**Rice is lauded for creating a collaborative atmosphere that enhances the quality of life for all members of our campus community. The Residential College System is heavily influenced by the unique life experiences and cultural traditions each student brings. What personal perspectives would you contribute to life at Rice?**

* <http://www.toddlertime.com/mh/terms/empathy-nguyen.htm>
* D

# Rev. 1

Everything starts with Juan, my chemistry teacher. who invited me to an after-class science club. I wasn’t very interested in science at the time but he insisted and convinced me to give it a try.

He was different from my other teachers. Not only did he make sure that we understood every topic thoroughly but he was also concerned for us on a personal level. I grew very close to him and continued attending the club, becoming more and more interested in science.

We had to train a lot, since it was the first time I was learning physics and chemistry, but I finally won the national competition. This meant, however, that my situation was going to change. I was no longer representing myself, but my country, and I was going to do it together with a team of kids I knew nothing about. Moreover, we trained in another city, with exclusive trainers, so I wasn’t able to spend time with Juan. The months that followed were tough and we were under a lot of pressure. But it was this pressure, that allowed us to come together as a true team, supporting each other, and helping each other learn and grow. It was the first time I was actually proud of being part of a team, and I learned the real value of teamwork. They allowed me to open up and become more social.

Working together, after months of dedication we won four bronze medals and a silver one. The first thing I wanted to do after the awards ceremony was to come back and tell Juan the news, to thank him for the faith he put on me, a kid who knew nothing about science.

It was summer vacation when I came back, so I had to wait until classes started to be able to find him at school, so I waited patiently. A few weeks before the break ended, though, I got the devastating news that he had died of a heart attack. I couldn’t believe it at first, I didn’t want to believe it. I was never going to be able to talk to him again, to thank him for the mark he had had on my life. I was wrecked.

A few weeks later, the principal called me to see the plaque they had put up in his honour. I started to cry as soon as I saw it. Tha piece of metal didn’t “honour” him. He had put countless hours to make the life of many students at my school better, that plaque wasn’t enough, so I decided to do something about it.

In his honour, I put my efforts towards restarting the science club, giving other students the same opportunity I had. Juan wasn’t there anymore, so I had to step up and start teaching physics. All this was extremely hard and painful for me, but after the first year, I realized I had developing a passion for passing on the knowledge I acquire. By the end of the year I found a professor who would teach the students science, so I moved on to teaching basic algorithms to kids interested in the informatics olympiads.

# Rev. 2 - 554 words

Five years ago I was diagnosed with scoliosis. The day the doctor told me I started crying. I knew it meant I was going to have to use a plastic vest all around my torso.

The vest could be noticed even if it was under a shirt, so people pointed it out, and asked what it was. It made me feel different. I was limited in a number of ways by it. If it was sunny, I couldn’t go play outside because the heat would be unbearable. I couldn’t do anything that may cause me to fall because hitting the ground with the vest on would hurt me significantly. Running, playing sports and riding a bike were completely out of the question. I wasn’t able to play with my friends. Moreover, every time I went through airport security I got pulled pulled apart and was asked to give explanations for the vest.

In the beginning, I didn’t take it well at all. The thought of having a piece of plastic around my body pressing my chest made me feel out of air. I would start hyperventilating at random times throughout the day. After a while, these events started occurring less and less often, as I learned to live with it. To be able to cope, I took it off for one hour a day and enjoy the resulting freedom.

After coming to terms with the vest, time passed quickly, and a year ago, due to my spine having stopped growing, I was able to take it off permanently. It felt weird at first. After years of having used the vest not having something pressing my chest felt liberating. I started enjoying again all the activities I had lost touch with, but after a while, I started experiencing powerful back pain.

I found out from the doctor that it was caused by the lack of muscle supporting my back, so I decided to join a gym for the first time ever. It’s been a whole year, and I’ve never stopped attending. I developed a love for it allows me to put conscientious effort towards fighting a condition I’ll never be able to get rid of.

A few months ago I was offered the possibility of surgery, of having a titanium rod attached with bolts to each side of my spine to straighten it. It would alleviate my back pain, but it also has its negative aspect. One wrong move, and I could end up paralyzed from the head down. Even if the surgery goes as planned, I wouldn’t be able to exercise or perform any other big movement for a year, and I would lose flexibility for life. I’ve thought about it long and hard, and I believe it’s worth the sacrifice. I will allow me to go through my life without fear of damaging my spine. I'm proud to say I will undergo surgery this February.

