick through the tough times when life throws your curve balls. Thinking about what kind of change you want and will make when you are done your education will help you better finish what you have started.

Chauna's experience with Freehorse Family Wellness Society was, in her words, "amazing". She states that knowing that an organization would support you as you go through the post-secondary world is so helpful, evidenced through quick response times. She is also thankful for Freehorse serving the process of education, especially the population that they cater to. There would have been nowhere else for her to go if Freehorse was not an option, and she is grateful that Freehorse is still continuing to serve in assisting students in their post-secondary education.