**SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY EXAMPLE #11**

**National Association of University Women Scholarship Essay Examples by Isabella Mendez-Figueroa**

Prompt: Please explain how your experience volunteering and participating in community service has shaped your perspective on humanity. Elaborate on how these experiences have influenced your future ambitions and career choice.

*I didn’t really understand my community until I was forced to see it from the outside; sort of like when you see a picture of yourself someone else took that you weren’t aware of. It took a 3,000 mile flight for me to gain a different perspective of the world, of my world. When I landed in Maine it was nothing like the place I called home. There was no traffic, there were lots of trees, and absolutely no spanish to be heard anywhere. I missed my people, my home, and my community the most as I saw the ways in which other communities fostered creativity, advocacy, and community involvement.*

*I talked about my community every chance I got, writing a public backlash to Donald Trump and reading out to the group of parents to show them my unique struggle. The election of Donald Trump has forced me to come to terms with the harsh realities of this world. The lack of respect he has for women, minority groups, and factual evidence are alarming. This presidency makes me want to prove wrong all of his perceptions of people like me, the poor, the immigrant, the woman. I left people in awe, leaving me empowered. I had people come up to me and explain that they can relate to my poem about not fitting in, being Mexican American and not feeling like you can consider yourself American or Mexican because you’re both. I emphasized that I, like many others, am in between and we have the same platform that anyone else does to succeed. I explained that many of us, hold this pressure of first generation children of immigrants to prove that we are the proof that our parents sacrifices of restarting in a new country was worth it. I was the visible representation of a first generation child of immigrants, branching out into a new environment despite where I had come from and shocking everyone with my prosperity.*

*If I was the only visible representation available, I was going to use my voice to echo the feelings of my entire community and make it known that we are all here-- all of our struggles, our efforts, and our passions, are not absent from places where we are not seen.*

*Maine helped me branch out in my own community now as a Student Ambassador. From this experience, I’ve learned that I can represent my high school and have the responsibility to assist staff at events for prospective students and organize presentations for parents. I spend a lot of time interpreting for parents at meetings and explaining the current events that are ongoing and new educational opportunities that students should take advantage of. I have had the privilege to work alongside office staff and the Principal, where I get to positively dedicate my time to parents who have general questions regarding the schools upcoming events. By dedicating my time as a Student Ambassador, I have allowed myself to excel at communicating with others and improving my customer service skills. I want my education to change the negative stigmas surrounding my community, by showing that it's possible to expand your access to the world and allow you to leave, by choice, through receiving a post-secondary education. I am someone who has grown up in an area with limited resources fostering limited mindsets. My neighborhood has 4 elementary schools, 2 high schools, and a strip club feet away from a library. What message does that send to children? It's normal in my community to have pregnant classmates in high school. People aren't aware of the world outside, they aren't encouraged to ever leave.*

*Through my experience as a volunteer that communicates a lot with parents, I have learned that the American Dream does not simply belong to first generation students like myself. I have found that our accomplishments are stacked upon the sacrifices of our parents. I used to think that growing up was like the passing of a baton where you’re the next runner and it’s your turn to run your best race, but I now see that this is a team effort, as you expand your horizons your family also gets to experience the benefits. I want to demonstrate to my community that there can be a female, bilingual, Latina doctor. I want to showcase that one's zip code, doesn't determines one's success. One of the most common questions I get at these parent meetings is “what’s better college or university”? This question didn’t make sense to me at first then I realized that parents wanted to know the difference between community college and a four year. Concepts like financial aid, grants, loans, are all foreign concepts as most of our parents never went to college. They want to be able to help but do not know where to begin. As a student ambassador I helped bridge that gap. We often held meetings where we explained to parents within our community what resources were out there and available and what the difference were among the different options for each student. Being the student face for Animo, I’ve learned that I as a student and daughter, can provide assistance to my own community through the knowledge that I have gained. I am the communication that is needed in my community that’s necessary for further successes by using my personal knowledge and experience to help uplift and educate others in similar situations.*