

2022 June Nelson Memorial Scholarship Essay Response Kaylee Hill

Sadly, inequality is real and still exists all across the world. A person's income, sexuality, gender, and, race are all traits that are often discriminated against. I believe that equality is very important, and starts on a small scale in homes, schools, and communities.

I grew up in the small village of Igiugig with a population of about seventy people. The operation of a small community like Igiugig requires all of the same aspects of life that are required in a city. Sanitation, electricity, road maintenance, law enforcement, and other operations are still required. There are very few people in a small village that are available to keep all of these things going. Everyone has to work together to get jobs done regardless of gender, race, age, or other commonly dividing factors. We believe that leadership roles, heavy equipment operating, accounting, and other jobs are not gender specific and anybody is capable of doing any job. On a small scale we've been trying to set up the youth of our village to ignore the gender boundaries that are present in many occupations.

The population of Igiugig is predominantly Yup'ik and Athabascan with a small fraction of the community having no Native Alaskan ancestry. However, when it comes to voting on village council issues and elections, everyone has a vote and an equal voice. We try to maintain equality in our village as a small start to a large change that will bring equity to many people. We hope that this small effort will teach our youth that are moving on to higher education, training, recreation, and jobs in more populated areas to carry that voice of equality forward with them. This is one way that I've been part of trying to bring equity to our village, region, state, and world.

I strive to make everybody around me feel like an equal individual with their own individual thoughts and skills. I am grateful to have never undergone the kind of inequality I see on the news, and in my high school history books. I am motivated to not let it happen around me and, as a young person that grew up in a community that focuses on equality, I plan to carry those values with me as I start college and the next chapter of my life.