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Davis Chamber of Commerce Foundation

High School Scholarship Application

14 May 2021

Growing Miracles from Difficulties

“Out of difficulties grow miracles” said French philosopher Jean de La Bruyère (BrainyQuote). No affirmation could be more apropos to my life’s educational path than this one. I have undergone an unconventional and arduous scholastic journey, and the global pandemic of the past two years has made me older – and yet stronger.

From Kindergarten through eighth grade, I had the privilege of attending Grace Valley Christian Academy. Personally mentored by former UC Davis college professors and highly experienced lab instructors, I had been virtually set up for success in my academic career. Come High School, I began a dual enrollment program in which I attended both GVCA High School and California Connections Academy, an online charter school. All was progressing smoothly until the coronavirus made its unexpected entrance and major scholastic changes were enforced. First, the principal of GVCA issued a stay – at – home order in compliance with our governor’s mandate. No in–person classes were permitted. Although I was only taking a handful of my classes at GVCA, the impact of this shift in education struck me no less than the full – time students. Many of my favorite courses, such as Career Exploration and Physical Education, were removed altogether; and of those that remained, virtual Zoom meetings were the only means of my education and communication. Yet curiously, my school and I did not only survive, but we also thrived. On a personal level, I learned how to adapt. When my PE class was discontinued, I

started exercising at home. As a result, my fitness level grew. In addition, the shift of my Personal Finance class from a classroom to an online setting supported the enhancement and growth of my technology knowhow. I was able to continue achieving excellence in my schooling, and it quickly became apparent that one's personal growth is not subject to demise simply because of an unexpected hurdle he or she encounters. There will always still be great ways to grow, both individually and collectively, as GVCA exemplifies. For it also flourished, even earning the "Best Private School in Yolo County" award for its tenth consecutive year. I am proud to be a part of this personal and mutual academic growth.

Second, academia at home presented its own set of challenges. A new work environment meant new work schedules and new workmates. My experience in brick and mortar and online schools – and both – prepared me well for making and maintaining a plan at home. At GVCA, I received a prearranged schedule and a set of deadlines. At California Connections Academy, I formed my own schedule and conformed to my own set of deadlines. Come quarantine, therefore, I was able to combine my two experiences and perform successfully in an otherwise foreign educational environment. Furthermore, I learned to cooperate with different workmates. In exchange for my teachers and peers I received my parents and siblings, and initially, the obedience and teamwork skills that had previously been gained threatened to topple. Yet through hard work, perseverance, and a determination to work with – instead of against – my family, I was able to face and overcome this challenge.

Finally, my plans for graduating early were adjusted for the better due to COVID-19. It had been my great desire for years to begin my career path one step ahead, obtaining a diploma after just three years of High School. The means by which I intended to accomplish this goal was by taking the CHSPE, a High School equivalency test, during either the winter of 2020 or early

spring of 2021. Due to pandemic restrictions, however, the CHSPE team could guarantee only that their testing locations would be open before the Fall semester began, a time that was rather inconvenient for my situation. Nevertheless, I held on to my aspirations and sought the help of both parents and principal. By early March, we had finally found a creative solution. Rather than waiting for the CHSPE, I could take an alternate test that would still pave the way for me to earn my High School credits and graduate one year early. Called the Hi-SET, this exam included a series of subtests and was permitted to be taken online. For the past month, I labored to complete these five tests and have recently received an email from the Hi-SET team with my cumulative score report. I am proud to declare that each subtest earned a passing grade, with my final percentage being a 94. I am prouder to declare that all of this was achieved during a period of global pandemic and uncertainty. I am proudest to declare that nothing was achieved on my own. To my community and my church and my family and my God belong all the praise.

The shift in my education over the past year has caused me to recognize and acknowledge several important realizations. First, the temporary shutdown of Grace Valley Christian Academy and partial removal of its cherished classes has taught me to persevere in any work environment. Next, creativity was learned when my plans for an early graduation were changed. But perhaps greatest was the realization that COVID is not a prohibitor of success but a stimulator of growth. Through the changes foreseen only to God that this year's pandemic has brought to my scholastic journey, I have learned to embrace the unexpected and dare to grow among the thorns. For truly, beyond a shadow of a doubt, "Out of difficulties grow miracles."

Works Cited

"Jean de la Bruyere Quotes." BrainyQuote.com. BrainyMedia Inc, 2021. 11 May 2021.

https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/jean_de_la_bruyere_380158