Overall, this experience has allowed me to grow personally, to teach me that even when you seem in the worst possible situation, with concentrated efforts one can reach a better state. This experience has also turned me much more sensitive and open minded. I used to have trouble understanding other people and their problems. Having had to use the vest has helped me understand those with a disability. NOTA

# Rev. 3 - 495 words

Five years ago I was diagnosed with scoliosis. The day the doctor told me I started crying. I knew it meant I was going to have to use a plastic vest all around my torso.

The vest could be noticed even if it was under a shirt, so people pointed it out, and asked what it was. It made me feel different. I was limited in a number of ways by it. If it was sunny, I couldn’t go play outside because the heat would be unbearable. I couldn’t do any activity like running, playing sports and riding a bike because the vest didn’t allow me to hit the ground without getting significantly. I wasn’t able to play with my friends.

In the beginning, I didn’t take it well at all. The thought of having a piece of plastic around my body pressing my chest made me feel out of air. I would start hyperventilating at random times throughout the day. After a while, these events started occurring less and less often, as I learned to live with it. To be able to cope, I took it off for one hour a day and enjoy the resulting freedom.

After coming to terms with the vest, time passed quickly, and a year ago, I was able to take it off permanently. It felt weird at first. After years of having used the vest not having something pressing my chest felt liberating. I started enjoying again all the activities I had lost touch with, but after a while, I started experiencing back pain.

I found out from the doctor that it was caused by the lack of muscle supporting my back, so I decided to join a gym for the first time ever. It’s been a whole year, and I’ve never stopped attending. I developed a love for it allows me to put conscientious effort towards fighting a condition I’ll never be able to get rid of.

A few months ago I was offered the possibility of surgery, of having a titanium rod attached with bolts to each side of my spine to straighten it. It would alleviate my back pain, but it also has its negative aspect. I won’t be able to exercise or perform any other big movement for a year, and I will lose flexibility for life. I’ve thought about it long and hard, and I believe it’s worth the sacrifice. I will allow me to go through my life without fear of damaging my spine. I'm proud to say I will undergo surgery this February.

Overall, this experience has allowed me to grow personally, to teach me that even when you seem in the worst possible situation, with concentrated efforts one can reach a better state. This experience has also turned me much more sensitive and open minded. I used to have trouble understanding other people and their problems. Having had to use the vest has helped me understand those with a disability.

# Rev. 4 - Recortes T

Five years ago I was diagnosed with scoliosis. When the doctor told me, I started crying. I knew it meant I was going to have to wear a plastic vest around my torso all the time.

The vest was noticeable even under a shirt, so people pointed it out, and asked what it was. It made me feel different. I was limited in a number of ways by it. If it was sunny, I couldn’t go play outside because the heat would be unbearable. I couldn’t do anything that might cause me to fall because hitting the ground with the vest on would hurt me considerably. Running, playing sports, and riding a bike were completely out of the question. Moreover, every time I went through airport security I got pulled pulled aside and was asked to explain the vest.

In the beginning, I didn’t take it well at all. I would start hyperventilating at random times throughout the day. As I learned to live with it, this started happening less and less frequently.

Once I came to terms with the vest, time passed quickly, and a year ago, due to my spine having stopped growing, I was able to take it off permanently. It felt weird at first. After years of having worn the vest, not having something pressing my chest felt liberating. I started enjoying all the activities I had lost touch with again, but after a while, I started experiencing strong back pain.

The doctor told me that it was caused by the lack of muscle supporting my back, so I decided to join a gym for the first time. It’s been a whole year, and I’ve never stopped attending. I developed a love for it that allows me to put conscientious effort towards fighting a condition I’ll never be able to get rid of.

A few months ago I was offered the possibility of surgery: having a titanium rod attached with bolts to each side of my spine to straighten it. It would alleviate my back pain, but it also has its drawbacks. I wouldn’t be able to exercise for a year, and would lose flexibility for life. I’ve thought about it long and hard, and I believe it’s worth the sacrifice. It will allow me to go through my life without fear of damaging my spine. I'm proud to say I will undergo the surgery this February.

