



ISCPA

Young CPA spotlight

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Hometown: Muscatine

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Alma Mater/Degree: Iowa State University; undergrad – Accounting and Finance, grad – Masters of Accounting

Where do you work and what's your role? I work in financial reporting and analysis for our U.S. insurance business at Principal Financial Group. My tasks range from preparing journal entries and reconciliations to compiling financial statements and providing analysis for premiums, claims and other expenses. The main areas I report on are direct insurance, reinsurance, business market solutions, separate accounts and individual disability insurance. I also sit on the Accounting Recruiting Committee at Principal.

How do you unwind? Spending time with my husband Jeremy and our three year old boxer Rex by either going on a walk or just relaxing at home. I'm a list maker, so I usually can't fully relax and wind down until at least some items are crossed off! Going on a vacation somewhere helps me to completely relax. Also, I'm not afraid to admit that a nice nap is always refreshing to me.

What's one thing you can't make it through the day without? I enjoy starting my day off reading The Skimm – a summary of news emailed to my inbox each weekday morning. It allows me to read about what's going on in the world quickly and in a fun way. The writing style is very entertaining and to the point. It gets me up to speed on what's going on outside of my own bubble and gives good conversation pieces and insight.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years? Ideally, on a beach somewhere with family and friends after winning the lottery with no worries in the world! Realistically, that's a tough question to answer. Careerwise, who knows what the accounting profession will look like in 10 years, but as of now I see myself continuing to pursue a career where I can use my accounting knowledge and analytical skillset. My dream job would be to work in the forensic accounting world solving fraud cases.

What (or who) motivates you the most? My closest family and friends. Each one has their own way of helping me want to continue to better myself both personally and professionally. I'm a sucker for a good motivational quote. A few of my favorites that I refer back to often are: "There are people who would love to have your bad days."; "Trust that life is giving you exactly what you need practice in."; "The expert in anything was once a beginner."; "Attitude is a decision" and "What do you truly want more: that second dessert or to feel strong and in shape?" – sometimes it's the second dessert. Also, Philippians 4:6 is my go-to verse.

What ways have you been involved in ISCPA and how has this benefited you? I volunteered for the Financial Literacy Committee for three years where I helped to get our foot in the door to present our Avoiding the Debt Trap presentation at ISU's Business Week to freshmen students. I also presented the Money Mammals presentation for kindergartners at a few schools in the Des Moines area. I am currently on the LEAP Committee where I've helped with the Emerging Leaders Conference. I have attended as many Lunch with Leaders events as possible as well as other conferences, volunteering and social events. Being involved in ISCPA has given me the opportunity to feel like a part of a bigger accounting community outside of work and has introduced me to great people along the way. It has allowed me to give back in unique ways and have fun while doing so! I feel I'm more aware of what's going on in the profession overall, both in Des Moines and throughout the country, by staying up to date on key issues the AICPA is facing as well. I would strongly encourage anyone thinking of getting more involved with ISCPA – either by sitting on one of the many committees or attending more ISCPA events (or both!) – to do so!

What made you want to become a CPA? I really enjoyed the accounting classes I took in high school as well as my math classes and learning about financial well-being. I'm the type of person who finds building budgets and working in spreadsheets fun (*insert nerd emoji*). Once I got into college and started taking the entry-level accounting courses, I knew the accounting profession would be a good fit for me. Upon reaching the end of my undergraduate career, there was no question that I wanted to continue with my masters and pursue the CPA route.

What's your best piece of advice for a college student thinking about becoming a CPA? If you're even considering it, go for it – it will only benefit you and your career. This holds true for both public and private accounting careers. Even if you end up not having a lifelong career in accounting, many areas of business deal with accounting and understanding how it works is vital to any organization. It is a great accomplishment and something that can make you stand out and can be proud of for the rest of your life. It will also be much easier to work toward becoming a CPA and take the exams right after school when you are already in study mode and the knowledge from school is still fresh in your mind than to start studying after you have been in the working world for a while and may have other distractions.