

Growing up, I dreamt of working in a profession where I could help people. I studied very diligently in high school to make it into college and was elated upon gaining admission. But I wasn't certain about the right career path until one night while working in the ER at a local hospital. A young girl came in for an examination after a horrific bout of abuse, and beside the patient was her social worker. The social worker was making sure everything possible was done to get this girl to safety while simultaneously encouraging this girl to believe in her own personal strength and take charge of her future. Chills ran up my arms because at that moment my past experience in foster care flooded over me and it became clear to me that I, too, could be a voice and support system for youth in the foster care system. Just as my social worker had been there for me and the social worker I saw in the ER that night was there for the young girl under her care, I could be an advocate and a care-taker.

Once this dream revealed itself, I began to make changes in my life, re-orienting my major course of study and drastically improving my grades. My personal flame of inspiration was ignited.

Since completing my BS in Human Development at UC Davis, I have been working in the social services field in a group home providing services to youth aging out of the foster care system. It is a challenging job but satisfying because it is in my chosen field of work. Yet simply being the care-taker of these young adults is not enough. I want to learn how to do more for these particular youth and also gain additional skills to be of service to future former foster youth. My goal is to be a walking model for these children. I want them to know that they can have so much more out of life and if I can go from a life of neglect and abuse to a life of success they can too. These children need an advocate, a support system, a friend, and most importantly, someone who cares about them and their wellbeing. My graduate school goal is to complete my MSW and be a person that provides hope and motivation to foster children and former foster youth.