

## **Personal Introductory Speech: Serving Fried Chicken & People**

“Hi, welcome to Babes Chicken, my name’s Laura, what can I get started for y’all?”

I think I’ve said this phrase thousands of times to thousands of different people. Who knew that being a server at a southern-style fried chicken restaurant could change someone’s life? I certainly didn’t.

When I was 16, I started working at Babe’s Chicken Dinner House in my hometown solely to make extra money and be somewhere other than my house and school. While I did accomplish my original goal of filling my time and my pockets, I was also able to bring out a side of myself that I had never seen before: passionate, outgoing, and confident.

Babes has sparked a passion for people and connection. I hope to use this passion in college to learn more about others different from me and develop a global perspective.

Being put in a situation where you are forced to not only interact with, but also serve so many people in one day, is at first daunting. Being calm with rude customers, trying to get iPad kids to look up from their screens, and cleaning up a million gravy spills is hard. But these challenges are worth all the skills and knowledge that I have gained.

So no, I’m not passionate about fried chicken or mashed potatoes.

I am passionate about people.

These interactions, although short, have allowed me to learn from people from all over the country and the world. I now know that New Hampshire is the only state that doesn’t require adults to wear seatbelts, how one goes about starting a church in Latvia, and that seven-year-olds would feed their chickens chicken nuggets.

Being a server has intensified my passion for connecting with others with a common goal at a common table. Hearing about others’ stories, life goals, and tough days brings a sense of empathy towards all those I interact with. With a bowl of mashed potatoes in one hand and a tray of biscuits in the other, I have discovered my passion as a question-asker, a listener, and a connector.

However, connecting with customers at Babes is only one tiny sliver of the world. My goal in college is to expand on my awareness of others' experiences. Being surrounded by other students from all over the world, with different cultural, familial, and religious backgrounds, is an experience that I want to take full advantage of. Unlike Babe's, it's not a transactional experience. I can initiate conversation with others because I truly want to listen and learn, not just to get a 20% tip.

I'm hoping to graduate from college as a more knowledgeable citizen and a better friend with a warm heart and open mind. By meeting people on campus and abroad, I want to understand more of the world and its people.

I am excited to bring together my two vastly different worlds. To bring my social confidence as a server in Texas into my Californian college experience.

In this way, I'm not filling my pockets, but fulfilling my soul.

I'm not bringing steaming hot biscuits, but deep and revealing conversations.

I am not serving tables, but the world and its people.

Thank you.