

American Association of University Women Scholarship

At a young age I was diagnosed with scoliosis and I was forced to face a harsh reality -- spinal fusion surgery. Two ten-inch titanium rods and twelve screws later I had to relearn how to walk, run, and even bend down to pick something up. I overcame this challenging setback over the span of a year and since then I realized my purpose in life is to assist people that experience major setbacks on a daily basis. The Outreach Program for Soccer provides that for me. Helping others is more than just volunteering my time. It is my passion. I get the chance to teach children with physical and/or mental disabilities the fundamentals of soccer and the importance of a team. In the program, I find comfort in making someone else's day better; I find comfort in giving someone hope, giving someone a chance to beat the odds. I recognized that every person deserves reassurance when they are challenged. I am the person that gives them that reassurance. In that moment I realized I want to be an Occupational Therapist. I decided I wanted to encourage people that are put at a disadvantage just like I was.

The program influenced me to be challenged and rewarded by the Occupational Therapy profession which is a form of therapy for those recuperating from a disability that encourages rehabilitation through activities required in daily life. I understand the emotional and physical struggles of people so I chose to make a career of it. The Outreach Program for Soccer impacted me to provide an attainable lifestyle for people relearning everyday tasks that most people take for granted. I see a future full of new beginnings not only for myself, but for everyone. I plan to make a future where a disability does not define a person, instead that disability is a minor setback for a major comeback.

My life revolves around helping people on a regular basis. Making a career out of this calling in my life will not only provide support to those in need, but a second chance to relearn basic activities that that person wants to know, is expected to know, or needs to know. I want to be that person that excels in benefiting others. That person that establishes a long lasting bond with their patient. That person that does not make a difference, but is the difference.

~~Paige E. Troublefield~~