

Sophia Routhier '26



Sophia transferred to Ursuline from a public school at the start of her junior year. While acclimating to a new school in junior year may seem like a challenge to some, in Sophia's experience, joining the Ursuline community instead feels like coming home.

After being encouraged by her mother and sister to "just tour" the campus, Sophia made the decision to apply to Ursuline because she could see herself thriving here. After enrolling in the Class of 2026, the countdown to the start of school began. "As September approached, I worried that the current students might feel that they already had enough friends. I was doubtful about finding my people before I started at Ursuline," Sophia recalls. Now, reflecting upon her first few weeks at Ursuline, Sophia can happily say that she has indeed found her people.

Sophia made her first friend at Ursuline through our Big Sister/Little Sister program, which pairs a Peer Mentor with a transfer student. Sophia, like every new student at Ursuline, was matched with another student with similar interests to ease the transition to UA and serve as an instant friend. Sophia found this very helpful, as she always had someone to sit with at lunch before branching out socially herself.

Sophia joined the Choral Group and Drama program at Ursuline, which allowed her to form new friendships and gain more experience in the arts. Most recently, Sophia worked in the tech crew on the production of *Matilda Jr.*, through which she developed additional relationships with 7th and 8th graders at UA. The cross-grade relationships that are so common at Ursuline was a new phenomenon for Sophia. “It surprised me that everyone here knows each other and that there is so much interaction between the grades.” There was one 7th grader in particular with whom Sophia formed a special bond... Sophia had the opportunity to act as a mentor, and the younger student benefited from learning from Sophia.

Without question, Sophia quickly fit right in at Ursuline. She is a go-getter, a common and core trait shared among UA students. Sophia took her first college course this past summer and dove headfirst into Ursuline’s rigorous academics. “At Ursuline, I feel academically challenged everyday,” she explains. Sophia’s favorite class is Anatomy, which comes as no surprise as she hopes to establish a career in medicine one day. Currently, Sophia works at a local veterinary clinic, where she has gained valuable experience including shadowing surgeries. This is an opportunity that Sophia forged for herself with grit and determination, making phone call after phone call to vet clinics in the area for weeks, asking for internship opportunities.



Sophia loves working with animals, and even trained her own dog, Maverick, who is now an AKC Therapy Dog. This is just one of the ways that Sophia has married her love of animals with the *Serviam* mission — she and Maverick visit assisted living facilities, colleges, libraries, and more to bring people joy and comfort.

Sophia's story is a reminder that it is never too late to join the Ursuline community. Sophia emphasizes the importance of trusting your gut and having the courage to make a change in your life. We could not be more proud of Sophia and we are eager to watch her as she continues to enhance the Ursuline community and the lives of others every day.