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Grade 12

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Driven By Chance

After being the only child for ten years I was surprised with a little sister. Little did I know, my little sister would be born three months early and have a rare condition called Ring 21. My little sister Ella has a g-tube, goes to physical therapy, feeding therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. Ella is still unable to talk except for saying the word "mama." My family is constantly in and out of the hospital with my little sister due to being immunocompromised and having seizures. Ella is currently eight years old.

It never occurred to me that my experience with my sister is different from what most siblings experience. I can't just have my sister right next to me upstairs because she could have a seizure in her sleep. My sister can't eat dinner with us at the table. There's a lot of things my family and I have missed out on. The focus of this is not the sad things. If it wasn't for my little sister I would have not been able to experience what it's like for families and health care workers in the NICU, ICU, emergency room, etc. I have gotten to see the medical field first hand. I would not know how to deal with a g-tube, what the different types of therapists are, and how to deal with children with special needs if my sister wasn't born. If it wasn't for my sister I wouldn't be motivated to pursue a career in the medical field. My little sister drives me to want to help others

because she has helped shape me into the person that I am today. I want to be able to have a job that I love. I have a lot of experience with kids with special needs not only just from my sister, but from volunteering at the Little Light House since 2014 when Ella started attending. Since 2014, Ella has graduated from the Little Light House and I have continued volunteering with the amazing staff and kids.

Helping families with special needs is a passion of mine. Without Ella I would have never known this. I had no idea how many families there were just in Oklahoma with children with special needs until I started volunteering at the Little Light House and going to events with my sister. I want to be a nurse in hopes of helping people the way others have helped Ella. I want to make an impact on families so that they know they are not alone. I want to be able to tell my sister's story while helping the community around me. Ella drives me to be a better sister, child, student, and worker. I want Ella to know when she grows up that she made an impact on me. Ella drives me to want to be a better human and to become a nurse.