

In 1989, my parents took a small fishing boat and left Vietnam in the dead of night in order to escape the hopeless of their home. Under gunfire and with nothing in to their names they somehow reached their destination in Hong Kong. I was born in a refugee camp there one year later. We thought we would be able to make a home there but we were wrong as we shipped back to the country that violated our rights and subverted our spirits until 2004 when we finally were granted asylum in America.

During the first few years of our lives here, my family and I had a very difficult time adapting to our new home and overcoming a stark language barrier. We eventually did adapt and today, my father and mother work as furniture movers and nail salon workers while I became the defacto head of the domestic aspect of my home. Through these hard yet rewarding years, I still managed to excel in my studies at Lynbrook High School (in San Jose). And while my classmates were enjoying their childhoods?I had none?as my days were completely occupied with studies and my evenings completely dedicated to maintaining my home. These years were lean, hard, and at the same time, rewarding and despite my responsibilities I still managed to earn a 3.75 GPA and acceptance by both UC Irvine and UC Davis by my senior year. My dreams of becoming either an ant eater or aggie were however dashed by reality as both said home responsibilities and the destitute nature of my finances prevented me from accepting either school's offer.

I however did not sulk nor become angry. Instead, I channeled these hardships into motivation for my studies at Foothill College. These motivations have since birthed many fruits. I have maintained a 3.6 cumulative college GPA whilst taking the challenging and heavy course load. As a first person in my family go to college, I have also been able to nurture and shape the lives of my siblings with the example I have set for them.

Respiratory Therapy is expensive subject. There are many extracurricular costs that no other majors have to endure. These costs include numerous expensive books and a litany of obligatory medical equipment like stethoscopes and scrubs. I have exhausted all of the funds that my family has made available for me as well as the money I saved from my work-study program. My parents have offered to take on extra shifts to help with this matter. But this would still not be able to cover these expenses. I have then no choice but to apply and hope for scholarships to achieve my goal of becoming a respiratory therapy.

While my studies do take a majority of my time?I have also been able to satisfy my innate desire to help others. I volunteer at the pediatrics wing of the Good Samaritan Hospital in Santa Clara. It is there in which I find myself happy. I work with young patients and their families by providing them with company and comfort. This proclivity to help others has also directed me to become a peer advisor for both EOPS and the Foothill transfer center where I use my wisdom and experiences to help often struggling students achieve their goals.

In the end, I have been and still am driven by my both my nature and need to help others. This need will one day allow me to become a registered nurse so that I may extend this help to my entire community. But this day will only come with the financial assistance of generous intuitions like yours. It is with this assistance that I will one day be able to give the proper thanks to the country that has given me my life and dreams.