

**Essay Topic: Your life is a series of stories. Tell a story that has helped shape you or reflects who you are today, and how that will move you into the future.**

### A Mother's Gift

Upon arriving in the United States from the Philippines in 2009, I was raised by a single, exhausted mother. She spent 11 difficult hours working at a cold cannery processing plant earning a minimum wage to support our small family. I revered my mom. When I was young, I observed her constant struggles in calculating and balancing our various financial needs. Her flawless hands began to form cracked calluses, and deep wrinkles and auburn cheeks encompass a once smooth face. My restless mother cooked, performed the laundry, and counseled her children like any mother; however, underneath those smiles is a fatigued but strong woman striving to build a future for her family despite the adversities of living as an immigrant in America. A mere 9-year-old kid like me before should not worry about these things, as parents are often viewed as the provider and caretakers. Yet, I did.

Each morning, my mother quietly leaves \$5 on our tiny and old dinner table to pay for my taxi expenses, and I valued each dollar that I received from her, for each one represented the discomforts and sweats that a fragile woman like her had to endure working in a frigid environment. She always wakes up exhausted early in the morning at about 5 am to cook and prepare breakfast for my brother and I before my mother worked, and she arrives in our cramped apartment late around 6pm. On the other situation, I had my own problems in school. I was mocked for I could not speak the English language well, and pupils offensively laughed at my unique humorous personality; however, I disregarded the impacts the emotional and mental pains caused me, for I valued education. My main goal was and still is to learn. All I think about every day that I entered school was my mother's determination and resilience despite everyday struggles. My mother is my hero.

Although I was young and naive, I started to value my mom's determination and hard work at the cannery working long, grueling hours. My mother kissed me and told me, "Al, do well on school and one day, I won't have to work anymore." I became perplexed with my mother's unclear, yet striking phrases. But, I started to realize that my mom's words and love for

my older brother and I served as a gift and motivation to finish and pursue college education to fulfill my lifelong passion.

I envision myself as an accountant and a lawyer that focuses on complex numbers and critical thinking. To earn my undergraduate accounting and graduate law degree, maintaining an outstanding academic achievement during the remainder of my high school is a must. The reward is worth the endeavor once I climb the lengthy staircase that leads to my passion. Throughout middle and high school, I received numerous academic awards for achieving highest grades in class, Elks Student of the Quarter Awards, and Academic Excellence Awards in World Languages, Mathematics, and Sciences. High academic achievements allowed me to earn the University of Alaska Scholar recognition, and I remained hardworking to earn more honors to help graduate and enroll in college. To avoid student loans and financially assist my mother, I currently apply to many scholarships, including UA Online scholarships and Kodiak Scholarship Foundation Scholarship, and I work part time as a crew at McDonald's and referee for Kodiak Parks and Recreation. Earning my college degree serves as an appreciation for my mother's years of constant determination and hard work raising us by herself. One day, I will view my beautiful hard-working mother proud with an authentic smile on her smooth face.

In 2021, I will have earned my accounting degree and pursue higher education by attending law school. My mother is my hero, who confidently battles life's intricacies, and she provided and demonstrated a gift of willpower to her children. I will honor that gift, and it will serve as my trusted guide to journey onto my prosperous future.