

Kara McCleary  
Quincy University  
*ACI Peer Mentor*



Kara McCleary, a junior at [Quincy University](#) now in her second year as an ACI [Peer Mentor](#), has witnessed the difference the program has made for participants. "It helps peoples' self-esteem, their academic performance, their ability to make friends and to make memories, and to enjoy this time in their lives," she says.

McCleary, who lives at and helps out on the family farm in Menden, Illinois, commutes to and from Quincy. At an early age, McCleary knew she wanted to work in health care or agribusiness. She says she decided to pursue nursing after helping her grandfather recover from an injury while she was in high school and from work experience she gained in a

nursing home. After college, she hopes to put her nursing skills to work in a medical-surgical or cardiac unit in a hospital. Later, she hopes to earn a master's degree. McCleary has been on the dean's list at Quincy and is in the honors program. She also works part-time as a teller at a local bank.

Quincy University joined the ACI Peer Mentoring Program in 2016, and McCleary became a mentor to new students. Now in her second year as a mentor, McCleary connects with mentees weekly. "I try to be relatable, reliable and as available as possible," she says. Her greatest satisfaction is seeing new students blossom in the college environment. "Seeing them happy and successful is the best part for me, as well as getting to meet them and share my experiences. I like to help people, so that is really awesome for me," McCleary adds.