

June 18, 2020

Dear Women of The World Donor,

First of all I would like to say thank you so much for believing in me! I would have never dreamed of the life I have now if it wasn't for this assistance you provided me. Being able to pursue a career in social services has made me feel complete. Every day I wake up and feel like I am making a change in my community and for future generations. I never in my wildest dreams imagined my life to turn it as it did. My family never had the extra income to assist me after I moved out. One of my biggest goals in life was to find a job I loved and that brought financial stability alongside it that I could provide a better life for my younger siblings and mother.

My name is a Belen Herrera I am 23 years old now, I come from a family of seven. Having been the first of my family to attend college has been a life changing experience. I am privileged to have had the time and financial assistance to further my education. This has provided me the tools and skills to succeed in the world. This experience opened many doors not only for me, but also for my family. I never knew that a year ago I would be where I am today. I'm at stable place to assist my family during these hard times. I used to struggle with working two minimum paying jobs while attending college all at the same time. I was lucky if I got 5 hours of sleep a night. I donated plasma three times a week and felt like I had nothing to lose at that point. Being able to focus on school changed everything for me.

After shortly receiving the scholarship I was able to start a new job I enjoyed. This job was working as a Job Coach. In this job I worked with adults with disabilities to find and maintain jobs in their communities. This was one of the most rewarding jobs I ever had up until this point. This job brought me so much joy to see strangers challenge themselves and achieve their own goals every week. With this job I was able to work towards a certificate from Utah

State as an Employment Specialist. This job also provided me a new set of skills and the full hours of completion. Having this as my first payroll job within the social service field made me question myself and my abilities. However, I had two amazing professors that brought support and challenged me to grow and learn to believe in myself more. It was a series of small things here and there that helped me push myself.

As my college career came closer to an end I was able to move on to a full-time career as a Case Manager. I was able to pass the Utah Case Manager test and enter a new world that is just as great as my previous job. This job has been incredibly rewarding and there is always something new to learn. I'm incredibly grateful for all of the experiences that have led me where I am today. In my current position I am able to get the resources I need to help my own mental health and deal with it in a healthier way as well as I am able to change the lives of others. I never knew that I could achieve so much in my lifetime. With the financial stability my current job brought I was able to give back to my community and put in time to help others. I had the privilege to volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House in my spare time in the summer and fall of 2019. I believe it is so important to build connections with local resources in the community and support each other as much as possible. It is especially clear to see now as we deal with a global pandemic and a recession.

As I continue my journey within the social work field I want to remember to put in the time and teach others who are going through a hard time to remember to never give up their dreams and to keep searching for the light at the end of the tunnel. Growing up in a low income community comes with many barriers. It's often rare, but so important, when you have someone who believes in you and cheers on your success. I want to be the change and support that can have the potential to change someone's life for the better. I always remind myself during hard

times why I chose this career, and what my next goal is and to always strive to help my community more as things get harder.

Once again, thank you so much for all the work that you do for the community and for struggling students. Having financial stability has changed my life in unimaginable ways. I now have a salary job that gives me that financial freedom I never knew I could accomplish. As well as the social work field has helped me learn and grow so much that I feel empowered. I truly feel like I chose the right path to take in my career. I appreciate you so much for the work that you do as well as, for your dedication to the community I feel incredibly grateful and blessed to have had the opportunity to have been able to have been rewarded this incredible opportunity. I feel confident enough to know that I could be making a huge change in the years to come within my field!

Thank you,

Belen Herrera