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12th

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<center>What Drives You?</center>

" People like you should go back to their own country." Hearing this in the 5th-grade playground for the first time made me realize two things. First that they were going to be people who were never going to believe in my dreams and wish for me to fail. Second, not only do I have to prove them wrong but be better than they thought I could ever be. What drives me is to knock down stereotypes, and prove that I have the potential to be among the great.

Growing up in a Hispanic household, as an only child I always felt alone. In the sense that I had no one to look up to for guidance, or motivation. This feeling of loneliness only increased when I moved from my hometown of San Diego California where all my family lived, to the small town in Northern Nevada called Reno. Not only was the place foreign but the people as well. Everyone seemed to have their goals and knew exactly what to do to get there. I, on the other hand, had a goal, but no idea how to get there. My goal is to become a doctor researching and finding cures for diseases. I found this love for science in middle school when we would see bacteria under the microscope, and learn about genetics. It just fueled me into wanting to learn

more. This leads me to develop a new hobby, research, and find the solution how to get to where I need to be.

Starting high school, I plotted like a criminal all of the classes that I needed to take to be ahead of the game. I wanted to be the mastermind when it came to my education, no one was going to tell me I couldn't do what I wanted to do. I choose as many honors, and APs as I possibly could to build up my resume so that I could stand out from the crowd. This ambition to stand out from the crowd was further driven during my senior year. I wanted classes that were going to make me stand out in college applications. I knew that I wanted to build connections to further my career, and I wanted to challenge myself on what I could do. This is what lead me to take a math class at UNR and a CNA Internship Program through TMCC. Even though my counselor was heavily against it. I knew that taking these two classes would not only help me stand out but it would teach me what college is actually like.

The class at UNR I found on my own while researching other ways to earn dual credit which wasn't through a community college since the colleges I was interested in did not accept credit through a community college. So I decided to take up this challenge and take a university-level class at the university. UNR did not give me any financial aid or discount for being a high school student, my fall semester class came up to be $951, which my parents would not afford to pay. So I used my money from my job at Starbucks to pay for the class as well as for the hundreds of parking passes I would get every day to attend that class. Through taking this class in person every day I was able to make connections not just with the students but with the professor. It also allowed me to find the honors college and meet the dean of the honors college furthering my interest in the university. Along with this the internship I did during the fall while

allowing me to further my interest reminded me about my drive and why I was doing this in the first place.

The CNA Internship Program through TMCC allowed me to experience what I have been craving, hospital experience. Although I do not have an interest in Nursing, the program offered 40 hours of clinical experience at the Northern Nevada Medical Center. Those 40 hours reminded me of my drive and why I am doing everything that I am doing. While many things happened during those 40 hours, the one thing that I noticed was the lack of Latina upper positions in medicine. Every Latina I saw was either a nurse or a CNA but I never saw a doctor or a neuroscientist be a Latina. It reminded me of my drive, to knock down stereotypes and be better. To be an inspiration for other young Latina women wanting to go into medicine and paving the way to do so.