

All the way from Anchorage, Alaska, Northwestern wasn't a place Isi Ofiu planned on attending. Life took some twist and turns, and after having a daughter, Isi ended up in Alva, Oklahoma.

"I met a girl I loved, and we had a baby girl together."

Because of circumstances they all moved to Alva. It was suggested that Isi return to school and he decided to enroll.

Isi has always had a love for music stemming from his childhood. Isi's third grade teacher played a major role in his decision to pursue a music education degree.

"My teacher stood out to me because of how she cared about teaching. She would ask us what we wanted to be when we grew up, and I always said I wanted to be a teacher."

Isi also sang with his family while in Alaska.

"As a family we always had this group thing going on and we would sing at church for the congregation."

Once Isi started classes at Northwestern, his choir director and advisor, Dr. Irene Messoloras, Chair of the Department of Fine Arts, validated his passion for music and education.

"Since day one, she's always been real with me," Ofiu said. "She actually convinced me that music and teaching has always been instilled in me."



Isi has had to do a balancing act between school, work, and helping raise his daughter and his spouse's daughter, both under the age of 5. However, he is no stranger to juggling multiple tasks at once.

"It's actually something I've always done because back at home, I was the only one who worked," Ofiu said.

He is the youngest out of 4 children.

"My parents didn't work and I would take care of them. I am used to being responsible."

Candidly, Isi says it isn't as hard as people think and when asked what keeps him motivated, he responds with a simple, "My kids; I want what's best for them."

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# Isi Ofiu

Class of 2016

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Because Isi can't work full time with his school load and home life, scholarships have played a tremendous role in alleviating some of the financial burden. When Northwestern's university singers had the opportunity to go to China, Isi wanted to go. Isi received the Dorothy Reichenberger Vocal scholarship and was able to use part of the money to pay for his trip to China.

Isi is appreciative that there are people in the world who are willing to help those who are struggling.

"This scholarship has helped me because being a nontraditional student, coming from a low income family, it's rough starting over again and coming back to school. This contribution has helped me tremendously and I thank Mr. Reichenberger very much."

