

## **Exploring Options**

Before working with College Connectors, Dennis and Deb Lofald had no idea how to research and compare different colleges for their oldest daughter, Jennifer. Assuming they couldn't afford a private college or send their daughter to a school out of the state, they limited their search to large, local universities that offered a decent set of programs and seemingly affordable tuition.

### **Taking Action**

College Connectors suggested a different approach. Valerie Broughton learned as much as possible about Jenn, and that became the driving force behind her family's search. Through a series of one-on-one interviews and questionnaires, she helped Jenn consider what type of city she wanted to live in, what kind of college life she was looking for, the importance of extra-curricular activities and other factors.

Valerie also helped Jenn think about where she wanted to be in 10 years. After much thought, Jenn changed her major from pre-med to nursing because she wanted more flexibility when she started a family.

Once College Connectors identified Jenn's goals, strengths and interests, they helped narrow her search down to the top five colleges that fit her ideal college profile. Jenn visited each of them. "Valerie really opened my eyes and showed me all the opportunities that were out there," Jenn said. "I had only looked at the colleges near me because I didn't know what else was around. I never even thought about living in Atlanta or Chicago."

The next step was helping Jenn and her family evaluate each college's financial aid package. College Connectors guided them through the entire financial aid process. Valerie helped Jenn identify and apply for a variety of scholarships and grants, including one worth \$4,300 for students in her city pursuing math or science related careers. "I had no idea what scholarships were available," Jenn said. "I never would've gotten as much financial aid as I did without Valerie."

### **The Result**

Jenn recently graduated from St. Scholastica in Duluth with a Bachelor's degree in nursing. It only took her three years. Recently, she accepted her first job with Children's Hospital in Minneapolis working in the neonatal ICU.

Jenn said College Connectors helped with much more than finding the right college. "I think the biggest benefit to working with College Connectors was her understanding of what was important to me and then helping me to explore all my options," Jenn said. "Valerie was great to work with. She was so positive and helpful, showing me I could do anything I wanted, whether it was now or five years in the future."