**SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY EXAMPLE #1**

Prompt: Open topic

*Fedora? Check. Apron? Check. Tires pumped? Check. Biking the thirty-five minutes each evening to the cafe and back to work a six-hour shift was exhausting, but my family’s encouragement and gratitude for the extra income was worth it.*

*A few years earlier, my family of nine had been evicted from the home we had been living in for the past ten years. With nowhere else to go, we moved into our church’s back room for three months, where I shamefully tried to hide our toothbrushes and extra shoes from other church members. Right then I made a commitment to my family to contribute financially in whatever way I could. My sacrifice translated to a closer bond with my siblings and deeper conversations with my parents, helping me understand the true meaning of a unified family and the valuable part I play in that.*

*With the financial stability that my part-time jobs provided my mother could stay home to raise seven children, my learning-disabled older sister could attend college, my younger sister could go on a mission trip to Korea, and my twin siblings could compete in national math competitions. I’ve seen that even as a high school student, I have so much potential to impact my family and beyond -- how one small act can go a long way.*

*Through the successes of my efforts, I also realized that poverty was just a societal limitation. I was low-income, not poor. I was still flourishing in school, leading faith-based activities and taking an active role in community service. My low-income status was not a barrier but a launching pad to motivate and propel my success.*

*To additionally earn more money as a young teen, I began flipping bicycles for profit on craigslist. Small adjustments in the brake and gears, plus a wash, could be the difference between a $50 piece of trash and a $200 steal. Seeing how a single inch could disarrange the lining of gears not only taught me the importance of detail but also sparked my fascination with fixing things.*

*When I was sixteen I moved on to a larger project: my clunker of a car. I had purchased my 2002 Elantra with my own savings, but it was long past its prime. With some instruction from a mechanic, I began to learn the components of an engine motor and the engineering behind it. I repaired my brake light, replaced my battery, and made adjustments to the power-steering hose. Engineering was no longer just a nerdy pursuit of robotics kids; it was a medium to a solution. It could be a way to a career, doing the things I love. I was inspired to learn more.*

*Last summer, to continue exploring my interest in engineering, I interned at Boeing. Although I spent long hours researching and working in the lab for the inertial navigation of submarines, I learned most from the little things.*

*From the way my mentors and I began working two hours earlier than required to meet deadlines, I learned that engineering is the commitment of long hours. From the respect and humility embodied within our team, I learned the value of unity at the workplace. Like my own family at home, our unity and communal commitment to working led to excellent results for everyone and a closer connection within the group.*

*What most intrigues me about engineering is not just the math or the technology, but the practical application. It is through engineering that I can fix up my car... and facilitate submarine navigation. Engineering, in fact, is a lifestyle --  instead of lingering over hardships, I work to solve them and learn from them. Whether the challenge is naval defense or family finances or even just a flat tire on my bike before another night shift, I will be solving these problems and will always be looking to keep rolling on.*

*Success is triumphing over hardships -- willing yourself over anything and everything to achieve the best for yourself and your family. With this scholarship, I will use it to continue focusing on my studies in math and engineering, instead of worrying about making money and sending more back home. It will be an investment into myself for my family.*