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How has your education in Davis provided you with more opportunities and how have you persevered through life's challenges?

My path to Davis began two continents and 8,339 miles away, before I was even born. My maternal great grandmother was the first Muslim woman in her district in rural India to own and run a farm. Twenty years later, my grandmother, who did not have the opportunity to complete college, started and ran her own clothing-manufacturing business that provided employment to women in her small town in India. My grandfather, a progressive Muslim man, helped educate and nurture their two daughters, who are now both physicians.

My journey continued 8,500 miles west to Davis where my mother works as a professor. When I was born, my father, a computer programmer with a master's degree, put his career on hold to be a full-time dad. Motivated by driven and resilient women, and nurtured by unconventional and supportive men, my path continues.

Over the past 15 years, Davis has provided me with invaluable opportunities to thrive as a student and as a person. I have been fortunate to study in its excellent public schools – Birch Lane Montessori, Da Vinci Junior High, and Da Vinci High. I have gained new skills from youth programs at the Davis Art Center, Davis AYSO, City of Davis, and UC Davis. I have grown from volunteer experiences at Davis Media Access and the Davis

Senior Center. I would not be where I am today without the safe, inclusive and nurturing community that Davis offers for its children and youth.

A bicycle lane takes me 1.5 miles away to Da Vinci High School, where I pursue a rigorous college preparatory curriculum centered on project-based learning, teamwork and communication. My high school coursework in AP 2D Design, AP Computer Science, AP Calculus, Physics Honors, and AP Drawing and Painting, provides me with a strong foundation in areas relevant to my career goals.

In order to explore career possibilities, in my junior year of high school, my path took me four miles away to a high school-sponsored internship at the UC Davis Design Department where I learned web design from a professor. As part of my internship, I taught computer science to elementary school girls and co-facilitated the Davis Girls Who Code Club. My path takes me to the Connections Cafe at Davis Senior Center twice a month where I help seniors use their mobile devices to stay connected with their friends and family. When I first started volunteering at Connections Cafe, I navigated a steep learning curve as I gained technical skills in a wide variety of mobile devices. Over the years that I have been there, I have improved my ability to communicate with and relate to people at a range of ages and stages of their lives.

Last summer my path took me 363 miles away to the California State Summer School for the Arts, a competitive 4-week training program for high school students. Admitted students are designated California Arts Scholars and are awarded a Governor's

Medallion, the highest distinction in California for artistically talented students. I was nominated for this program by Da Vinci High School's art teacher and the UC Davis professor who I completed my school-sponsored internship with.

At Davis Media Access, a non-profit center for community media, I taught animation, film production, and digital media to children and teens, and founded the Davis Teen Animators Club. I completed a production internship where I taught community workshops on using GoPro cameras, co-produced a television show called Teens on Topic, and designed a portfolio website for a local performer. In recognition of my efforts to make technology more accessible and user-friendly, I was honored with the national Daily Points of Light Award that recognizes individuals who lead causes to strengthen their communities.

My goal is to combine my love of art and technology to pursue a career in interactive digital media. Women, especially women of color, are underrepresented in technology careers. My goal is to use my skills and passion in art and technology to help close that gender gap. Through my years as a student, I have worked hard to persevere through a significant challenge that women face – uncertainty in their own ability to be successful in science, technology, and math.

I recall a day at my school-sponsored internship at the University of California Davis Design Department, where I was learning web design and helping establish the Davis Girls Who Code Club, a technology immersion experience for school-aged girls. My

goals were to encourage girls whose aptitude for technology may have previously been underestimated. As the Club's co-facilitator, I was helping an instructor teach coding to a group of 20 girls. The instructor was unable to make it to class that week and I volunteered to teach on my own. I was anxious that my students would sense my uncertainty. I reviewed instructional materials and borrowed techniques from my own teachers at Da Vinci, such as establishing ground rules, project-based learning, teamwork, and positive reinforcement. To my astonishment, the girls listened with rapt attention and quickly learned the basics of coding!

This experience changed my perspective on leading. It showed me that through initiative and preparation I could overcome feelings of uncertainty, and each time I did that, I felt incrementally more confident. After this experience, I volunteered to lead a Girls Who Code event at UC Davis featuring accomplished women in technology, including LeShelle May. This time around the voice of self-doubt in my head remained silent.

This is the version of me that will go to UC Berkeley, where I have been accepted for admission as a freshman this Fall. One that is self-motivated, creative, responsible, and socially engaged. One that is courageous and resilient when faced with unexpected challenges and is driven to excel in enriching environments – such as the one my hometown of Davis provided me with. It is this version of me that will help me confidently lead, serve for change, and make a positive impact on diversifying and strengthening the technology workforce.