

Striving for Excellence

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As a minority woman struggling with both financial burdens and being first generation, my main priority has always been to succeed and beat the stigma set by my family. It was normalized within my family for the women to become pregnant at a young age and not graduate or even attend college. This is not only a settling mindset for my family, but a common mindset amongst other families as well. In a study conducted in Mississippi, 38% of women dropped out of community college due to being pregnant or having baby related burdens while attending college. This has always been a driving force behind me to succeed because I don't want to become another statistic.

Along with this, even though my family is a major support system for me, navigating through college has been hard because they never truly understood the concepts of enrolling in classes or applying for financial aid. Ultimately this led me to learn how to navigate my way through not only college but many life issues alone. To me this is a defining characteristic because it shows that through tough times I never gave up. My determined mindset has allowed me to make my way through three years of college all while surviving a pandemic and attempting to maintain a 3.0 GPA.

Throughout my life, I knew that my calling in life was to always help others because I never want someone to feel like they are alone and it comforts me knowing that I can be a helping hand to those in need. This led me to become a double major in both Biology and Psychology. With these majors, I hope to not only learn about the human mind and how we think, but I can learn about medicine and fine ways to cure/aid those in need. Throughout high school and the pandemic, I volunteered at a nursing home where I was able to give back to the elderly. This role entailed performing entertaining activities for the residents and ensuring that they know that we are here for them even if their families could not be. I have appreciated this job because I learned about individuals who lived through historic events to individuals who served our country. I also was able to talk to them and brighten their days through these trying times. Many residents were battling mental illnesses and life threatening diseases, but providing comfort and support could make what they were going through bearable for the time being.

I am applying for the WISH Excellence at Intersection of Science and Life Award because I feel like I have never lost sight of my true purpose and my actual goals despite how hard life may get. I also believe that both my work life and school life go hand and hand because I am already pursuing my goals by volunteering, while majoring in a pre-medical program to get me there. With my majors, I hope to become a

gynecologist or become a physical therapist. Being a black woman in STEM alone is an accomplishment and I know that I can achieve more in the future.