

St. Louis Metropolitan Area and surrounding Missouri and Illinois counties



Submitted photo Amanda Roberts

Woman overcomes health issues to succeed in business, school

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With everything life has thrown at her, Amanda Roberts could have given up easily. Instead, the 22-year-old has refused to let adversity get in her way.

So many people let things like the economy, health or family problems drag them down," Roberts said. "I believe no matter what your circumstances, you can let life control you or you can choose to be happy and find ways to enjoy what you have.

No matter what happens, I have faith I can find a way to rise above it."

And risen she has. The south St. Louis woman recently received her third All-American Scholarship from Vector Marketing for ranking fifth nationwide out of 40,000 company sales representatives. Roberts has earned \$150,000 in sales in her three years selling Cutco Cutlery with the company.

In addition to selling as well as helping to manage other sales representatives in four divisions, Roberts also is a full-time business and marketing major at Webster University.

"Amanda is amazing," said Stephanie Weiser of Vector. "She's had so many setbacks, but she didn't accept defeat. She's determined to succeed, and she's helped and inspired others to do the same."

Ironically, it was Roberts' setbacks that launched her career with Vector. At age 14, a botched gall bladder surgery damaged the nerve that controlled her stomach contractions, leaving her unable to keep food down.

"They thought I was bulimic," she said. "That first year, I lost half my hair and was down to 90 pounds." She ended up hooked to a feeding tube for two years. The nerve eventually regenerated, but months of malnutrition had taken their toll. Roberts was left with kidney, heart, uterine and spinal damage.

Later, when she tried to return to running again, she exacerbated her back problems and ended up with a hip injury. To help pay for her college courses, Roberts was working a retail job when she saw an advertisement for Vector.

"I was on my feet all day, walking with a cane, and I thought that job might be something I could do that would be easier on my back," she said. "Honestly, I thought when I started, it would be one summer's work, but three years later I'm still here."

It turned out to be a perfect match. Roberts quickly became one of Vector's top sales representatives in addition to carrying a full load of college courses; and despite two surgeries on her hip, she ended up opening her own Vector office. Last summer, her office generated \$100,000 in Cutco sales.

Now in her last year of college, Roberts said she hasn't decided on her future career plans or whether she will stay with Vector after graduation.

"No matter what direction I go, Vector will always be a part of my life, all my friends and my customer family," she said. "I've been blessed by all the opportunities the company has given me. I'm not sure where I go from here, but I know I'll be ready for whatever challenges are ahead."

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