

What have you learned or observed in the past year that has impacted your desire to attend college and why you should be selected for this scholarship? (250-750 words)

This past year, I've seen my father hop from job to job, while being unemployed for weeks at a time. My family mainly depends on his salary, since my mother's is significantly smaller. My parents have always tried to hide their struggle from me and my sister, but it has never been hard to notice. I've always wanted to pursue higher education, and this past year has only reinforced the importance of a stable and high-paying job. I even picked up a job last summer to save up money for college. My dad is an immigrant from Iran, and my mom is an immigrant from the Philippines, meaning that I am a first generation American. With this, I've heard many tales of their hardships from being new to the United States, especially since we have no other family here. They always tell me how lucky I am to have access to much better opportunities than they did, and I have always intended to make them proud. I especially remember my dad telling me how negatively biased his classmates and teachers were against him after the 9/11 attacks, and how he was robbed of many opportunities, even if he was more qualified than white counterparts. Hearing that made me even more determined to be successful and fight for who I am. I've always been interested in science and healthcare, and I was selected to participate in two amazing programs last summer, one of them being the 6-week UMKC STAHR Program. The program exposes students to training in academia, health, and research. During those six weeks online, I gained insight on numerous careers, areas, and issues, within the medical field. One of the many things we were taught was the health disparities in the Kansas City region, specifically those that fell under social and economic inequities. Learning about how factors such as limited education, environmental toxins, and even what zip code you live in affects the quality of care someone receives really impacted me. Fighting healthcare disparities is just one of the reasons why I am eager to attend UMKC's 6-year BA/MD program and work in healthcare as a family medicine physician. I also have a desire to serve my community and improve it with each coming generation. I have many service hours because volunteering is one of my favorite hobbies, along with crocheting, listening to music, and spending time with others. I also take part in many school-related leadership roles such as being the secretary of my school's medical club, and being a Link Crew leader to mentor kids that are new to my school. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, I currently do not have any direct health and research experience, but I do have a research apprenticeship at KU lined up in March. I have been preparing myself for a career in medicine ever since I started high school, by participating in extracurricular activities such as KCK Saturday Academy and being a long-term member of the medical club. I also take full advantage of any health-related programs I can apply for. I like to challenge myself with several rigorous dual enrollment and IB courses to ensure that I am prepared for the classes taught in college, and I also manage my time well in order to earn the principal's honor roll every semester. Since I plan on attending at least six years of post-secondary education, receiving this scholarship would provide life-changing relief for my whole family. It would take plenty of mental and financial stress off me and my family's shoulders, at least for five years. Since my dad is 65 and doesn't plan to retire anytime soon, I know that getting this scholarship would allow him to relax more and maybe even retire earlier than what he currently has planned. This would also mean that my mom wouldn't have to work

overtime so often, and that my sister can have more money saved for her when she goes to college in a few years. Personally, I know that this scholarship would allow me to devote myself to my studies and involvements, getting me one step closer to achieving my dream.

KC Scholars has both an education and a workforce goal. We are aiming for 80% of our college graduates to stay in Kansas City to live, work, and contribute. After college, how do you plan to contribute to your community and/or the broader Kansas City Region?

I love this community and I love to serve others because it aligns with my strengths and values. I am so proud to live in such a diverse city, but I know how disadvantaged a lot of the people here are. As an aspiring family medicine physician, I am eager to provide resources to those who may not be able to access visits to the doctor. I, myself, have gone years without visiting the doctor solely because my parents could not afford insurance. With all the illnesses we have faced, I know firsthand how important regular check-ups are, and how important they are when it comes to preventative care. To elaborate, I believe that if my dad had been able to regularly receive wellness checkups, he would not have battled stage 3 stomach cancer. I do not want any other family to go through the same pain my family went through, which is why I strive to provide care and resources before things get too bad. Unfortunately, medical racism is still present in today's society. I would like to help fight it and make people feel safe and confident about going to seek treatment. I would like to advocate for my patients and continue to educate myself about the many different groups of people we have in the Kansas City region. Another thing I really want to do is inspire the next generation that want to work in healthcare. Being a middle-class Asian woman, I know exactly what it's like to feel like the odds are stacked against you and feel hopeless at times. I really would like to bring my leadership skills to light and mentor anyone who is interested or in need to know that they are not alone