Samantha Stutzman

July 10th, 2019

**DEVELOP(her) Prompt**

*"In at least 500 words, please tell us about your background and how you believe receiving this scholarship will have an impact on your life and career."*

**DEVELOP(her) Essay**

Often life has a way of directing you in a way you didn’t expect to go. You could be headed down one path but you are then pushed in another direction and forced to take new opportunities or create them on your own. Either way you have to ask yourself if you are where you are supposed to be and where you *want* to be. I know that I belong in the predominately male-dominated web development field and this is my opportunity to succeed in leading a fulfilling life. Now I just have to make it happen.   
  
I have constantly been tenaciously determined, not letting any obstacle stand in my way. I grew up in a small, rural town as a part of a not-so-wealthy family. We always managed to have food on the table and clothes on our backs but I have always been determined to make a life for myself that was better and less financially stressful. When it came time to graduate high school and go to college, I knew that I had to do it on my own and that I would not be able to get financial assistance from my parents like so many of my friends were able to do. But that would not stop me from going to college. I just had to create my own opportunity. I did my research and worked my butt off applying to scholarship after scholarship, I saved up what money I could with my part-time job before college. With all of my scholarships I received and the little money I had saved, I was fortunate to be able to move to the city of Grand Rapids and to not have to provide tuition costs for my 4-year degree. I did not have to work through college; I was able to focus on college and make that my full-time job which largely led to my success and graduating with honors and as the Excellence Award Recipient of my department.   
  
My background and degree have served me well but have not provided stable work without a fight. I find that I am often pushing myself to do more to get by and to be able to provide for myself. While I love what I do, I do need stability. I need a career that will allow me to grow and constantly be challenged. This means that the DEVELOP(her) scholarship will mean a world of difference. In my current world, I am fighting tooth and nail to sustain myself and make it month to month. This means that making enough to cover tuition or even the payments on a loan is something that could not be financially feasible. In a world where I am honored enough to receive a DEVELOP(her) scholarship, I will be more likely to afford the opportunity I so desperately seek. It means the chance at a more stable life and a life where I am able to acquire a full-time 9 to 5 job with my newly acquired skills after the bootcamp. My quality of life, and even my general outlook, will likely change. I might even be able to start putting down more roots and enjoy life by giving back to the community instead of feeling like I am just fighting to make it through.

Just like in college, I plan to continue being a strong, independent woman who can rise to the top of the class. I recently took the two day front-end workshop offered through Grand Circus, and it wasn’t until then that I realized how truly accurate it is to say that coding and web development is primarily a male-dominated field. I was the only woman out of five students. I strive to be at the forefront of this field. I am not afraid of or intimidated by being in a male-dominated field. If awarded the DEVELOP(her) scholarship, it will be my duty to carry that honor with pride and make myself a worthy recipient as I work through the challenges of the bootcamp as well as in the field of web development.

I sincerely thank you for taking the time to consider me for this scholarship honor. I am determined to make this opportunity my reality.   
  
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