

Victoria Hargis

A mentor once told me, “Victoria, speak up because the world needs to hear what you have to say.” As a quiet young woman accustomed to many moves and new situations, this did not come easily for me. I was shocked during a trip to Arequipa, Peru to hear Dan Dollar, a friend and second father, say that I had a voice worthy of being heard. We were in Peru with a team of twenty people joining together to distribute and specifically fit wheelchairs to the disabled people in Arequipa. As a translator, I spoke often but questioned the validity of the words I spoke. Dan reinforced the message my dad and mom had been telling me all my life, which is, “you are valuable; listen to what God is telling you, and do something about it.”

College is the next opportunity in my life for me to “do something about it.” My mentors, including Great Oak staff Mr. Gigliotti and Mrs. Wells, have equipped me with the knowledge that I can positively impact the world. I know that they are right, and I have found that physical therapy is an occupation that will allow me to reach out to other people in the same way my mentors inspired me. I have researched, applied to, and been accepted to nine doctorate of physical therapy programs. The program at Maryville University, St. Louis, interests me the most, but I realize that I cannot go there without support.

As a repercussion of the 9/11 attacks, my dad lost his job and was unemployed for two years. After numerous moves, which landed us with my grandparents in Washington State at one point, my dad finally found another job; however, the financial strain caused by the two years of unemployment still exists and was highlighted when my brother began college in 2007. Although my dad has kept a steady, well-paying job for the past seven years, the debt acquired from that period in our lives still exists, and my parents cannot assist me much with college payments. This is why your financial award and support would be much appreciated. I am determined to let my voice be heard wherever I am led, but I feel that college is the next step, and that step requires assistance. Thank you for your scholarship opportunity.