

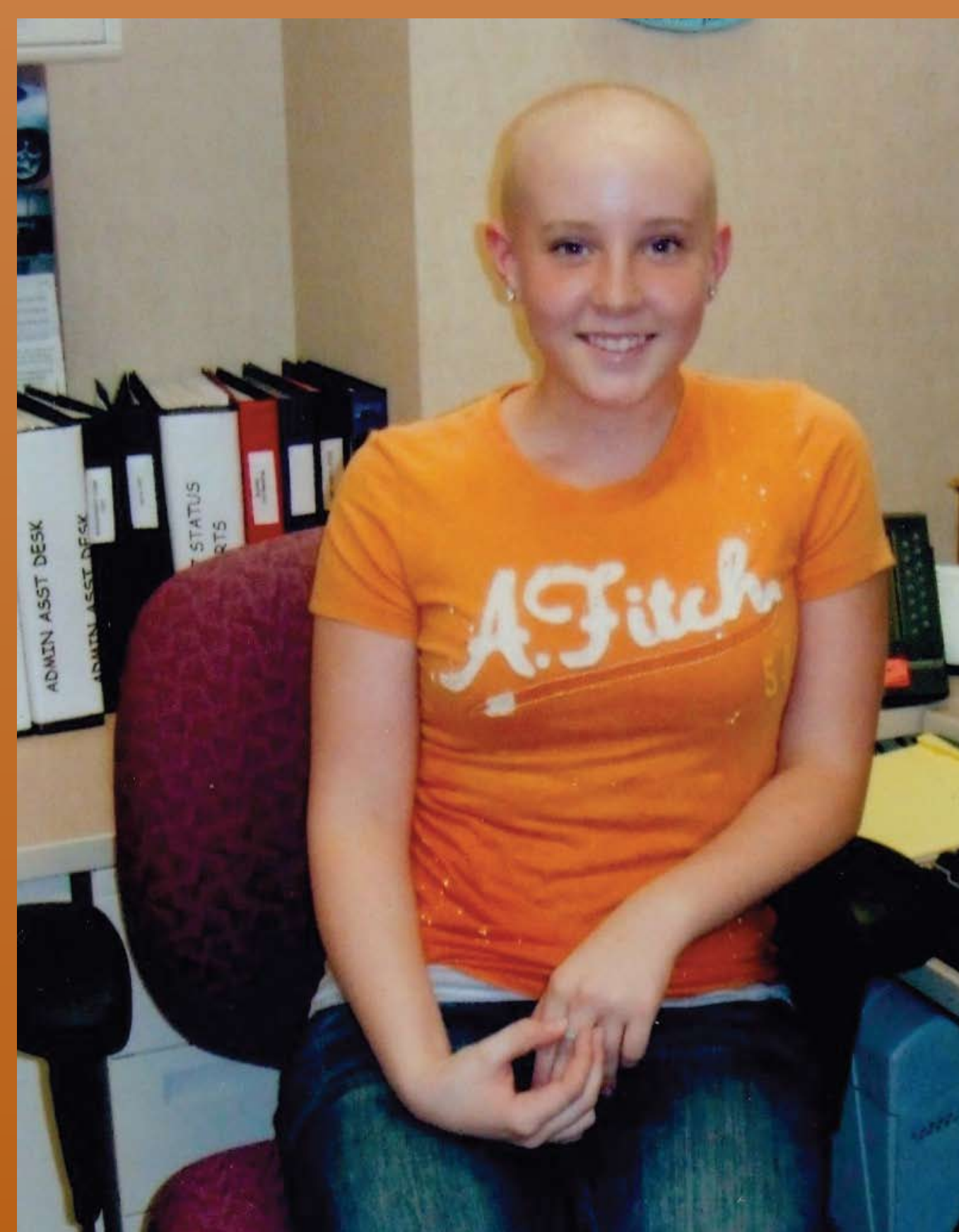
