

Chloe Kerns

Ninth Grade

Tigard High School

Oregon

Jiffy Lube Scholarship Essay: "What Drives Me?"

For my 8th birthday, instead of toys I asked for a white board and school supplies. After my birthday, with these supplies in hand, I began setting up my classroom. I hung the whiteboard on the wall, positioned a desk and set out my supplies. I even made a class schedule. All I needed now were some students. My brother agreed to be my student, only if I in turn played what he wanted. So the necessary arrangements were made and class began.

Throughout my life teaching has been a passion. Whether it's helping a friend with homework or teaching my grandparent how to text, I love to instruct and support people. When I see that someone doesn't understand something, my mind asks, "How can I make it more clear." It's like a puzzle. Each person is unique in the ways they learn and see things. I try to step into their shoes and imagine what might make sense to them. For me, the question has never been *will* I teach, but *what?* Just recently I found the answer.

My cousin Logan is nine months younger than me. He loves to jump on the trampoline, ride four wheelers, and eat ice cream. When he was two, he was diagnosed with autism. When I was younger I would easily get frustrated with him. I didn't understand why he didn't talk, or why he didn't make eye contact, or play with me. Over the years I've learned more about autism

and how it affects people. When he repetitively runs back and forth or refuses to make eyecontact, I try to understand how he's feeling and what's going through his mind.

In middle school I got the opportunity to work as a peer tutor with students in a special education class. It was the coolest experience to meet students with learning challenges and observe how they learn. It opened my perspective. As I continued to take this class I also had the opportunity to tutor some 4th-grade twins on the autism spectrum. I was able to put into practice what I had learned as a peer tutor. It also opened my eyes to a future career in special education.

As I have worked with people with disabilities, I have noticed how they are treated by others. They are often ignored or avoided. I wonder if this happens because people are unsure how to act around people who have differing abilities. The differences seem to make them uncomfortable, so they avoid them. As a special education teacher, I would hope to have the opportunity to not only teach students with disabilities, but also help others learn how to interact effectively with them. I believe that learning to show love and respect to those who are different from us is one of the most important skills in life and one that can start in school.

The "What Drives Me Scholarship" will help me financially attend a college where I can receive my degree in special education and further continue to live out my dreams of teaching.