

Ever since I was a little child, I had a dream of becoming a respiratory therapist and dedicating my talents and knowledge to the community. I have a dream of one day going to college and obtaining a degree. I have an ambition to build an enhanced community and I'm proud to say that I am allergic to failing. Although I was born and raised in Dong Nai, in the poverty-stricken countryside of Vietnam, "I still have a dream" like Martin Luther King, Jr.

After the North Vietnamese Communists took over the South, my parents lost everything. Despite how hard my parents worked from dawn until dusk, the income of the rice field was not enough. Some years, when we had a lean harvest, there was barely enough money to pay for food, let alone pay for school tuition. Nevertheless, my parents still believed that education was the only way to get us out of poverty; hence, they wanted me to be educated and be a productive member of society.

Since my father was a former General of the Vietnamese Republican Army, my family had an opportunity to move to the United States under the Humanitarian Operation. My first few years in America were unbelievably tough; kids used to mock me because of my background. Nonetheless, what makes me unique is the fact that I pushed myself hard with five International Baccalaureate (IB) courses in high school. As of Fall 2012, I obtain an overall 3.81 GPA and I continue to work hard this quarter at Foothill College as a full time 1 units student in the Respiratory Therapy program. Although I am overwhelmed with my classes, I still manage to do work-study in the technical service room in the Foothill College Library.

Being a first generation to be in college, I am grateful to have this opportunity to go college. For me, unlike other students struggle to find their majors when they about to enter colleges, I know exactly what I should do with my life. My volunteering experience at Dr. Trang Do's office has helped me to realize that the health profession, no matter what specialty one chooses to study, always offers the fulfillment to help humanity, and that is what I am seeking.

Seeing how my niece, who was born with a heart outside of her chest and suffered from many breathing problems, I am motivated to go into the respiratory field. As an immature and malformed baby, my niece, Vanessa, had to live in the incubator for two years. Since she is a tracheostomy patient who is a ventilator-dependent child, her daily routine requirement is a breathing treatment every four hours. In addition, she has medical difficulties that prevent her from taking in adequate nutrition by mouth, thus milk must be delivered through a gastrostomy tube. It breaks my heart whenever I have to witness her suffer occasional asthma attacks; thus, my future plan is not only to become a Respiratory Therapist, but someone who can make a difference for those who suffer the same condition as my niece.

Since I am now in the Respiratory Therapy program, there are many financial expenses that I have to pay in order to accomplish my study. Unfortunately since my father is now retired and is unable to adequately support me with my academic fees. The primary income that my family receives is my father's supplemental security (SSI). As an EOPS student, I am keenly in need of this scholarship. I truly believe that this scholarship can enhance my academic achievement.