

I was only five years old when my family and I moved to Ames. My parents made the tough decision of abandoning everything they had ever known to give their children the opportunity of a better life and education. After our abrupt move, I was quickly enrolled into kindergarten to prevent me from falling behind. Although my class consisted of children around my age, I still fell behind because I did not know how to speak or read in English. I was not meeting the assessment benchmarks my peers had achieved, and my lack of participation caused me to become isolated. As I struggled to catch up, I was met with the hurdles of learning basic words, phrases, and skills that most of my peers had already developed. I was very reserved and timid for most of that year since I struggled to communicate well with others. Nonetheless, I continued to go to school everyday, determined to learn and make friends.

I did not make any great gains until I took my learning into my own hands. Since my parents could not afford a tutor to teach me outside of school, they would buy me a few learning work books from the store and anything that held any educational value at garage sales. While my peers had access to remedial lessons in music, private tutors, or summer enrichment programs, I had to work with what I had to invest in my own learning. Determined to make do with all the resources given to me from both in and outside of school, I read and practiced on my own as much as I could. No longer would I fear writing, reading, and speaking in English.

Instead, it became something I desired to learn more of as well as something I loved to do in my spare time as I continued through elementary school.

My early life experiences and hardships have given me the drive and motivation to strive for improvement, and to go beyond my limits. I hold these values dear to my heart as they have given me the strength and will to try out new things and accept opportunities given to me. These challenges taught me how to cope and solve different problems I faced throughout my life with the few resources I was given. Although I have missed some opportunities due to financial hardships, I try my best to accept most of the obtainable opportunities that arise, such as this scholarship.