

My family has a reputation, there is not a very high standard when it comes to educational goals. In high school, my mom was told, by her own teacher at Sultan High School, that she'd end up just like her brother, a dropout. This story really stuck with me because teachers are supposed to be the ones to push us, to hope we succeed and to guide us through our successes. For the wrong kind of student, that could have been the end of their education, it could have been just discouraging enough for them to quit school because "nobody thinks they can do it anyway." Not my mom, she started then, she did what she could to push herself the rest of the way, and she graduated with straight C's. It was enough.

My dad never graduated; he didn't really get the chance. He was out of a home and sleeping on different couches by the time he was 13 years old. He always says he wishes he could've had the opportunities he was able to give me. His situation helps me understand what I have, and what it takes to get a student through the way I got through school.

I have been lucky enough to have both a stable home and encouraging teachers that push me to grow every day. That is why furthering my education is so important to me. The standards for education in my family haven't been set very high. My mom rose the bar in 2001, and I hope to raise it further.

If I can do anything with my educational opportunities, I hope it is that I inspire my cousins and the younger kids in my community to follow in my footsteps. To seek out chances to gain new experiences and learn every day and to not settle into that "nobody thinks I'll make it anyway" mindset. I am a first-generation college student, and I will use that title to make a difference in my community and my family.