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The Success Story of a Bullied Atmautluak Girl

Two hundred people should have raised me. After-all, it takes a community to raise a child; or so I thought. Instead, my village drove me out. Statistics say that I should have ended up like nearly everyone else in the village. Poor, in poverty. The village of Atmautluak did nothing for me that I could have done and did on my own to escape the lifestyle that brought people down, including myself. It was brutal. I was determined to leave, pursue my education, and become someone that no one can look down to any longer. Through the beaten path on my road to success, I find myself sitting here telling the story of my life that may potentially open doors to support my education, so that I can become someone the village should have raised. Perhaps with my success, I can return home and inspire the next generation to raise themselves as I have.

While I lived in Atmautluak, I didn't feel like I belonged to my school, nor my community. I was constantly bullied and beaten. I was surrounded by drunks who staggered the village and no one seemed to care. There were times where I had been beaten up by girls I thought were my friends, only to found out that they weren't. They beat me inside the porch of the local village store in plain sight of the public eye. No one stopped them and no one comforted me. I was constantly made fun of by both older and younger kids. I didn't really have many friends to confide in. I was always alone besides my family, but even then, there were times that I've thought they hated me.

I often cried at night because of how miserable my life was. Sometimes I'd come home from school angry or upset because of how the bullies would treat me. However, regardless of the way I was brought up by my home and my community, I aspired to succeed in school so that one day, I can leave and escape the horrific life I was forced to live.

I think the reason I was bullied a lot was because I was a “nice girl” and didn’t have nice things. My classmates had nice new clothes and always had their hair fixed. They were in a social status higher than mine because of the way I dressed; poor.

There was one gift that I had that no one could take away from me that really helped me blossom throughout the hardships of my elementary school years. I am athletic. It wasn’t until the seventh-grade that I joined sports. Although I wasn’t very good at high school sports in my earlier years, I persisted to become the best student in sports by the time I hit the tenth-grade.

My family and I had later decided that it would be in my best interest to enroll into the Bethel Kuskokwim Learning Academy (KLA) to take full advantage of other opportunities to escape the bullying in Atmautluak. While attending KLA, I joined sports once again and traveled 12 other districts and regained my confidence.

No matter the circumstances or situations I faced in life, I never give up. There were many times I wanted to quit but kept on going. My pursuit in education and opportunities outside of Atmautluak earned me the class title, Valedictorian.

This coming May, I will wear a cap and gown as I march with my classmates to receive my diploma. A certificate of achievement not only for academics and sports, but a certificate of achievement that holds the history to the trials I’ve overcome that should have held me back.

I want to assure you that your investment in my post-secondary educational goals will be worth every penny. I’m enrolled at the Kuskokwim University Campus in the Dental Assisting Program so that I can work my way towards becoming YK Delta’s first Alaska Native Women Dental Hygienist (that I know of). My pursuit in this career will land me an occupation where there is a high demand. With this career, I’ll be able to travel to the villages, including Atmautluak, to bring clean smiles across Alaska’s beautiful faces.

My trials in life have prepared me to succeed life after high school, and I’m ready to take full advantage of the opportunity to succeed through college as I’ve succeeded through high school.