

Kaitlyn

At times life can seem painful, it can seem like nothing is going your way; however there's always something at the end of the tunnel for you. Since I was a little kid I have had dreams and goals. I had a goal to get to college and graduate with a four year degree. My dream was to go to college to pursue a nursing degree while continuing my athletic career.

When I was in fourth grade I was diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome. When I was first diagnosed I did not know what to expect or how it would affect my life. All I could think in my head was what people would say or how they would treat me, I was scared of getting bullied or getting kicked off my team because I was different. The thing is, being different is not always a bad thing. Although I went through many rough patches from being bullied, to being left out, to being questioned about why I am doing things I always found my way out in the end. I overcame so many things I never thought I would have to deal with in my life. From going through therapies and medicines to try and make things better to trying to explain to people I am not doing things on purpose. The hardest part is when people thought you were lying and they thought you were just being straight up rude but you had no way out but to say sorry without explaining your entire life to them.

After overcoming so many bumps in the road of life I have become a stronger and better person. Currently I am able to say I have accomplished more than I could have ever imagined. Coming from a family of seven with five kids you learn that you need to be independent and responsible. I have managed to be a dual athlete, while maintaining two jobs all while maintaining good grades and doing a multitude of clubs at my school. If it were not for the support of my family and friends through all the rough time I would have never been selected as one of only two people from my school and one of only about 160 kids from New Jersey to attend the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards Conference last summer Attending this conference was such an honor and was a moment that will last with me forever.

With the battles that I have faced from being diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome I have become a leader because I am not afraid to be different anymore. This scholarship would give me an opportunity to show others that you can do anything as long as you put your mind to it. I never would've thought that eight years ago today I would be where I am. After many years of thinking and being told nursing is not a good career for someone with Tourettes, I want to show people that nothing is impossible.