

## ADVOCATING FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN SCIENCE: ENVIRONMENTAL GEOLOGY

Lily Kuentz '17

Young alumnae, Lily Kuentz '17, recently graduated from Colgate University, located in Central New York, with her Bachelor's in Environmental Geology and minors in Film & Media Studies and Art History. Lily hopes to pursue a graduate degree somewhere out west, which stems from her desire to have access to a local field site. Unfortunately, due to the global pandemic, Lily learned firsthand the importance of having a local field site when she was unable to travel to Antarctica for a research trip this past year. Despite the setback, Lily was instead able to successfully conduct research on arctic hydrology entirely from her dorm room.

Earlier this year, Lily was listed as a contributing member on a research study published by the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* (PNAS). The study, titled "Surface boulder banding indicates Martian debris-covered glaciers formed over multiple glaciations", aims to show that, "like ancient debris-covered glaciers on Earth, boulder banding on Martian glacial deposits indicates multiple episodes of ice accumulation and advance."<sup>1</sup> Lily explained how she was fascinated by this project, because at first, the findings they expected to discover were not there, which in turn forced her and the other researchers to look through a different lens and come up with an alternate understanding of their findings.



Lily, who started at Lake Ridge Academy in first grade, credits Mr. Morrison and Ms. Alexander for helping to guide her interests throughout high school. Although starting freshman year in the School of Fine Arts program, Lily quickly realized her interests were shifting more towards science. Despite no longer being part of the

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<sup>1</sup> Levy, Joseph S., et al. "Surface Boulder Banding Indicates Martian Debris-Covered Glaciers Formed over Multiple Glaciations." *PNAS*, National Academy of Sciences, 26 Jan. 2021, [www.pnas.org/content/118/4/e2015971118?fbclid=IwAR2Av9WjElBoHcPbMmYumFbcofOKzHDJkKnsxEssCBAK7WN\\_fk8XgXkElyc](http://www.pnas.org/content/118/4/e2015971118?fbclid=IwAR2Av9WjElBoHcPbMmYumFbcofOKzHDJkKnsxEssCBAK7WN_fk8XgXkElyc).

SoFA program by tenth grade, Lily felt that Ms. Alexander never pressured her to stay in the arts, but instead, allowed her to appreciate art while studying science.

Lily explained how she truly felt that the teachers at Lake Ridge want to see their students succeed, and she's lucky to have found that at Colgate University as well.

In addition to her coursework, Lily spent much of her time in undergrad working for the university's radio station. Starting off as a DJ, by sophomore year, Lily had quickly risen to become General Manager. When we last spoke, she mentioned hopes of starting a podcast about making science more accessible. The podcast would focus on interviewing researchers at the university and expounding on what it looks like to collect the research and achieve the desired results.

“A lot of cool stuff happens behind the scenes that would make it easier for people to understand how scientists arrive at their results. Part of getting to scientific literacy is making sure people understand how we produce science and how we discern the information.”



In the future, Lily hopes to someday become a professor and study climate change on Earth. As an educator, she wants to contribute to people's understanding of science in a way that is accessible.

We can't wait to see all that you accomplish in graduate school and beyond, Lily.

[Click here](#) to read the research article Lily contributed towards, and to read CNN's coverage of the study, [click here](#).