

I clenched my fists together and writhed in pain in the hospital bed, surrounded by a team of physicians and my closest family members. As a student at the [SCHOOL], I once read that the hospital operating room was labeled “the setting where miracles were commonplace.” Lying down in the \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital’s standard delivery room, I was uncertain then that I would eventually follow in the same profession footsteps as the physician who tended to my pain. However, each every shriek and scream was met with a comforting hand from my physician, who was diligently focused on *delivering* my own miracle. The pain reached a crescendo, and I felt blood trickling down my thighs as the surge of life travelled through my frame. Almost suddenly, a tranquil cry washed away the shrieks, screams, and pain, and the doctor gently placed Sally, my first child, within my arms.

Mothering a child, both before and after birth, is a life-changing experience. In addition to revolutionizing my perspective on life, carrying and tending to Anne inspired my interest in human physiology and medicine. Pregnancy gradually reshaped my body, and also, influenced my behavior, diet, and most critically, my priorities. I scrutinized and attempted to understand how external and internal factors affect the human body, both inside and outside of the classroom. Apart from merely an intellectual passion, optimizing my comprehension of my body and well-being evolved into both a personal necessity and a motherly responsibility. Therefore, my pre-medical education was twofold, and I harmonized my academic preparation with the practical education required to mother, and care for, my child. In time, my responsibilities as a mother were broadened with the birth of my son who accompanied Sally.

I focused principally on Economics and History as [SCHOOL], but recommenced my studies in 2007 order to prepare for medical school. Although I desired to pursue a medical degree well before 2007, my aspirations were postponed by the demanding, and full-time jobs of being an independent mother and businesswoman. Thus, I chose to fully pursue my medical school dreams when my children approached adolescence and early adulthood, so that I could dedicate ample energy and time to completing the foundational courses, and second, preparing for the admissions process. Instead of diverting me from my life’s dream, my children inspired my hard work and commitment to attend medical school. In fact, the professional sacrifices I made for my children’s benefit harkened me back to those my parents made nearly three decades earlier in Vietnam. While driving my children to and from school and extracurricular activities, I routinely reflected upon my childhood in war-torn Saigon and the difficult journey my family traveled in search of a better life in the United States. Following the footsteps of other Vietnamese refugees, my father found work on Nabisco’s assembly line while my mother procured a job as a cook, while I assumed the role as my younger brother’s and sister’s *de facto* parent. Emulating my parents’ spirit of sacrificing for me and my siblings, I enrolled in prerequisite science courses while working full-time and independently parenting my children. Furthermore, medical school developed into far more than simply a personal aspiration or professional dream, but also an avenue to provide my children with a better quality of life, and also, a source of great pride for their mother.

Unlike the vast majority of my classmates in my prerequisite science courses, my study sessions were routinely intertwined with preparing next-day lunches or interrupted by late-night cries. Although the responsibilities part and parcel with being a mother of four vibrant children are plentiful, the experiences that stem from it have also furnished me with a more comprehensive insight into being a physician. Indeed, four children who regularly experience a range of ailments and accidents provide me with four permanent in-house patients who have me at their beck and call. Furthermore, my parental

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responsibilities have also cultivated my philanthropic spirit and commitment to community service. For the past five years, I have dedicated much of my idle time volunteering at the *Acupuncture Clinic*. In addition to enriching my knowledge of medicine with a holistic perspective, my tenure as a volunteer has also sharpened my capacity to interact and serve patients, collaborate with physicians and medical staff, and acclimated me with preventive medicine and patient education. As my interest in medicine developed, I focused on tending to the Clinic's stroke patients, and shadowing the physicians who specialize in this area. Like the physician who delivered Anne and three subsequent children, the doctors I collaborated with integrated skill with a keen ability to resonate with their patients – I shared this humanized approach to medicine, and was fully confident I possessed the compassion and intellect to provide the same level of quality care.

Ever since that fateful miracle at the \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital where I delivered my first child, the operating room has evolved into far more than simply, “the setting where miracles are commonplace,” but also site of my prospective career. My journey toward this setting, without question, intersected with detours and avenues that will not only broaden my perspective as a medical student, but also diversify my skill sets as a prospective physician. Mothering two children empowered my focus and fueled me to accomplish a number of feats I once thought I was not capable of. I excelled as a businesswoman, establishing my own Baskin Robbins franchise and dry cleaning business, and helming them both while balancing this with my studies. I raised two beautiful children, evolved into a good mother, and never deserted my goal of attending medical school. Indeed, many of my friends and family members commented that only a *miracle would deliver me into medical school*, but I preserved beyond the hurdles that stood between me and my goal. Today, I stand at the cusp of achieving my goal. I look forward to the prospect of commencing my first-year as a medical student, and ultimately, assuming my place in the operating room fully prepared to deliver my share of life's miracles.