

From a young age, I have observed and experienced inequality. In my kindergarten classroom, we watched a movie on Martin Luther King Jr. and I realized that life was different for me, as a kid of color. Without the struggle for civil rights, I never would have attended the same school as my white friends, wouldn't have sat at the same restaurants or used the same public restrooms. Since then, what drives me is the hope for a more equitable society. Our world is so filled with turmoil, bigotry, and futile hatred. I want to increase opportunities for marginalized groups in the U.S. who have been oppressed through a system designed to advance only a very select group of people. Social justice has become increasingly important to me as I see violence and deep-rooted bigotry rear its ugly head. Our country is divided and the only way to achieve progress is to unite. I've been inspired by other activists to take a stance through volunteering for March for Our Lives Utah and Black Lives Matter chapters. It's important to me to protect the civil liberties of each person, especially those from communities who have historically been denied human rights. I've been outraged at prejudice and intolerance I have seen and experienced, which has only made me want to work harder to change negative stereotypes and stop bigotry.

I plan to take my fervor for social justice and use it for political science and law studies. I want to defend underrepresented communities and provide justice for victims of police brutality and hate crimes. I want to influence social change, celebrate diversity, and educate the public to cultivate a more tolerant and equitable society. It is unrealistic of me to assume that inequity within society will be solved quickly, but with ambition and relentless effort, I believe that a brighter future awaits; a future where no matter where you're from or what you look like, you will be included and treated with dignity. I have been forever empowered by trailblazers like Malala, Angela Davis, Marsha P. Johnson, Audre Lorde, and Nina Simone.

Nayra Green

West High

It's easy to become discouraged when you watch a cycle of hateful behavior impede progress, but it is essential to keep working to improve the lives of disenfranchised and marginalized people. I want to impact the next generation and lay down the foundations for a more accepting society, like those who paved the way for my generation.