

Amelia Lutz

12th Grade

La Cueva High School

New Mexico

Embarrassment is certainly an odd way to find where your passion lies. In my case, it was reading out loud that gave birth to my drive in a way I would have never expected.

While there are certainly benefits to reading aloud in a class setting, I have rarely been one to enjoy it. My naturally quiet nature makes me more suited to observing peacefully in the corner of the classroom than reading in front of my peers. For the longest time, I didn't appreciate anything related to verbal communication—public speaking, persuasive writing, even expressing my opinions to others was difficult for me. Words got stuck in my throat, and thoughts jumbled in my head.

One day in class, I was required to read aloud from a textbook. As I nervously stumbled over my words, my heart pounding in my chest, I felt something different from my usual embarrassment—inspiration. As I finished reading my assigned passage, I realized my drive to find a new, more natural way to express myself and communicate with others. Once I had recognized that, I couldn't wait to begin looking.

Art seemed to be a promising start. It's always been fascinating to me how a simple pencil or paintbrush can evoke emotion through color, shapes, and texture. I've always enjoyed art as a hobby and an outlet, but while I love it, I'm not entirely ready to start my career as a

painter—I still crave structure and function. I need a reason to create and a goal to achieve. That's when I decided to look into graphic design.

Graphic design was the perfect medley of creativity and function, art and its application. The poster for a musical, the art for albums and books, the thousands of logos and advertisements plastered on every surface—they were created by graphic designers. That ever-present creativity, that practical application of art to create so much more, fascinates me. It's not a book's title that catches my eye, but the choices of colors and designs on the cover. It is the unique shapes and fonts that catch my attention, that leave me wanting to study a toothbrush's packaging or a billboard's effectiveness. But it's also more than a simple attraction to colors and shapes. Each poster and cover has hidden messages to explore, ideas to decipher, and themes to convey. The way a simple design could sum up a thousand words and encourage change in others inspired me. It quickly became evident that this niche between art and communication was something I wanted to pursue.

I've learned that communication is truly important, though it doesn't always conform to the ways I expect it to. In college, I hope to study graphic design, and I plan to use Jiffy Lube's Teen Driver Scholarship to fuel my drive and achieve my passion. What started out as stumbling through reading out loud has grown into the drive that inspires me to change the world, one design at a time.