

Dr. Becky J. Smith Scholarship Essay

As a first-generation college student in my family, receiving this scholarship would heavily benefit my college education. I am a proud Haitian American, and both my parents are Haitian natives. Both my parents came to the United States when they were young for opportunities that were not available in their country and to work hard to provide a better life for their future children. I come from a low-socioeconomic background, and my family cannot financially support me through college. Therefore, receiving a scholarship would enable me to focus on my education and stress less about paying student loans or putting unneeded financial pressure on my parents.

Growing up, my family struggled financially. My parents worked hard to provide for us, but we often struggled to make ends meet. As a result, I had to take on part-time jobs while in high school to help contribute to the household income. Despite these challenges, I was still able to maintain good grades and was accepted into a prestigious university. My parents have always emphasized the importance of a good education and instilled their values in us about working hard in school and how far it can take you. I would not be the student I am without the structure and guidance my parents gave me. Because of them, I am a determined and driven person. As I grew older and began thinking about my future, I knew I wanted to go to college to further my education and career prospects. However, I also knew that paying for college would be challenging for my family. We simply do not have the resources to pay for my education out of pocket, and I have had to rely on loans and scholarships to cover my tuition and other expenses.

This scholarship will impact me tremendously and help me not be under such a heavy financial burden. It is extremely difficult to work full-time to pay for school and be a full-time student. I want to achieve a lot in my career, and receiving a scholarship will allow me to focus and increase my knowledge instead of worrying about how I will pay for the semester or overwhelming myself by juggling work and school. Obtaining this scholarship would alleviate some of the financial burdens that I am facing. It would allow me to focus on my studies without the added stress of worrying about how to pay for my education. I am determined to succeed and am willing to put in the hard work and dedication needed to excel in my studies.

I always knew that I wanted to be in the medical field and help people. I chose public health as my major because I believe that the best way to help someone is to educate them, and this major allows me to utilize the knowledge that I learned from classes like global sexuality,

human diseases, or environmental health to inform the patients that I meet in my nursing career. When individuals are educated and empowered, they have the courage to speak up. They are more likely to adapt to their environment's circumstances and create a positive behavior change that benefits their health. Education and self-efficacy are crucial factors in achieving health equity for underrepresented populations like African American mothers because it influences the achievement of good health and the health locus of control for these individuals. When I become a nurse, I want to do what I can to ensure that mothers are given a voice and access to the services they need while also doing my best to reduce or eliminate barriers that African Americans face.

In addition to my academic achievements, I have also been involved in various extracurricular activities and volunteer work. I have participated in several community service projects and helped organize events to educate the public. I have volunteered with Groundwork Jacksonville this summer with UF Health Jacksonville to pick up trash along Hogan Creek and help meet the public health need of providing a safe public space for the surrounding neighborhood by creating a harmless and clean environment for kids to play and for individuals to walk their dogs or do fitness. We cleaned up the park and tried beautifying Historic Springfield Park and Hogan Creek. I also volunteered with UF Health Jacksonville to give out school supplies at their Back to School Wellness Event and their Hunger Fight events to give out food to those in need. In addition, I volunteered with the Prevention Coalition of St. John's County throughout the summer of 2022 and helped with events such as the DEA National Take Back Day. I believe that this demonstrates my commitment to making a positive impact in my community.

I understand that many other deserving applicants are also seeking this scholarship. Still, I hope my financial need and dedication to making a positive difference will make me a strong candidate. I believe that I deserve this scholarship not only because of my financial need, but also because of my dedication and determination to succeed. I have always been driven to achieve my goals, and with this scholarship, I will be able to focus on my studies and graduate from college without the burden of overwhelming debt. Thank you for considering my application.