

2000 HS Scholarship Winner

Dominique Soeldner

Learning to live each day to the fullest
Initiating change and taking an interest in things
 Fulfillment of dreams and ambitions
 Encouraging everyone around you to do their best

For the past four years I have been plagued with an unusual illness which was finally diagnosed two years ago as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). I was also found to have an Autonomic Dysfunction causing me to pass out at any given time. The inability to be diagnosed caused my family and I a lot of frustration. I went from a student who loved school and participating in many extracurricular activities to someone that sat in bed because of an illness. When I felt good, I tried my hardest to attend school, which was to no avail.

Teachers and students did not see my symptoms and therefore believed my illness was actually psychological. The only things that kept me going were the love from my family and my interests in so many subjects. I have included the above poem, which I titled "LIFE", to show how CFS has helped me and made me who I am today.

Due to my illness, I have learned to appreciate every moment when I feel good and to take advantage of it. I have broadened my horizons. At the moment I don't know what I want to be when I grow up because I'm like Baskin Robins ... thirty one flavors. Depending on the day, I'm interested in Pre-Med., Pre-Law, Engineering, Economics, and Performing Arts. My family's love and support have been my "lifeline" for these dreams; And yes Regis, "That's my final answer." Every day of my life my family and the people I have encountered support me and make me realize that no matter how lousy I may feel at times, dreams can happen. Chronic Fatigue has made me who I am. Whether I become a doctor, lawyer, or singer, I know that CFS has made me stronger, more compassionate towards others, and more passionate about life.

