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## Overcoming adversity, KHS grad succeeds

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Growing up in an unstable home -- a parent battling drugs -- almost robbed Courtney Shipman of a bright future. "I was depressed and had written off the idea of going to college," the 18-year-old says. "I didn't think I would succeed in anything."

Today, the 2010 Kingsburg High graduate is enjoying her first year at Fresno Pacific University. Shipman earned several scholarships toward her education including a \$4,000 Horatio Alger Association award. She was among 40 students in California to achieve the honor. The association recognizes students who have succeeded "in spite of adversity." Shipman certainly has done just that. "My mother was an alcoholic. I had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and I wasn't taking my medicine," Shipman says. "I didn't like the who I was when I was on it. I wasn't focusing in school.

Her father, who she first met at age 7, was out of her life.

"It was a horrible situation. I was left at home to care for my 9-year-old brother," Shipman says. "She neglected us."

While Shipman says she wasn't physically abused, her home life was far from the quiet, suburban lives her friends enjoyed.

"The abuse was more mental and emotional," Shipman says.

Luckily, Shipman was taken in by an aunt and uncle in town. In their care fulltime, Shipman turned things around from the middle of her sophomore year to the end of her senior year.

"Courtney's childhood was very rocky for a lot of parts," says aunt Arlene Shipman.

The family encouraged Shipman to do well in school.

"My aunt would give me \$100 for every 'A' on my report card," Shipman says.

Not only did Shipman improve her grades, she also was a member of the Kingsburg High band, theater, choir and the swim team.

Shipman is making the transition from high school to college student. She shows the maturity of someone much older.

"I love my mom in spite of what she's done. God, with everything I have gone through, has shaped me for the purpose of inspiring others," she says.

Free of the "drama," Shipman is in charge of her life.

Fresno Pacific University, a liberal arts Christian college, has her considering a career in youth ministry.

"I've bonded with the people here so well," she says. "I love my life."