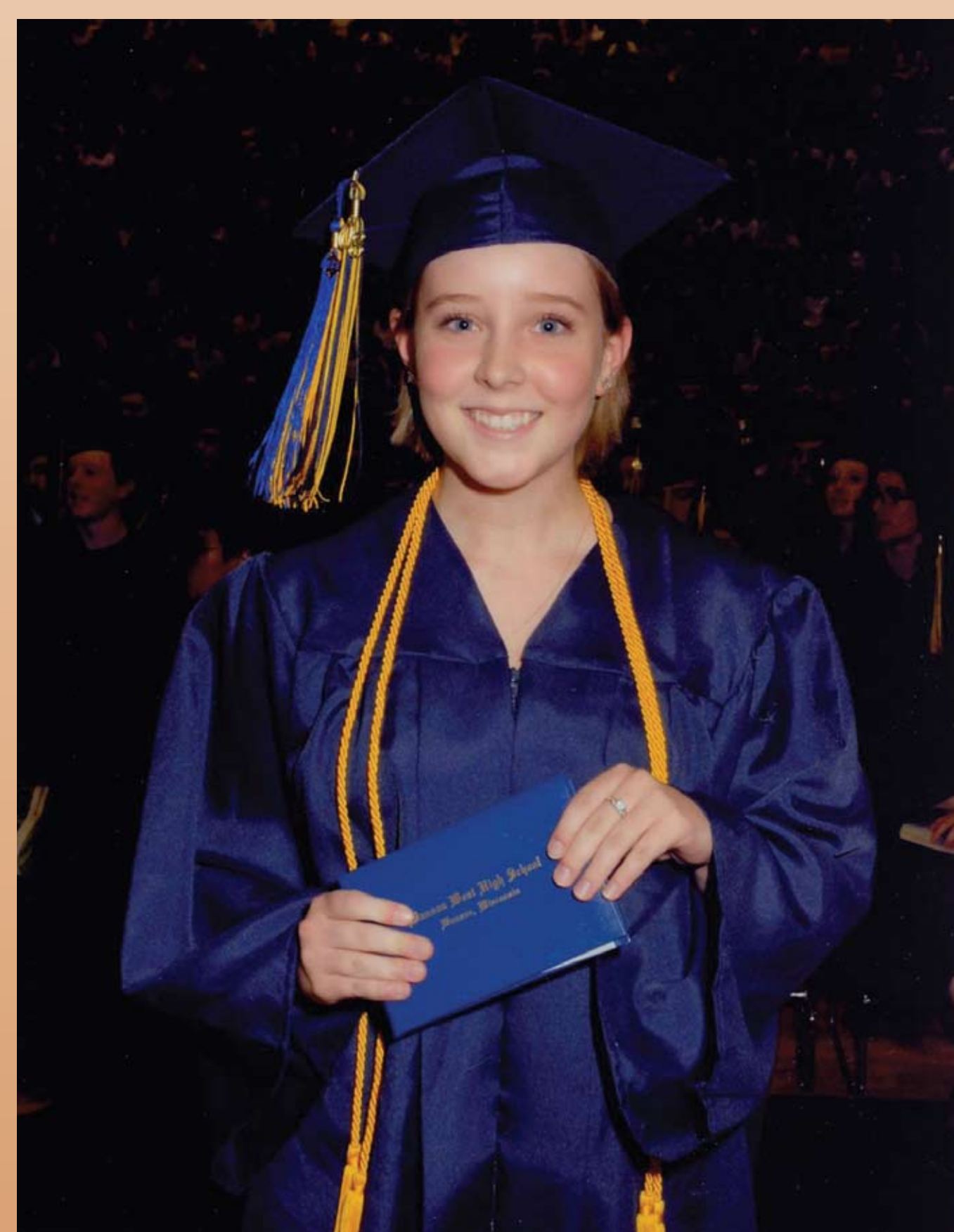
COURAGE, LIFE & HOPE

