

I was born in Los Angeles and spent the better part of my infant years wandering around the apartment complex, picking snails off of the sidewalk and setting them safely in bushes.

Soon I moved to San Diego and started elementary school, where I quickly learned that reading was fun, that my birthmark kept me out of the cool kids, and that I was no good at any sport involving a round object flying at my face. Instead, my parents signed me up for figure skating lessons. I blossomed there, learning to zoom around the ice and gaining confidence. Once I joined the rink's synchronized skating team, I began committing to several early-morning practices a week and traveling to regional- and national-level competitions in the past 10 years. Around the same time as when I began skating, I started art classes. Drawing relaxes me, training me to be more creative and appreciating the flaws in the world around me.

Even though I began to enjoy science as a school subject in middle school, biology wasn't even on my radar as a field I might enter for a career until around my sophomore year in high school. That summer, my close friend was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis - a rather uncommon inherited disease that affects the lungs and other organs - and the abstract character of the rare diseases I'd heard about suddenly became real and close.

This past summer, I did an intern project at a local pharmaceutical company. My task was to evaluate the effects of pharmaceutical treatments on the differentiation of human bronchial epithelial cells, a cell model for cystic fibrosis. At the end of the summer, I gave a presentation of my findings to the company's pulmonary drug discovery group. This valuable real world experience further affirmed my decision to pursue a biomedical related career. I plan to conduct research contributing to the development of new medicines in college and beyond.

In college, I plan to major in the biological sciences, although I am of course open to exploring other scientific disciplines. I want to further my education because the research and learning opportunities available to me at a university will give me the skills and knowledge to then enter the pharmaceutical industry. To fund the many costs involved with such an education, I plan on applying for many scholarships such as this one and participating in work-study programs throughout my time in college. Furthermore, I already have a job coaching at Icetown Carlsbad and am setting aside most of my earnings for college costs.