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12th Grade

Compass Academy

Idaho

### **What Drives Me?**

I come from a low-income household, and it has always been a concern how I would afford college, even at an early age. My parents informed me that they will be unable to contribute anything to my college and that I must rely on the money I earn from my two jobs and any scholarships that I receive. This, of course, has not caused my passion for education to falter. I have been working diligently to do as many scholarships as I can, including this one.

My current goal is to become a psychologist. The major branches I would like to study are experimental psychology, cross-cultural psychology, and counseling psychology. I have always been intrigued by the human mind, how it is programmed, and how that programming impacts our behaviors. There is a deeper reason for my love of psychology, however. In the U.S., stereotypes, bias, and racism run deep into the roots of its history. As a Latina girl who has had racially insensitive encounters, this subject hits close to home. I am hoping through psychology, I can find why the pattern of discrimination continues to this day. Is there a way to untangle ingrained biases in the human mind? Is racism a part of the human program, or is it self-inflicted? What is the best way, based on psychology, to help people understand the unfairness of racism? These questions are just waiting to be answered, to be experimented on.

To accomplish my goal of becoming a psychologist, I have worked multiple jobs, maintained a 4.0 GPA, and invested time into classes and projects related to the career I want to pursue. I not only earned money for college at the jobs I took, but I also learned critical social and career skills that may help me in my future classes. I kept my GPA up by using organizational skills to keep track of my assignments. It was my way of preparing myself for college classes, as I know they are demanding. As for the lessons and projects I participated in, I took an AP Psychology class, and I compiled a video of interviews with general and ethical questions related to the pandemic for my senior project. My senior project was a test of my social skills and my ability to conduct efficient, non-biased interviews.

If I receive this scholarship, I will be able to focus on my education rather than worry about the cost of it. Education is a passion I've pursued my entire life, and I want to be able to follow my dream career path. However, the roadblock currently standing in my way is money. This is not enough to stop me from pursuing college, but it will cause strain. With this scholarship, I will get a step closer to receiving an education, living in the dorms, and being part of my university community. With this scholarship, I will gain something invaluable: Knowledge.