

Hi family!

It's a little bit surreal to me to be writing this letter after all the anticipation and planning and especially the thoughts I had towards compiling everything into one big mess of words. Back when I picked February as my month I kind of jokingly said to myself "wouldn't it be funny if you moved and then got to write your letter about that?" I didn't really anticipate that I would be correct in my prediction.

I think this letter is something we all always wanted to do or had in the backs of our mind as a way to catch people up with the goings on of our lives and also stay connected as we all get older. I also think that we maybe (mistakenly) thought we'd all grow apart with age – that's funny. So let's start from the beginning. When I graduated Iowa State in May of 2017 (Go State) I had these big plans for myself and what I was going to do and who I was going to become. I've always considered myself fairly level headed when it comes to being realistic about expectations vs. reality, but in the post college haze of leaving behind a huge part of my life, picking up everything I had yet again, and moving states to be what I considered completely on my own had its own plan for me. I started my job at Cerner Health Technologies on July 13<sup>th</sup>. Coincidentally I actually scheduled my start date after the 4<sup>th</sup> so I'd be able to go to grandmas because the 4<sup>th</sup> is a sacred Hammes family tradition.

Cerner was a job that by all respects gave me what a lot of people my age don't have the luxury of. I had the ability to travel all over the country, sometimes I picked the location and most of the time it was chosen for me, but the perks that came with that were amazing. I had status on airlines, I was staying in hotels with my friends, we were going out to dinner after working our 12-hour shifts, and I was traveling to New York to visit my boyfriend or to Rochester to see my family on the weekends instead of going home to KC. There wasn't something completely settled in my heart about it though. I tried really hard to like my job and to be ok with all the last-minute changes, and the phone calls that I had to pick up and fly out somewhere the next day, but I wasn't. I was just ignoring the problem.

I wasn't happy, I wasn't healthy anymore. I was eating what was quicker instead of better for me because I would only be at home for 3 days at a time, I wasn't working out for a number of reasons that mostly circled around travel, and the days that I was home in KC I stayed in my apartment and did my best not to leave.

In September of 2018 after a little over a year at Cerner I was worn down, constantly tired, and finding almost no joys out of anything anymore. I looked forward to going to New York, or going home to my family and that was about it. That was when I made the decision to take the energy I had and redirect it. I wasn't really sure what I was redirecting it towards yet. All I knew what I'd heard one of my good friends at Cerner had gotten a job at Apple and was moving to do what she got a degree in, and I was so happy and also foaming at the mouth jealous. I thought if she can do that then I'd better stop making excuses and get up and figure out my career path.

I went through several iterations of my resume, each one was brand new from the last. I took my last trip to New York for the year that September to really push my motivation to move – which was insane for me because I'd been visiting once or twice a month for the past year and a half. I did some self-searching and had a lot of really low lows, self-doubt, and complete panic over what I was even doing in the first place, but I did end up getting there. My attitude, my outlook on life, my determination only improved even as I submitted 72 (yes 72) applications and was rejected from every single one.

I had made some huge changes and I was not going to let anyone stop me anymore, least of all myself. And then after about 4 months of nothing I got a call back and not just from 1 company but from

6. Everything I'd been working towards, everything I'd been hoping for and secretly packing away parts of my apartment for was here.

Those 4 weeks of interviews took place during the time I was home for Christmas. Which meant the process was delayed with the holidays and I was wildly on edge the entire time because I knew that there was 1 company in that mix that I really really wanted to work for.

January Digital is a Digital Media Advertising Agency. We are 45 associates strong with an office in Dallas, Texas, and New York, New York – just off Wall Street. The day I found out I got the job it was 8:02am and I'd just walked into work at Cerner. That day I put in my notice, canceled my lease, listed all of my furniture for sale, my brand new car, for sale, scheduled to cancel all my utilities on my move out date, and pretty much turned into the physical embodiment of a tornado. I didn't cry, I didn't jump for joy, I genuinely just sat there with the signed acceptance to the job offer and thought "what the hell did I just do?"

Terrified would be putting it mildly.