# REFLECTIONS *of a journey*



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## Emily Leonhard

As a junior at Wausau West High School, Emily Leonhard was perfectly content being a member of the school's dance team and a participant in the DECA Club.

In March of 2007, Leonhard was dealt a new challenge when she began feeling ill. Figuring it was just a bug, she went about her daily life, until she began to get severe stomach pains. The pain was so bad she struggled to get out of bed, resulting in a trip to the doctor.

A CT scan revealed a 10-centimeter mass on her ovary, which meant she needed surgery to have it removed. Doctors went into the procedure thinking the mass was an ovarian cyst, but during the procedure, Leonhard's parents received some startling news.

"The doctors found out it was cancer, and they had to tell my parents during the surgery," Leonhard said. "It was a better situation for me, but not my family. By the time I found out, it had already been mostly taken care of."

Despite doing everything they could to try to save the other ovary, doctors were forced to remove them both when it was discovered that the cancer had spread. Waking up after surgery and finding out the situation was drastically different than originally thought was a little overwhelming for Leonhard, but she took it in stride.

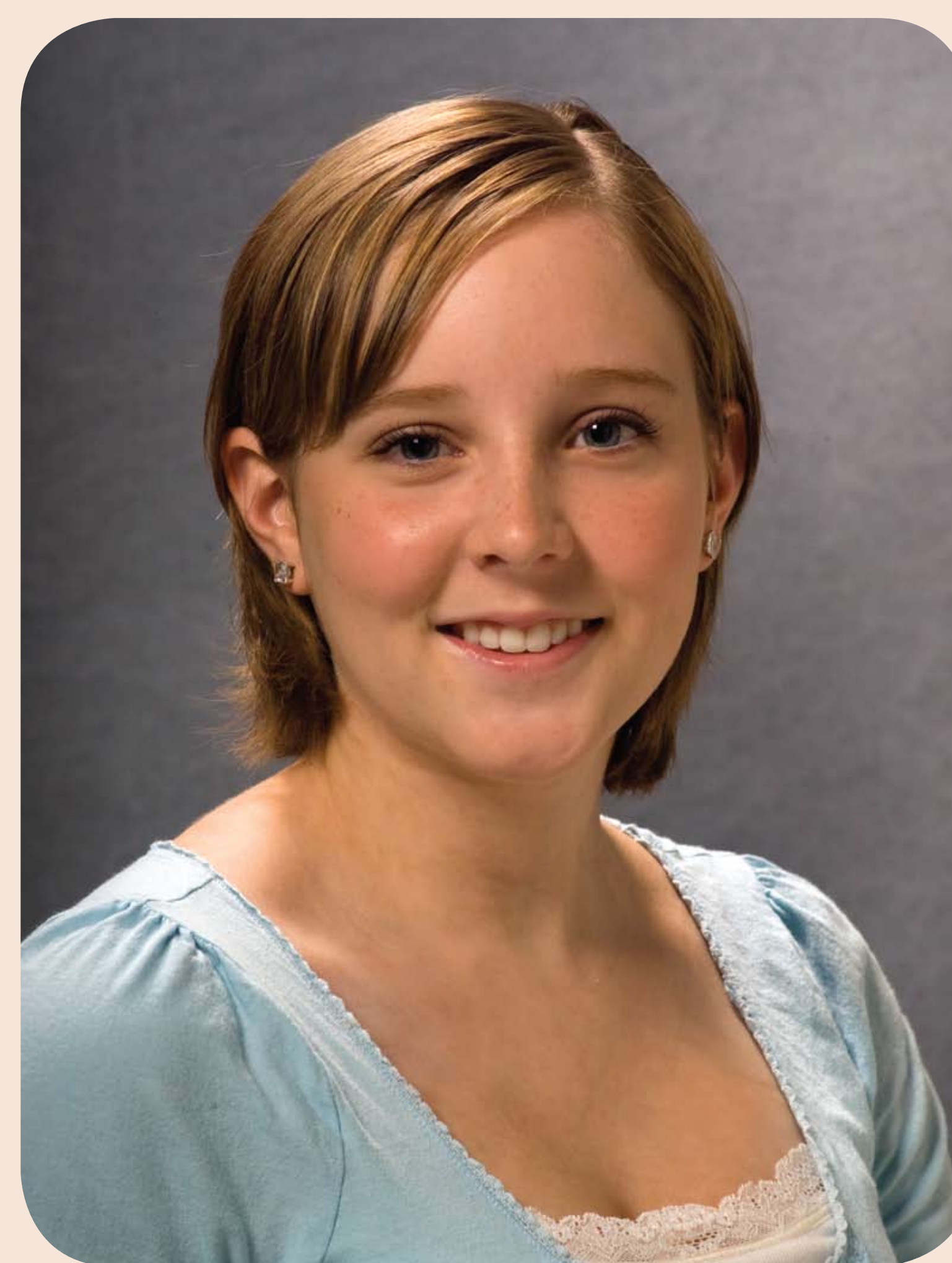
"I wasn't totally surprised, because I knew something was wrong," she said. "I'm just glad they figured out what it was. They did what they had to do."

In April she started nine weeks of chemotherapy treatments to ensure none

of the cancer had been missed. Spending extended periods of time in the hospital meant a lot of time away from school.

Other than struggling to become motivated to do her schoolwork, Leonhard remained upbeat during all her treatments. Her positive attitude was a big boost for her family.

"My family was really upset about everything because they didn't know a lot about it," she said. "They got better when they saw I wasn't really upset about it."



Leonhard did have one instance when she became upset. Just before prom, she began losing her hair, which was difficult for her. Finally giving in to the inevitable, Leonhard had her friends over for a party two days before prom where they helped buzz off her hair.

She got a wig for prom and finished up her treatments in June. With the experience behind her, she looks back on all the support she received and is grateful for her family and friends.

"My friends never treated me differently and they were all so important," she said. "My family is closer now and everybody at the cancer center was so nice."

Leonhard completed her senior year at Wausau West in 2008, where she was a co-captain of the dance team and enjoyed hanging out with her friends. She finds herself more goal-oriented following her experience with cancer, which should serve her well as she pursues a degree in marketing from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.