

My mother leaned over and handed me a box, it was my birthday, and I was only 8 years old, living in China with my parents. I tore open the box and inside I found a gift that was to change my life. My mother and father, knowing I was a curious child, bought me a chemistry toy set. From that moment on, I became fascinated by the workings of science. My subsequent interest in the composition of drugs, their chemical and physical properties began to galvanize my desire to pursue a career in pharmacy. In addition, my desire to alleviate the suffering of people through healthcare compels me to seek a profession where my work can be applied successfully on a broader scale. As such, through my education, research, professional, and volunteer experiences I have been able to identify and develop the skills necessary to achieve my goal of being a successful aspiring pharmacist.

Before I could fully commit to studying the sciences and more specifically pharmacy, I wanted to get valuable hands-on experience. During my senior year in high school, I participated in a volunteer program at the UCSF. At UCSF I had the opportunity to interact with staff pharmacists, enabling me to gain a valuable in look at a hospital pharmacy. Later, I also participated in a selective mentorship program at Kaiser Permanente, where I had the unique opportunity to shadow and learn from the pharmacist-in-charge. Here I observed how the resident pharmacists assisted patients, interacted with the hospital administration, and worked with pharmaceutical vendors on a daily basis. Through these experiences I knew I wanted to explore the field of pharmacy further and so I decided to pursue biochemistry as an undergraduate.

At UCSD my love and enthusiasm for the sciences was immediately reflected by my dedication to my college courses. Through my academic background I developed the qualities that are essential for a pharmacy student. Moreover, I also sought to compliment my academic studies with research, professional, and volunteer experiences that are relevant and provide different aspects available in the field of pharmacy. Presently, I am volunteering for a pharmacist's research project focused on pharmacokinetics in liver transplantation. Researching in an academic setting has given me the opportunity to witness clinical research from a more complex dimension than traditionally viewed in a

college science lab. In addition to research, I also volunteered at a retail pharmacy, which has shed light on the importance of interpersonal skills when advising patients with their prescriptions. I have also been curious as to the actual manufacturing process of pharmaceutical drugs in the private sector. Therefore, I shadowed a biotech scientist at Genentech and witnessed the importance of drug manufacturing on the industrial level and the potential benefits of such drugs on the population at large. These experiences have helped me to think critically and opened my eyes to the different opportunities in pharmacy as well as how best to work with patients, fellow researchers and colleagues—attributes that are critical for a career in pharmacy.

Through my various internships and volunteer experiences, I discovered that interpersonal skills can play a pivotal role in the success of a pharmacist. Moreover, providing help and medicine to those less fortunate in society was and continues to be goal I hope to fulfill. In that light, I advanced my communication and leadership skills when I chose to volunteer at the Nutrition and Senior Centers of San Francisco. As a volunteer and team leader, I was tasked with training and motivating the volunteers to take care of the every need of the seniors. I was subsequently awarded a certification of appreciation from the organization, in recognition of my efforts and contributions to the senior center.

Years later I still look back fondly on the day I received my chemistry set from my parents. It was a watershed that still serves to keep me motivated as to my progress towards my career goal in pharmacy. Indeed, my academics, research, professional and volunteer experiences have collectively helped shed light on the attributes most important to a pharmacist namely, being analytical, personable, compassionate, and dedicated to the profession. It has been my goal to foster these attributes through education and I am fully committed and determined to continue to do so as a pharmacy student and aspiring pharmacist.