

College Personal Statement

It was the day I saw my sister, Miranda, in her ICU room at Hasbro Children's Hospital that I broke down at the sight of the monitors surrounding her. Previously covered in the most beautiful head of black curls I had ever seen, her head was now shaved. The nurses had cleaned her up the best they could to display her as the 15-year-old "girl" she had been two months and fourteen surgeries earlier. This was good-bye, and that face has been imprinted in my memory forever. I was nine years old.

Amazingly, Miranda defied the odds and awoke from her coma, which is a medical miracle due to the brain damage she suffered. The first time she spoke to my parents after waking up, Miranda thought she was in the third grade and did not remember that our parents were divorced. However, she did remember my name and the name of our sister, Anna, who is autistic. Julia spoke to Samantha as if she was never gone, but I was very unsure about Miranda's future.

When Miranda learned how to speak and eat again, I was elated. With determination, patience, and the highest quality of rehabilitation care at Mass General in Boston, Miranda learned how to do everything again, graduated from high school and became a Medical Assistant, helping others like those who had helped her recover. During this period of time, I worked with Anna by involving her in activities that encouraged her to come out of her private world and interact with others. Anna graduated from high school after playing two unified sports for all four years and is now at Roger Williams University.

For the past seven years, I have adopted the qualities of being inclusive and the drive to understand the perspectives and backgrounds of others. I attended every one of Julia's unified games over the past four years, and the relationship I formed with the coach enabled me to implement my own Youth Activation Committee at my high school and become involved at the state level. I travel to the Special Olympics state office usually once a month to meet with other co-chairs and discuss upcoming events that would aid in unifying the community. This position has given me the chance to assist in creating a positive and inclusive environment for the participants and their families, as well as positively change many of my peer's opinions of those with mental and physical disabilities. Watching my sisters struggle has made me want to create a world in which I would be grateful to see them live in.

Being on Youth Activation Committee, I have been given many volunteer opportunities. This past February, I traveled to Costa Rica, allowing me the privilege of meeting the most grateful kids I have ever encountered, who accepted the simple supplies I had collected back home, that are often taken for granted. I spent four days with the "Ticos", used my Polaroid to give them their first picture of themselves, and joked around in Spanish. My personal experiences have instilled the desire to experience other cultures and meet other extraordinary people like the many I know today. They are the kind of people who constantly give me hope.

Because of my experiences, I know that I can stand up for what I believe in, put myself in anybody's shoes with empathy, and take whatever life throws at me. Over the course of my seventeen years, I have been able to be myself, support my family members, and remain positive in everything I do. The people in my life have taught me to believe in the power of the human spirit. My positive perspective, resilience and courage are the essential qualities that I will bring to the college environment, and I greatly look forward to the opportunity to share my experiences with the people within it.

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