

Name: Ellie Korotky

Year: 04

Major: Nutrition Dietetics

Qualifications:

- Tiger Paws Dance Team - Team Captain
- Auburn Student Recruiter
- Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society
- Mortar Board Senior Honor Society
- EAGLES Program WINGS Peer Mentor

Platform:

My platform, *Encourage with Ellie*, is centered around the line of the creed, "I believe in the human touch, which cultivates sympathy with my fellow men and mutual helpfulness and brings happiness for all."

When I was seven, my cousin, Eleanor, was born with Down syndrome. She is beautiful, confident, and full of joy. Over the past 14 years, she has inspired me in many ways. I first volunteered at a special needs camp in 8th grade, and I have continued volunteering in various projects and organizations ever since. One that I have enjoyed being a part of is Auburn's EAGLES Program. I love building these precious friendships. I was inspired to choose my platform based on Down Syndrome Alabama's values and the love Eleanor and these friends have shown me. I will never stop advocating for them and would love the position of Miss Homecoming so that I could have a broader audience to do so.

In the human body, we have 23 chromosome pairs. Down syndrome is caused by abnormal cell division in Chromosome 21, which creates an extra copy. According to the CDC, one in every 700 children are born with Down syndrome. Despite these differences, we are alike in so many ways. Many of my friends with Down syndrome are on sports teams, have homework, and even go to college like other students!

Encourage with Ellie is based on Down Syndrome Alabama's values of **awareness**, **acceptance**, and **advocacy** of those with Down syndrome. I want to *encourage awareness* on campus by educating the student body and answering any questions about Down syndrome. Next, I want to *encourage* the student body to **accept** those with Down syndrome. I want to demonstrate ways to get involved, whether it is through Best Buddies, the EAGLES Program, or the BraveHeart Center. There are many opportunities on and off campus to build friendships and include those with Down syndrome. Lastly, I want to *encourage* students to **advocate** for our friends.

All of my friends with Down syndrome bring so much joy into my life. They make me laugh. They brighten my sad days. They *encourage* me! I would love to bring Down syndrome awareness, acceptance, and advocacy to Auburn's campus and to the Auburn family through *Encourage with Ellie* so that they can experience the same valuable relationships that I hold so dear.

With Joy,

Ellie Korothky