

Kaitlyn Taylor

I had a rough start to high school. I struggled a lot and at times I didn't even know how to ask for the help I needed. Although I met great teachers at East Rowan High School and knew I had the work ethic, it just wasn't working out for me. My grades weren't terrible, but I knew they could've been better with the right help. I never gave up on myself because my mom has always told me, "No matter how long the storm lasts, there will always be sunshine at the end."

Right before the end of first quarter my junior year, I transferred to North Rowan High. There I saw a change in myself and a dramatic change in my grades. I met teachers like no other teachers I've ever met before. Every teacher I encountered genuinely cared about each of their students. My junior year history teacher, Mr. Yoder, had the biggest impact on me by far. His extremely high standards made the class very difficult at times. By the end, I was more than grateful for the experience of his class because he helped bring out the perseverance and work ethic that I knew I had, but had struggled to show.

During my senior year I was offered the opportunity to help our theater teacher work with students with exceptional abilities. I loved every single moment. It was one of the best experiences in my high school career. In my English IV class I completed a project on the issue of domestic violence. I researched the impact of domestic violence on individuals and society, because I've witnessed people I love most experience it this nation wide epidemic.

One thing I've always known about myself was that I want to help people. What I didn't know about myself was the way I wanted to go about helping people. After working with students with exceptional abilities, seeing my mom suffer abuse, and helping my best friend of 14 years bring herself back together after being a victim of domestic violence, I came to realize I needed to be an advocate for people who cannot advocate for themselves. I've chosen to pursue a career in social work.

Receiving this scholarship and earning a degree in social work would contribute to my personal and career goals of making a positive contribution to society, my community, and the people close to me. Obtaining a bachelor's degree from Strayer University would impact my life tremendously. My mom was sixteen years old when I was born. Being a teen mom was hard. I've seen my mom struggle, go through unspeakable things, all the while raising three children by herself. Just a few years ago, college wasn't even a thought because I knew it would create such a financial hardship on my family. However, I have a new motivation. I want this for myself. I want this for all the people I plan on helping. And, I want this for my mom.