

DREAMIN'S FREE ESSAY *by* BROOKE DIMOND

“A Dream Built From Adversity”

“It is concerning that she is unable to locate the top of a paper.” This was a section of a letter written to my parents by my elementary school teacher. “We are worried that the learning disability, in addition to her many absences, will cause her to struggle academically.” The letter continued.

This was one of many letters I pulled out of storage and read the night before my first class at MCC. A genetic disorder made the traditional school schedule difficult for me to keep up with physically, and it also caused some learning problems. At the time I enrolled at MCC, I was fifteen years old and attending an online high school, the director of which recommended I try a few dual enrollment classes. Years of overhearing counselors whisper that I was too far behind, teachers sending me to interventions separate from the rest of the class, and students asking what was wrong with me had left me weary. School was a little easier online, but the memories of grade school were all coming back. Once again, I would be picking up a backpack and walking into a classroom with a teacher and students. The prospect of going back to school actually gave me nightmares.

Thankfully, my parents made me go, because I would have never attended on my own initiative. What I experienced at MCC was completely different from grade school. The teachers allowed me to make up tests when I wasn't well enough to take them with the rest of the class. One teacher arranged for me to attend a class on a different day to accommodate an appointment with an out of state doctor. Some met with me outside of normal class times to help me with concepts I struggled with. My fellow classmates also assisted me by taking notes when I had to miss class and even offered to give me rides to school when I was too sick to drive.

The extra help I received was wonderful, but the perspective I gained was even more valuable. In the past, teachers had made me feel that my medical condition was something I had to overcome if I were ever to succeed in college. On the contrary, the teachers and counselors at MCC taught me to view my experience as an asset. They recommended that I choose a career in the medical field because my health condition

could help me to relate to patients. Viewing my situation this way helped me to see that I did have something unique and valuable to offer. There were others facing the same problems I had, and with the right training, I could help them.

The first class I took was Medical Terminology. To my surprise, I received an A. The time I spent in hospitals must have caused me to absorb more knowledge of medical terminology than I thought. Then I had an A in the next class, and in every class since then. I realized that I wasn't simply a terrible student and my health didn't make it impossible for me to learn. Rather, I had never been in an environment that allowed me to learn effectively.

About two years ago, my condition took a turn for the worse and I was told that the complications I was experiencing had a high mortality rate. Doctors told me not to expect to return to school the following fall. I came back to MCC the very next month, more determined than ever to learn a trade and make a difference. I knew that the staff and students at MCC would do all they could to help me succeed.

During my time at MCC, I have become more confident in my abilities. To my surprise, I have found that I actually enjoy school, something I never expected to write. I decided to take the advice of the counselor and enroll in the Medical Assistant Certificate program. For the first time, I have found a career that I have a passion for and that will allow me to use my experiences to help others. I still have dreams about school, but they are no longer nightmares. Now, I dream about graduating. I can see all of the teachers and students who have helped me, and myself with a cap and gown, something I never would have imagined myself dreaming. The best part of the dream is seeing myself finally working with patients. If I ever meet a child who feels limited by their situation, I hope to show them that they too can achieve their dreams.