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What Drives You?

Every Fourth of July, all of America seems to participate in the magical tradition of fireworks. They are breathtakingly beautiful and entertaining, but they are notoriously loud. While this may seem like a minor inconvenience to some, for my little sister it is a battle to make it through the night without having a panic attack.

Just for some background, my sister is nine. She is incredibly funny, smart, and kind. She also has a superpower: her incredible sense of hearing. Unfortunately, this gift comes with a lot of challenges that most people do not understand. When you watch a firework show, you only hear the sound that it makes in the moment. For my sister, this noise rings in her ears for several minutes after the noise has occurred. When you mix this auditory sensitivity with a loud, explosive night like Independence Day, it does not go well.

The heartbreaking part is, my sister loves fireworks. She *wants* to be able to enjoy them so bad. But even with tools like noise-cancelling headphones, it is still a major challenge for her to participate in watching them. There are certain moments where she is physically unable to be able to participate because she is just so scared. It is heartbreaking for me as her older sister to have to watch her have a difficult time doing what she loves.

I am so grateful to the healthcare professionals and resources that have been able to assist my family in finding coping mechanisms for my little sister's situation. This has inspired and driven me to want to go into occupational therapy, so I can help other superheroes like my sister.

OTPs get the opportunity to form genuine connections with those that they work with, and create safe spaces to help come up with unique, creative, case-sensitive solutions that help their patients. As a potential future occupational therapy practitioner, I am absolutely looking forward to being able to help others. The least I can do is pay it forward and help a family like so many medical professionals have helped mine. An education is the difference between wanting to assist others, and having the ability to assist others. I plan on getting my Bachelor's Degree in Health Sciences, and my Doctorate's Degree in Occupational Therapy at Utah Valley University. While this will require extensive time and effort on my part, I want to be able to assist other people in their emotional and social challenges.

I am passionate about helping these kids on their developmental journeys. People should not be prevented from doing what they love simply because they have physical or mental challenges standing in their way. Becoming an OTP will allow me to fulfill my drive of helping others.