

Priya Gadhe
11th Grade
Beaverton Academy of Science and Engineering
Oregon

The 97% drives me. The story of Sarah Everard, following millions of women, who were torn from the choice they deserved is what drives me. This number represents the 97% of women that have been sexually harassed, but more so a number that motivates me to push for a change in our society.

My life revolves around three major cornerstones; learning, service, and community. Two summers ago, I trained to become a licensed advocate for my community's sexual assault resource center. Frustrated with the incessant cases of harassment against women, this training felt like my movement toward change in society. Listening to my coworkers bravely share their experiences in an effort to spread awareness, taught me that breaking down systems of inequity requires changing an entire culture. I learned that the root of this problem begins with education; rather than teaching youth to create a generation of safety, equity, and respect, the overpowering message tells them to look back when walking, to hold their keys between their fingers, and dress modestly. As an advocate, I started a youth blog and began writing articles about news, cases, and protective factors, hoping that my efforts play a role in saving someone's life and giving them a voice.

Simultaneously, I serve as a Student Health Advocate at the Oregon School-Based Health Alliance, testifying for the bill SB 549 in hopes to foster the accessibility of healthcare to students without barriers. I am a strong believer that advocacy can drive unimaginable change in our society and when chosen to represent youth on the Superintendent's advisory board at Beaverton School District, consisting of over 30 schools, I felt empowered to give back to my community, and give our marginalized youth the resources that they need to succeed despite their situation. Expanding my reach on youth advocacy, I am under the Beaverton Mayor's youth board, giving me the voice to impact city-wide youth. Serving my community taught me to challenge dominant approaches in society, encouraging me to use science and leadership as an opportunity to promote societal literacy and equity.

Studying public health makes me admire the power that science has in our society. I hope to be involved in public health studies in the future as a gynecologist; serving as a healthcare advocate, and an educator, committed to utilizing my skills to elucidate the health impact of structural stigma and inequity. The chance of reimagining the future, and creating a reality where women no longer have to carry pepper spray on their keychains, and public bathrooms are no longer as

dangerous is what drives me.

My experiences have solidified my passion to advocate for the unspoken struggles of marginalized communities, and motivate me to tie in my community and scientific goals beyond classroom walls. With this scholarship, I hope to invest in my education, financially allowing me to pursue medicine and public health, and contribute to our changing society and generation. I will greatly appreciate your consideration in helping me pursue my dreams.