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By Melissa Lizotte

Back in 2011, Caribou native Darci Faye was a student at Stony Brook University on Long Island, New York and took a class that changed the course of her studies and her life. The class was Introduction to Theater.

Faye, who was attending Stony Brook through the University of Maine at Presque Isle's National Student Exchange Program, had always loved theater. She wanted to write plays, but never thought people would be interested in what she had to say.

When the class started, Faye realized her love of theater was stronger than she thought it was. The teacher was a graduate student who was writing, directing and starring in his own play for his master's thesis. Students were able to volunteer for the production. Faye became the play's assistant director and stage manager. She even gave the graduate student helpful advice on his script.

"It was inspiring to watch how excited he was to share his work with other people. At that point, I had never written something that I wanted to share with people," Faye says.

Every night after rehearsals, Faye wrote what would later become "Ininitely Yours," a play about domestic violence that she produced and staged with New York actors at UMPI last fall. While at Stony Brook, Faye wrote two drafts of the play, then held a reading with four friends who were actors.

Faye expected her play to get bad responses. But after the reading one of the actors, a graduate theater student, approached Faye.

"She told me that I should go to graduate school for playwriting," Faye says. "I told her, 'You think I'm that good?' And she said, 'I think you have the potential to be that good.'"

Faye could not attend graduate school at the time because she had not earned her bachelor's degree. Her time at Stony Brook made her realize how much she wanted to pursue playwriting. So she enrolled in playwriting classes at Primary Stages, an off-Broadway theater company in New York City, where she was a student for two years.

At Primary Stages, students do not take classes for credit or a grade. They workshop their plays and get feedback from working playwrights and fellow students. Faye enjoyed learning from teachers and students who had similar career goals and experiences.

"It's a good feeling to be in that environment where you walk down the street and there's theaters everywhere," Faye says. "I wrote a lot more than I write up here just because the city makes me excited and inspired."

In 2014, Faye decided to go back to UMPI to obtain her bachelor's degree. She enrolled in the criminal justice program because she thought the topic would be more interesting to study than English. She admits that she will likely never have a career related to criminal justice. But as a playwright, Faye is interested in how people deal with trauma and hopefully move forward.

"I'll sit in class sometimes and think 'Oh, that'll make a good play' or 'Maybe my character will go through that experience,'" Faye says. "So if anything, I guess it's just for future play ideas."

Faye has also revived the University Players, UMPI's drama club, which had not existed on campus since 2003. Since last spring, the drama club has performed two plays, staged Faye's "Infinitely Yours" and held two Broadway Revues.

Recently the Players hosted a playwriting festival with each night featuring performances of nine 10-minute plays that UMPI students wrote.

"I wish more people around here would have more opportunities to watch as much theater as I have," Faye says. "I definitely jump at any chance I have to share theater with my community."

Faye recently found out that "Planet Connections," a New York theater festival, has accepted "Infinitely Yours" for its summer lineup. The play will have five performances from mid-June to mid-July.

Though Faye will graduate from UMPI in December 2016, she has decided to wait on graduate school. She wants to pursue her dream of starting a small theater company in New York with three students from the University Players.

Faye is excited for the future and shares advice to aspiring playwrights.

"Just say 'yes' to any opportunity that comes because you never know who you're going to meet or what it will open for you," Faye says. "Just be open to life."