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PUTTING WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Essay By Estela Grabiell for Jiffy Lube Scholarship

What drives me? I think the best way to explain my answer to this question is to first describe what drives me crazy. It drives me crazy that there is still a gender pay gap. In 2022, women earned an average of 82% of what men earned. It drives me crazy that girls are more likely than boys to be a victim of abuse. It drives me crazy that teenage girls are bearing the brunt of the post-COVID adolescent mental health crisis and it makes me even crazier that it took a CDC study for everyone to realize it.

My name is Estela and I am driven to improve the lives of women and girls. I am a freshman and I live in a rural community, so speaking of driving, my world is currently pretty limited because I depend on my parents to take me everywhere. I have mainly used opportunities at school and in my town to pursue my passions and interests, and I have created my own opportunities.

For example, I use my participation in my high school's Speech and Debate team as an opportunity to focus on learning about women's issues. I have researched, written, and delivered speeches on mental health, femicide and conflict-related sexual violence. I also volunteer in my town and participate in local events focused on women's rights. This year, I am taking more initiative to create opportunities to make an impact for women. I am currently organizing a supply drive at my school for a local women's shelter in honor of Women's History Month. I plan to volunteer at the shelter this summer. I also recently reached out to my Congressman's office to voice my concerns about the teen mental health crisis and request an opportunity to work with him on it.

Working at the local level is rewarding and necessary, but in the future I would like the opportunity to impact the lives of women and girls at the national level, and even the international level. I plan to pursue an undergraduate degree in Sociology to further understand our society and how to make change in it. I hope to study abroad while I am in college in order to expand my world view and understand how women's issues are treated across cultures. I studied Mandarin from kindergarten through eighth grade, and although I earned all of my high school

foreign language credits during middle school, I elected to learn Spanish in high school because being multilingual is important to my future.

My long-term goal is to earn advanced degrees in both Women's Studies and Law. I want to fight women's rights in order to improve their lives. To do this I have to get not only a lengthy education, but an expensive one, so scholarships like the Jiffy Lube Scholarship are an important part of preparing for my future. I am applying for this scholarship so I can drive change for women and girls. I would be grateful for your support.