

WPS Corporate Social Responsibility Scholarship Essay

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I am the ancestor of a people of resilience. I am a Cowlitz Native American. It is estimated that there were over 10 million Native Americans living in what we know to be the United States of America. By 1900, due to violence intended to eradicate Natives and disease brought on by European settlers, only about 300,000 Native Americans remained. Those of us who come from that noble bloodline have been blessed with that ancestry, and cursed with the historical and intergenerational trauma that resides in our veins. Today, many Native Americans struggle with addiction, discrimination, disparities in mental health and health care, disparate low socio-economic status, the second to lowest high school graduation rates, and cycles of violence and abuse within families. It was not until I became an adult in my early 40's that began to draw strength from my Native heritage to help me overcome my own traumas.

The pride of my ethnic diversity and my determination to be an agent of change in the lives of children and their families, especially those who need support the most, has culminated into my enrollment in a School Psychology graduate program. As a Native woman working towards earning a Master's of Science degree in School Psychology with a Pupil Personnel Services Credential, I represent one of a small handful of Native women in higher education. According to the Census' American Community Survey, only 15.4% of those identifying as Native American held a degree of Bachelor's or higher. In the Fall of

2020, Native Americans only made up 0.6% of all postsecondary enrollment. I am beyond proud to have gotten where I am. I am proud to be a Cowlitz Native American. And I am proud to be on a career path that serves some of the most disadvantaged youth in our schools: those with academic, behavioral, and societal deficits.

To have the opportunity to earn a MS in School Psychology is both an opportunity to be of service to underserved youth and their families, but it allows me the distinct honor of representing one of the most underrepresented ethnic groups in the United States. My work with public school students in California means that I will be working with the largest and most diverse student populations. My own diverse background lends itself to an awareness and sensitivity to differences than those who perhaps come from a more privileged or dominant background. I am on an ideal career path and the WPS Corporate Social Responsibility scholarship will help me get there!