

Aleisha Dutton
Year in School:
12
Billings West High School
Montana

With the ambition of becoming an architect, I have been educationally driven, taking honors, dual-credit, advanced placement, and summer college courses that have enabled me to adhere to a rigorous core schedule while exploring a variety of subjects. The college credits I have earned will be beneficial as I embark on a Master of Architecture degree. As a member of the Platinum Program, which requires completing a minimum of fifteen AP and Honors classes and a platinum project, I am launching a photography business. While the process has been exciting, combining my interests in photography and design, I have become aware of the many challenges and expenses involved with starting a business, building a clientele, and producing a satisfactory product. I am hopeful that this business will provide a source of income while I attend college.

As a child in a low-income household with a father who suffers from mental illness, I will not receive financial support from my parents to attend college, but I have been motivated to become successful, becoming involved in extracurricular activities that have taught me leadership and communication skills, obtaining employment at a local antique shop that has helped me develop customer service skills and a strong work ethic, and volunteering in our community. These activities have given me confidence that I will excel in college and enter a satisfying career, breaking the cycle of poverty in my family.

Beginning in elementary school, I became fascinated with architecture, observing creative ways architects make space more exciting and how shape can improve function. School activities, including an extended studies project focused on architectural features and a high school architectural engineering class, further fostered my interest in becoming an architect, but my volunteer experience mentoring low-income children has inspired my future ambitions of designing welcoming and inclusive spaces. I can relate to these children's experiences, and I understand the need of creating a safe place where they can gain confidence and develop positive social skills. As an architect, I will continue volunteering my services to projects that will benefit my community, and I am greatly inspired by the Billings Public Library, a facility that provides a welcoming atmosphere to all people while featuring sustainability and aesthetic appeal. Specifically, I would love the opportunity to design a community center with disadvantaged teens in mind, providing school-aged children with a fun and safe place to congregate. I look forward to expanding upon the knowledge I have gained, delving deeper into architectural study, developing my own design style, and contributing aesthetically to the architectural world.