

Name: Taylor Fang

Grade: 12

School: Logan High School

What Drives You?

There are three doors that slide open with jerks, like zippers on thrift store jackets, revealing book displays and yellow circulation pencils. Since elementary school, I've entered the doors to the Logan Public Library countless times. Growing up, I never saw my parents reading. As first-generation immigrants, they said they didn't have time. But I was lucky: my mom drove me to the library and helped me carry my heavy book bag to the car.

Spending hours at the library taught me the power of storytelling. Writers like Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison not only gave me companionship, but pushed me to empathize with others. Stories inspire us to step into new perspectives and reveal our common experiences—across race, class, and gender. I'm driven to make a difference in my community by a belief in the transformative power of storytelling.

In sixth grade, I started writing poetry. Creative writing has become my voice for self-expression and advocacy. I write about issues I care about: environmental destruction, gun violence, inequality, and mental health. I write to explore my home and heritage, and to convey dimensions of my identity and lived experiences.

Writing has taught me to be persistent. I write, and rewrite. And rewrite. I've amassed pages of rejection letters and critiques. But I believe in the Japanese proverb: "fall seven times, stand up eight." I'm proud to have published my poetry more widely, including in the New York Times, Pulitzer Center, Salt Lake Tribune, and on Utah Public Radio.

However, I'm most proud of sharing my love for creative writing with more diverse students. Two years ago, I founded my school's creative writing club. I pitched to a faculty meeting and recruited over 17 students. Through weekly meetings with artistic projects and peer-led critiques, I strive to create a welcoming space. My goal is to not only encourage established writers, but to mentor new students and help them learn English through creative writing.

As club president, last year I led a six-student team to start *The Ursus Arctos* literary magazine. Together, we gathered over 100 artwork and writing submissions, and printed 75 free magazine copies. As our school's only printed publication, I believe this is an important outlet for students to share stories that would otherwise go unheard.

In the future, I hope to attend college to study English Literature and Composition. My goal is to become a professor, to share creative writing with the next generation of leaders and creators. I hope that pursuing this dream will allow me to not only continue writing, but also to give back to my community as a teacher and advocate.

I believe storytelling can tackle concrete issues and make a difference through inspiring empathy and solidarity. Whatever I'm pursuing, I'm confident that I will continue to draw on stories as a humanizing force. I'm grateful to Jiffy Lube for this opportunity to share my voice. This scholarship would enable me to continue advocating through poetry and speaking to communities across borders.