

Scholarship Essay

Being nominated for this scholarship is an incredible privilege, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity. Growing up in a community that has a bias against educating women, pursuing a higher education like a master's degree was an ambitious goal that only a privileged few women in my community could achieve. Nevertheless, I feel extremely fortunate that with a little bit more effort, my aspiration will soon turn into an impressive reality.

I come from a very small city in India where women have traditionally been held back to pursue opportunities in fields such as architecture, education, and technology. Despite the city's proximity to the capital, it has lagged behind in its outlook and mindset toward gender equality. As a result, access to opportunities for women has been restricted, which has hindered our advancement and personal growth. I am sure this is not just my story but also the story of countless other females all around the world.

With San Jose State providing education to such a diverse set of students, I am sure my other female classmates have faced and continue to fight similar battles. This has allowed us to have strength and be resilient but has also instilled feelings of underconfidence and imposter syndrome regarding our achievements, as we strive to break through the glass ceiling that has been imposed on us. Being one of the very few female students in any of my CS classes has made for an incredibly isolating experience. While it is not something I am entirely comfortable admitting, I must acknowledge that the challenges I have faced due to my struggles with mental health and the feeling of isolation has made the journey even more difficult. As an international student away from my family and a support system, it is vital to form a strong community of people who are there to help you in times of need. It is the little things that keep one going. The female role models you relate to and see yourself in, the reassuring smiles of your classmates who understand and share your struggles, the uplifting messages and guidance from your professors and so many other sources of support are an

immeasurable source of motivation. I can vividly recall so many people who have been an incredible rock to me throughout my journey.

My father has been my biggest source of support and inspiration. Despite being raised by a single mother who was not always present, he overcame the odds and built a successful business with no external support. Our family's beginnings were humble, and we faced numerous challenges as my father worked tirelessly to build his business. However, throughout it all, he prioritized our education and never hesitated to invest his hard-earned savings in ensuring me and my sister received the best education possible. His sacrifices have motivated me to work hard and pursue opportunities that were not available to him growing up.

I have been fortunate enough to have Dr. Wendy Lee as my mentor throughout my college journey. When I was a clueless freshman in Dr. Lee's Introduction to Python class, she provided me with invaluable guidance and inspiration that has played a significant role in my success. As a graduate instructor now, I am committed to emulating Dr. Lee's warmth and support for my own students. I hope to guide and assist them both academically and emotionally, particularly those who may be in a similar situation to where I was a few years ago.

Receiving the \$5000 scholarship would be a significant financial relief for me and I am extremely grateful to Broadcom Inc. for this opportunity. As a student, managing finances can be quite challenging, and the scholarship would help me pay for my tuition expenses. It would allow me to assist my parents financially by unburdening them with the added responsibility of paying for my education. In addition to using the scholarship to pay for my tuition and alleviate financial pressure on my parents, I also plan to prioritize my mental health and personal growth by allocating a portion of the funds towards professional support for my well-being and the rest for additional academic opportunities. I am extremely grateful and appreciative of all of the professors and mentors who motivated me to apply and cheered for me throughout the process.