My move to Kansas City was a hassle and a half and I had 8 months to prepare for it. My move to New York was 7x the distance away and I had a little over 4 weeks to get there. It took some serious planning and some serious favors to do it. Matthew drove up from St. Peter on a Friday night in a blizzard to take my bed home to my parents. My dad took days off to drive to KC to take me and my remaining things back home, and my mother has now had to store all my extra crap for when I'll be able to fit it in a suitcase and fly it to New York. And then there was my best friend from KC – Marie – who helped me move 240 pounds of luggage from LaGuardia to my new apartment and she didn't complain once.

All of that came and went in the blink of an eye. There were a lot of emotions but I do have to admit the hardest I cried was when I sold my car – Tabitha (Tabby) – not sure if you guys ever met her but she was pretty much the nicest thing I will ever own and for whatever reason when I gave her away I finally realized I was moving and turned into a literal puddle. It was fun, ask Emily about it sometime.

February 3<sup>rd</sup> I left Kansas City for the last time, and I honestly felt no sadness towards that at all. I had never really made a home there. February 6<sup>th</sup> my dad and I landed in LaGuardia (with another 200 pounds of luggage) and we took the stupid expensive uber ride to my apartment in East Village. He spent a few days in the city with me, and had a blast the entire time. The best part about that was being able to show him the things that I really care about. I've spent a lot of time on these streets walking around enjoying the view, and sharing it with family for the first time was a huge moment. When I dropped him off at the subway station and headed home that's when things felt real on an entirely new level.

I'm happy to report all is well on this side of the coast. My roommate is all sorts of fun, we moved into a furnished apartment for the remainder of a 5-month lease both of us as subleasees. On July 1 I'll be moving again and furnishing my own place. Which gives me just enough time to recover from how much money it actually costs to move across the country and I'll probably move in with some friends at that point.

I just finished the first week of my job where I'm happy to announce I've had more fun and been more challenged in those 4 days than the whole of the time I was at Cerner. The people I work with are respectful on an entirely new level to each other, and there's visibility to all levels of the company which I admire and promised myself to never take for granted. I've been challenged, I've been pushed, I've felt an urge to learn more and be better again and I lost that for a bit. I also think my coworkers are hilarious and it's a dog friendly office which doesn't hurt.

Today I had off work since it's president's day and I went to a group workout at Fithouse Union Square with Inbal (my roommate – she's Israeli). Got my butt kicked, and then I walked past the empire state building because it's on the way home. Because I'm in New York and I don't ever want to forget everything it took, every sacrifice I had to make, and more importantly every sacrifice the people I love had to make for me for me to get here.

New York is a breath of fresh air – which is probably hilarious to some of you – but it's where I fit in. It's where I'm happiest and where life took me. It wasn't the most comfortable decision I ever made, and it will never be anything remotely close to easy, but it was the right choice. I have no doubts about that.

Thank you to everyone I called an unreasonable favor upon, who encouraged me at every turn, and stopped me from turning into an actual swamp monster during the weeks leading up to the move. I think that's all I have to say here for now, but I'll attach some photos below.

As always – all the love,

Hannah



My last trip to New York before the move started happening, with my two closest friends from KC Marie and Tanna

My beautiful family over Christmas this past year



The coolest picture I'll ever take





Thanks Matthew for driving  
my mattress home in a  
blizzard #cousinpoints

I get anxiety just  
looking at this... Tabby  
I miss you (also it's  
been 2 weeks since I've  
driven a car)



My KC going away party with friends. It was  
conveniently named "Hannah's Wake" which is  
why everyone's in black, and coincidentally I also  
got food poisoning that night







This is Marie and I's view outside our hotel room on the first trip to move things into my new apartment – you can see the Empire State building to the left and then way far off in the distance in the middle is One World Trade



The day before I moved Marie and I went to the Panic! At the Disco concert and successfully wrapped up my time in KC

I may not miss KC, but I do miss my extra large apartment (and the bathtub)







Goodbye hug  
dropping Emily off  
back in Ames



Dad got a chance to meet up with his childhood  
best friend whom he hadn't seen in 30 years on his  
trip to New York!



Dropping him off at the bus to the  
airport. Little did he know I burst  
into tears going home (secrets out)





View of lower Manhattan on the way to the State of Liberty



My view walking home from work. The World Trade Center is peeking out on the left!

My roommate and I today at Fithouse after half an hour of a HIIT workout – was brutal