Overall, this experience has allowed me to grow personally, to teach me that even when you seem to be in the worst possible situation, with concentrated efforts one can reach a better state. This experience has also turned me much more sensitive and open minded. I used to have trouble understanding other people and their problems. Having had to use the vest has helped me understand those with a disability.

# Rev. 5

Five years ago I was diagnosed with scoliosis. When the doctor told me, I started crying. I knew it meant I was going to have to wear a plastic vest around my torso for many years.

The vest was noticeable even under a shirt, so people pointed it out, and asked what it was. It made me feel different. I was limited in a number of ways by it. If it was sunny, I couldn’t go play outside because the heat would be unbearable. I couldn’t do anything that might cause me to fall because hitting the ground with the vest on would hurt me considerably. Running, playing sports, and riding a bike were completely out of the question. Moreover, every time I went through airport security I got pulled pulled aside and was asked to explain the vest.

In the beginning, I didn’t take it well at all. I would start hyperventilating at random times throughout the day. As I learned to live with it, this started happening less and less frequently.

Once I came to terms with the vest, time passed quickly, and a year ago, due to my spine having stopped growing, I was able to take it off permanently. It felt weird at first. After years of having worn the vest, not having something pressing my chest felt liberating. I started enjoying all the activities I had lost touch with again, but after a while, I started experiencing strong back pain.

The doctor told me that it was caused by the lack of muscle supporting my back, so I decided to join a gym for the first time. It’s been a whole year, and I’ve never stopped attending. I developed a love for it because it allows me to put conscientious effort towards fighting a condition I’ll never be able to get rid of.

A few months ago I was offered the possibility of surgery: having a titanium rod attached with bolts to each side of my spine to straighten it. It would alleviate my back pain, but it also has its drawbacks. I wouldn’t be able to exercise for a year, and would lose flexibility for life. I’ve thought about it long and hard, and I believe it’s worth the sacrifice. It will allow me to go through my life without fear of damaging my spine. I'm proud to say I will undergo the surgery this February.

Overall, this experience has allowed me to grow personally. In these hectic and fast-moving times, we seldom stop to think about others. The importance of empathy is often underestimated. I used to lack it and care only about my friends, my hobbies, my career; there wasn’t time for anyone else. It was after my experience with scoliosis that I realized how it felt to feel alone and understood, and recognized the massive importance of taking a moment to be sensitive to other’s feelings and circumstances, and to help solve their problems. This is crucial if we want to evolve as a society.

# Rev. FINAL

Five years ago I was diagnosed with scoliosis. When the doctor told me, I started crying. I knew it meant I was going to have to wear a plastic vest around my torso for many years.

The vest was a stigma. It was noticeable even under a shirt, so people pointed it out, and asked what it was. It made me feel different. I was limited in a number of ways by it. If it was sunny, I couldn’t go play outside because the heat would be unbearable. I couldn’t do anything that might cause me to fall because hitting the ground with the vest on would hurt me considerably. Running, playing sports, and riding a bike were completely out of the question. Moreover, every time I went through airport security I got pulled aside and was asked to explain the vest.

In the beginning, I didn’t take it well at all. I would start hyperventilating at random times throughout the day. As I learned to live with it, this started happening less and less frequently.

Once I came to terms with the vest, time passed quickly, and a year ago, due to my spine having stopped growing, I was able to take it off permanently. It felt weird at first. After years of having worn the vest, not having something pressing on my chest felt liberating. I started enjoying all the activities I had lost touch with again, but after a while, I started experiencing strong back pain.

The doctor told me that it was caused by the lack of muscle supporting my back, so I decided to join a gym for the first time. It’s been a whole year, and I’ve never stopped attending. I developed a love for it because it allows me to put conscientious effort towards fighting a condition I’ll never be able to get rid of.

A few months ago I was offered the possibility of surgery: having a titanium rod attached with bolts to each side of my spine to straighten it. It would alleviate my back pain, but it also has its drawbacks. I wouldn’t be able to exercise for a year, and would lose flexibility for life. I’ve thought about it long and hard, and I believe it’s worth the sacrifice. It will allow me to go through my life without fear of damaging my spine. I'm proud to say I will undergo the surgery this February.

I acknowledge and I am very grateful for the positive effect of those who supported me and helped me cope. My experience with scoliosis made me realize how it feels to be different and misunderstood, and recognize the massive importance of being sensitive to the feelings and circumstances of others.