

I have empowered myself in life. I know the scholarship committee reading this is expecting people to talk about a parent, teacher, friend, coach, or director. But for me, I empower myself.

I was born to a family that seemed normal on the outside. I had a dad, mom, and two sisters, but we were far from a normal family. My mom became addicted to alcohol and prescription pills shortly after I was born. I grew up not knowing what those things were, but knowing they were bad for my mom. My mom would go away for months at a time, I later found out it was when she went to rehab. The number of times she went to rehab exceeds my age. She started abusing my sisters when I was eight, my sisters and I were almost taken away several times. My dad worked out of town half the year and that is when the abuse was the worst, my dad always protected us when he was home. My mom finally chose drugs over her family and left when I started sixth grade.

Middle school was miserable. It was mostly bullying and feeling alone. My dad still worked out of town half the year and my sisters avoided home as much as they could. That left me home alone most of the time, feeling lethargic. Now that I'm older, I recognize that I was depressed in middle school, but at the time I just knew I felt upset all the time.

When I entered high school, I became determined to turn my life around. My whole life had sucked up to that point, and I knew the only person who could change that was me. So, I switched school districts and went to a new high school where no one knew me, a clean start. I joined the speech and debate club and worked hard to do as well as I possibly could. I quickly gained an amazing group of friends that grew when I joined theatre my sophomore year.

My life was going amazing and then I moved to Sitka right before I started my junior year. I started feeling depressed again, I cried every day, and I resented my dad, the only person who had stuck by me my whole life. I had to decide again that I was determined to make my life better. I auditioned for a play less than a month after I moved to Sitka, I joined student council and mock trial, and I worked hard in school. I currently have another fantastic group of friends, I have done six plays here, I am doing rehearsals for another play, and auditioning for another play on March 5th.

Growing up, I spent a lot of time watching Hannah Montana, and in her words, "Life's what you make it, so let's make it rock." I've had a lot of people in my life influence me and serve as positive role models, but the person who empowered me most in life was myself and that is what I want students in the future to do. I see countless young people at my school who let bad events in their life ruin them, and I don't want to see any more children do that. I plan to become a nurse, and hopefully work in a pediatric clinic. I want children who are depressed or abused to see me and know that just because their life is hard doesn't mean they can't make their life better. I want to be a role model for younger people, to illustrate that life is what you make it, to empower yourself, to push yourself to do better.