

I decided to pursue a career in medicine early in life. Not on a whim, but because I felt it would be the best way to help people. Becoming the first doctor in my family has blossomed into a lifelong dream that I continue to pursue. I recently completed my second year in the Biomedical Sciences Undergraduate (Bachelor of Science, Honours) program at the University of Guelph with a place on the Dean's List. I eagerly look forward to starting my third year!

As a person of colour and a child of immigrants, I must admit that my personal experience in school and my community has been a positive one thus far. I have been fortunate enough to have had the constant support of my parents, teachers, and extended community. They have always encouraged me to participate in activities such as; Football on the local Minor League team Orangeville Outlaws, the Alpha and other Power 2 Change and school and church. All of which have supplemented my growth over this past year. With the lifting of restrictions around the pandemic, I was able to be a table host for the first in-person Alpha program on campus since the beginning of the pandemic and participate in evangelistic outreach events on campus. These events allowed me to connect with people and places around campus which was impossible during my first year. However, the most significant experience was an international trip to Costa Rica to volunteer at a medical clinic through Vida.

Vida is a volunteer abroad program that is based in Central America. It is an organization with a strong Service-Learning Program. They are a bridge that connects students and volunteers worldwide with the most vulnerable communities, conditions, and challenges. They offer three main programs: Medical, Dental, and Veterinary, which are designed to deliver health care and promote healthier lifestyles, ensuring a long-lasting impact in the communities that volunteers visit. I participated as a volunteer in the Medical programs. Volunteering in the medical program allowed me to gain hands-on, culturally and clinically immersive training and the opportunity to work side by side with local physicians in diagnosing, treating, and educating patients

It was a fantastic experience that inspired more confidence than any fear or discomfort I felt at being in a strange place alongside strangers to help people in a foreign land or from being one of the very few who looked like me in the area. It instilled a sense of pride in myself for being able to make a difference and confidence in knowing that I would do it again without hesitation. This trip allowed me to glimpse into the future that I strive to achieve, and I can say with resolve that it is the future that I want wholeheartedly.

Of course, this aspiration is not without its challenges. I know that there is a high likelihood that I will incur a large amount of debt before achieving that goal. Being awarded the Carmen Anderson Perseverance Award would help me realize this goal by aiding my current funding gap as I prepare for my third year.

To work towards closing this gap, I have also found a summer job as a summer camp coordinator at Broadway Pentecostal Church, a local church in Orangeville. I was initially introduced to this church through a mentor at P2C last year and had a wonderful summer experience there. As a summer camp coordinator, I am responsible for the planning, scheduling and implementation of the summer camp program, aiding in recruiting and developing leaders and assisting the spiritual growth of youth and kids. It is my hope to use

this job as an opportunity, to not only grow but also to serve as a role model for other youths and help them grow and achieve success in the future.

As a proud member of the Black community, I strive to carry myself in a manner that will make me an exemplary student among my peers in the Biomedical Science program. I will also actively look for more opportunities to mentor other black students by participating in the Power to Change campus group, of which I am an active participant. When I become a doctor, I will give my time and financial energy to building our community and encourage those in my network to aspire for lifelong excellence. In the future, I will continue to strive to find opportunities to be my authentic self while being a positive example of black excellence for others.