WHILE MANY THEATRE MAJORS DREAM of eventually making it in Manhattan, Sarah Tomek says she’s already arrived. In Manhattan, Kansas, that is, where she teaches drama to prison inmates.

“I started out as a theatre major at Michigan State,” says Sarah Tomek in her recent Spartan Saga on the msu.edu web site, “and through a couple of programs – the prison outreach program in the theatre department – my career path has moved toward drama therapy, and I will be going for my Master’s in drama therapy soon. When I tell people, they’re shocked that just a girl like me could go into prison and work with all the—and it is all male – prisoners, too, that I work with.”

It was while she was enrolled in MSU’s Theatre program that Tomek says she discovered her passion for drama therapy, working with children having moderate to severe cognitive impairments. She is now pursuing a Master’s in drama therapy at Kansas State University in Manhattan, KS, while working in prison outreach.

For Tomek (BA, Theatre, 2010), a typical workday might entail acting out scenes from Macbeth with an inmate who not only understands exactly what the play is about and the huge stakes involved for each character, but wows her with an incredible performance.

“You put in the hard work and dedication and put something positive into the world,” Tomek says, “and you will change it one person at a time, one group of people at a time. I am doing something good, and that is what I take the most joy in. The humanities directly touch lives, and it makes me so happy and excited about what I do every day.”

Tomek says that she found that here at Michigan State: “That theatre can connect people to each other. And I think that’s how I change the world.” As for the “Spartans will” tagline, Sarah says, “For me, personally, it is ‘Spartans will create.’ I think that is what I value most in myself and in others—the creative mind and bringing something into the world that wasn’t there before.”