

Brianna Webb
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PB&J Scholarship Essay

My name is Brianna Christine Webb. I'm a high school senior going to Belmont University in Nashville. I'm majoring in International Business and minoring in foreign languages. I would like to be considered for the PB&J scholarship because, like the donor, there were always barriers in my way, but I persevered through each one to get to where I am now. Due to unfortunate circumstances and disabilities, I also struggled through school academically.

At age 6 I was shot in the head during an attempted robbery of a store. The injury permanently damaged my brain, leaving what doctors told my mom was 'white matter' over some parts of it. At age 9 I was diagnosed with ADHD.. I quickly noticed that I was slower at everything in comparison with the other children my age. I couldn't read as fast as them, speak as fast as them, or write correctly like them. I had trouble reading on my own; I would read the same line over and over because I couldn't comprehend what I was reading. I spoke at a slower pace than others that allowed me to speak clearer. My handwriting was so bad at school that I had a teacher parent conference just so my mother could possibly translate my classwork. She said it was normal for me to write sideways, because a lot of students develop this habit. However, my handwriting was completely illegible.

It never really sunk in that I had a learning disability in elementary school. I just thought it was everyone misunderstanding me. I didn't know why I couldn't just stay in one place. I always thought "It's normal for a kid my age." Still, I always seemed to be the most hyperactive in all of my classes. Other children got upset every now and then, but I was just a little more extreme. Sometimes I'd be frustrated and just scream for hours and sprawl on the floor and kick. I brought upon myself a great deal of teasing from other students. I was the worst behaved and the kids would always poke fun at how I acted or mock my constant tics, which are like uncontrollable muscle spasms. Needless to say, I was mostly isolated and didn't get along well with everyone else since I was the freak in my grade.

At my elementary school, the majority of children were Hispanic and often spoke to each other in Spanish during any free time we had. As I already had a bad reputation at school for being weird, it was hard to approach other students even without the addition of a language barrier. During my time going back and forth from hospitals to better treat my ADHD, I would wonder if I would get along with the other children if I spoke Spanish.

That was a common thought I had all throughout going to that school. I went to a new school for junior high and the students there spoke English. I had matured a bit and was more aware of my disability and how it was affecting my learning. I chose to hide my tics as best I could and really focused on catching up with the other students. I made some of my first friends and did a lot better socially and academically at the new school.

After a pretty good middle school life, I went to high school and took my first real Spanish class. Being in the class brought back a lot of memories of when I couldn't speak any Spanish in a majority Spanish speaking environment. I saw this as the chance to learn the language I'd always longed to speak during my terrible years in elementary. I became so fascinated with the language and got ahead of the other students by studying outside of school hours. Soon, curiosity led me to start learning other languages as well. By the 11th grade I, the freak who screamed and kicked on the floor during carpet reading time, could speak Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese, conversationally fluent in each.

I'm a person that likes to be resilient in the face of adversity. I don't like people telling me what I can't do or what I'm incapable of doing. It always drives me to prove everyone wrong and also prove to myself that I could do what others said I couldn't. A lot of people in my life told me I didn't have to try as hard or looked down on me because I have a disability. I pay no mind to them now and know that through my perseverance alone I'm fully capable of doing whatever I strive for.

I will put the languages I've learned to work and secure my future. Learning languages has opened my eyes to foreign problems, needs, and untapped potential within smaller countries. I aspire to be the person to tap into that potential and work in international trade. Since I'm graduating from a Business based high school, I have been educated on what it takes to run, manage, and expand a business. With my knowledge of this field and my passion for learning languages, I know that I'll thrive in international business in University. I'll put the money from the scholarship toward my future and pave the way for other students with unique situations and disabilities to do something that people would believe we're incapable of doing. I thank you for your consideration.