



Women of the World Essay

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to Women of the World for awarding me this scholarship. Thanks to this opportunity, I have been able to continue my education, become self-sufficient, and pursue additional opportunities that have helped support my education.

Before coming to Utah State University, I had completed my bachelor's degree in Psychology and wanted to pursue a degree in Education. I felt that continuing my schooling with a master's degree was the right choice. The Displaced Women's Education Fund of Utah Scholarship allowed me to pursue this path. During my time at Utah State University, I had the opportunity to be part of multiple different communities and opportunities that allowed me to grow as a student and as an educator. I held a job as a research assistant on a project working with the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation to share and preserve culture through digital and non-digital technologies. I also worked as a teaching assistant at the Dolores Dore Eccles Center for Early Care and Education where I helped create environments for learning and participated in leading lessons in a preschool classroom. These job opportunities were valuable for expanding my knowledge of the field of education and gave me opportunities to practice what I learned within my courses.

Beyond work, the scholarship helped provide me with the financial stability to pursue additional opportunities to build my knowledge and expertise. As a student, I completed a graduate practicum and an independent study that were tailored to my passions within the field. These were opportunities that I sought out myself so that I could pursue my personal passions beyond what was included in my degree requirements. During the graduate practicum, I participated in virtual home visits with families where we observed parents interact with their children and helped give feedback on positive parenting practices. From this work, I also completed research looking at how parents' abilities to consider their children's thinking may be related to teaching behaviors they exhibit. I presented this research at Utah State University's 2021 Student Research Symposium.

For my independent study, I was a preschool intern at Stokes Nature Preschool, where I learned about outdoor early education. I have always been interested in this learning setting and this was

a valuable opportunity for me to gain experience working in a nature preschool environment. During my time there, I participated in lesson planning and in leading lessons. This helped me gain further teaching experience and feel more confident in my ability to work in nature-based setting. I am especially grateful to the scholarship for allowing me this internship opportunity as I had originally hoped to gain a job at Stokes Nature Preschool. However, due to my visa limitations, this was not a possibility. Having this scholarship and knowing that I was able to support myself financially, I made the decision to pursue this as a course of study, knowing that I would not be able to earn money from the internship but still gain valuable knowledge and first-hand experience to allow me to become a better educator.

My self-reliance had led me to seek out these opportunities and the experiences I gained from them both increased my knowledge of education and allowed me to get to know, connect with, and help those in my local community through education. Both my work and curricular opportunities provided me with the chance to get to know the people from my local area. Through this, I feel that I have increased my voice in the community by being an ambassador for education.

Thanks to this scholarship, I was also able to become more financially independent, affording to live in Logan while working on campus. As an international student, there were certain restrictions in place that hindered my ability to support myself. While at Utah State, I was limited to working on campus and was only able to do so for a maximum of 20 hours per week. Having this scholarship allowed me to support myself financially. This significantly helped relieve the financial burden on my family at home where the COVID-19 vaccine roll out has been slower compared to the United States and they are still fluctuating between lockdowns, restrictions, and returning to normalcy. As my parents are self-employed, this situation has negatively impacted their small business. The scholarship made it so that I did not have to rely on them while they worked to care for my grandparents and younger siblings at home.

Since graduating from USU, I have been accepted as a preschool teacher at Bear River Head Start. The Head Start program is known for its support of low-income families in accessing early childhood education. I feel very privileged to be able to work in this position to help families and their children have positive early education experiences. Through working in this program, I hope to be an ambassador for education and to support families, including those who may be displaced, in gaining education for their children. The Displaced Women's Education Fund of Utah Scholarship helped me successfully pursue my master's degree in education. Furthermore, throughout my time as a student, the scholarship allowed me to expand my understanding by seeking out additional experiences such as the graduate practicum and independent study. All these opportunities in tandem allowed me to grow significantly as an educator. Going into my

interview and starting my job at Bear River Head Start, I felt more confident in the knowledge that I had and my ability to perform well.

All in all, this scholarship award has given me a great experience as a master's student and has given me the ability to pursue unique opportunities to build my teaching practice. It has supported me in continuing my educational journey and pursuing my passions in early childhood education. Furthermore, it has relieved the financial burdens placed on both me and my family. I hope that my teaching experience at Bear River Head Start will allow me to pay this grant forward by supporting local families and their ability to access education.