



Jamie Parmese - HS Scholarship Winner 2010

I have chosen the field of education because I want to be in a profession that helps people. Teaching will help me because I will constantly be exchanging ideas and in this way. I will be learning from my students every day. This profession will help my students by teaching them how to motivate themselves through the attainment of knowledge. They can use it to advance themselves and others in society so that they will be able to make positive changes in the world.

I am anticipating majoring in English. I have always had a life-long passion for reading that has sparked an interest for me in how the mysteries of the human race can be solved through analyzing works of literature. I find these analyses fascinating and I also enjoy academic discussions that involve swapping ideas and conclusions with the participants. By pursuing a degree in English, I will be very marketable and studying an area I am passionate about throughout my years of education.

During my career, I expect to make great contributions to both my students and the profession. For my students, I want to instill a love for learning in them so that they will be always willing to educate themselves and better themselves to their highest potential. I want to make literature available to them so that they can be inspired from legendary characters and moralistic lessons to live their lives to the fullest, while contributing to mankind in a positive way. For the profession, I would like to compile ideas with other teachers on how to motivate the students, how to teach an aspect of English in the most interesting way, and also which pieces of literature I should introduce to my students. My career goal is to contribute efforts towards making my dream of making literature available to all students in all areas a reality. It will open

doors of creativity and inspiration for them, and they will learn how they can use education to benefit themselves and others in their lives-- and that is the true essence of a helping profession.

My chronic fatigue syndrome has drastically influenced my choice in every possible way. Before I fell sick, I still wanted to be a teacher, but I wanted to major in music. When I was first hit with this illness, I had to drop out of all my choirs, drama clubs, piano lessons, etc. After a year or two of attempting to recover, I knew my body would not be able to give the high amounts of time and effort required for school plays as it had in past years. I joined the school choir again, but the director was extremely upset that I was unable to attend performances at night. This was a time when I would become too tired, or fell sick on an afternoon performance due to the lack of strength of my immune system in battling this illness. He reflected his disappointment in my grade for the class, and I did not want my G.P.A. to be pulled down by that. In trying to re-join all of my music activities, my body simply would not comply with what my heart wanted and I started to hate it and not enjoy it anymore - a complete one-eighty compared to the previous passion I devoted to it just a few years ago.

Despite this setback, I realized that I truly do have a passion for English. Also, Rutgers University, the university I plan on transferring to after Raritan Valley Community College, will allow me to take enough music classes that I would be able to teach music, too, without having to stress my body by participating in performing classes. I would be able to do this while still completing a major in English and a minor in education. This illness did make me realize a few things in life, in which I would be remiss in its true impact of me on my life if I did not mention them. This setback was the most significant event in my life since my freshman year of high school, especially enduring four months of not even knowing what it was and being surrounded by people full of doubt who now acknowledge my daily struggles. Although I have made leaps and bounds in my physical progress, what is even more tremendous is the impact it has had in my life that actually turned out positive against all the odds.

Through this illness, I learned patience. I learned that I have to be patient with my body and not force it to do more than it is capable of, which sometimes means utilizing my study hall and lunch to get my homework done then instead of working until midnight to skip crucial hours of sleep that I need. I learned to be patient with other people. Not everyone understands the legitimacy and degree of seriousness of my situation, but I cannot harbor any animosity toward them because they simply do not know what I go through every day. I learned to be patient with others who are sick. Just like me, they might not be able to pile up activities or challenging courses with demanding workloads, because there is only so much that can be done by us.

I learned endurance of the mind. Half the battle is over when one has a solid mental outlook of acceptance. From that point on, it is simply a matter of following through with a performance of determination. I know how to calm myself down if I become anxious while feeling the symptoms. I come up with solutions of how to manage my time and still take care of my body. If I feel depleted during the school day to the point where I might not make it through those seven hours, I encourage myself to keep going so that I can feel that diploma in my hands.

This illness taught me stamina. I physically train my body to increase its stamina from a twenty-minute mile walk to now running five miles in one hour. I learned to use exercise to decrease my stress level and to help me relax every single day with no excuses. I learned to eat healthy foods so that I may continue my progress in staying fit since this illness has slowed my metabolism down. I learned to take care of myself by taking the proper precautions with warm clothing, vitamins, etc., in helping strengthen my immune system, because it was weakened by this syndrome.

I learned courage. Inspired by my school mascot, I try to be a brave North Hunterdon lion by getting myself up at six in the morning even if I only could obtain six hours of sleep. From making progress, I had courage to try an advanced placement class for the first time. I am brave enough to volunteer my time to community service even if I might not feel 100% every day. This courage has also helped me gain confidence in myself to achieve anything I want to achieve. As long as there is a will, there is a way.

Most importantly, I learned empathy. Through the gracious hearts of others who are sympathetic to me, are those friends and family that I have learned to appreciate during high school. They will stand by me in every obstacle I may face in life. Such is their compassion and sympathy for what I go through every day that I now willingly declare that I will fight for them against any injustice and protect them from any harm that may come their way. Through these loved ones, I am now able to apply what they have taught me to use that empathy for helping the rest of the world and anyone else that may cross my path in life.

These lessons may seem humdrum in daily life, but for me, after all that I have been through, looking back, the progress I have made as a person is nothing short of amazing. I have learned so many things that I never thought could be attainable when I was sick, but I defied the odds and succeeded. It is epic. These lessons outside of my classes' textbooks, that I have learned through this sickness in high school, will help me in life - no matter what situation is thrown my way, because nothing took me more by surprise than this illness did in my first year of high school. I learned how to fight back and how to fight for others.

The maturity that has grown in me is much more than what I was planning to expect at the beginning of high school. I feel much more independent, self-reliant, and free of any evil in the world that could thwart who I am. Self-pride has taught me to never be ashamed of who I am and what I experienced, because we are all unique with our own stories that are as varied as we are in this race of humanity. Out of all of the paper qualifications that I have listed in my application, none are as nearly valuable as what I have mentioned above - as Mahatma Gandhi said, "We must be the change we want to see in the world." With these qualities, college can help me jump-start that change and it will happen... now, it is simply just a matter of where I learn to make that first leap into the world.