



# 2016 AAU Gymnastics Scholarship Recipients



**KAYLA LaRUE BROOKS**

*Western Technical College*



My name is Kayla Brooks and I am from the Wisconsin District. My plans include going to Western Technical College in La Crosse, WI for Massage Therapy and then to UW--La Crosse for a degree in Business, eventually I want to own my own business. For the last 7 years I have competed in AAU gymnastics. I started at Level 3 at age 11 and was Level 4 at age 14. I chose to pursue high school gymnastics and to compete in Xcel Gold during the off-season, while also coaching Level 1 for the past two years. AAU has given me a clear path to develop my skills, both in gymnastics and in life. It has not only taught me not to doubt myself, but also that doing what I love is worth the effort. My scoliosis has plagued me since my freshman year. The subluxation of first my elbow and then my knee, combined with pinched nerves, prevented me from increasing my gymnastics skills during my sophomore year. Soon, freshman with no previous gymnastics experience began to surpass me, causing me to doubt myself. This year was a year of growth for me in more ways than one after I almost quit gymnastics entirely. Remembering why it was that I loved gymnastics brought me back to the sport. I still foresee many personal challenges during my plans to go to college for Massage Therapy and Business. The AAU Gymnastics program has given me the mental toughness and skill to push through the challenges, think outside the box, and conquer anything life hands me.