

Jenae Westfall
12th
Carlsbad High School
New Mexico

What Drives You?

My passion for all things biology-related began when I was very young. I was maybe five years old when I started to notice trends in the kinds of lizards that I would see around my yard, and how some of them reacted differently to me approaching them (some would drop their tails, some would hiss, some would freeze and camouflage themselves, etc.). I started many "small businesses" out of my playhouse to research and rehabilitate the few I could catch. This hobby opened up a world of my true passions even from the business perspective. After charging my family a daily fee to be able to name a pet I was studying and taking care of, I learned many lessons that would later prove beneficial when I created a real business plan.

My extreme passion for nature and creatures in general has led me to have various kinds of my own pets. After years of owning many reptiles and amphibians, I have become increasingly fascinated with their conservation and care. Growing up, my best friend's mom was a veterinarian. We would promise to be invisible if she let us watch an operation or even play with her patients outside. In addition to my natural love for animal care, experiencing the impact she had made to those that were in dire need of help changed me forever. Animals aren't capable of telling us when they are hurting or having the privilege of picking their owners, so I promised myself that one day I would make a difference in this field. Also, running my makeshift business called the "Bug Convention" when I was young also sparked

my entrepreneurial spirit in becoming a business owner. Within the past year, I started a small online business with my best friend and obtained an LLC to learn the aspects of being a small business owner in preparation of larger opportunities to come.

I would love to use my passion to study and help conserve critically endangered species. Following a bachelor's degree in biology from Texas Tech University, I plan to enroll in graduate school to specialize in the field of animal medicine. I have also been invited by the Rawls School of Business to apply to a STEM Pathway MBA as a “high achieving high school student”, so I am excited to work on a dual program for STEM. I am currently shadowing a dentist, dental hygienist, and registered nurse at a local dental office and hopefully a veterinarian during these next few months before I leave for college. Before doing this, I had learned that a veterinarian even uses the same tools on animals when doing dental work. I plan to exercise the skills I learn from all of these experiences in my field of study, as they are universal for the most part. My drive revolves around becoming a licensed veterinarian and business owner, and even more importantly an impassioned activist to help make my community and world a better place.