

Why College is Important to Me
by Stacey Park

Epictetus, a Greek philosopher, once said, "Only the educated are free." What Epictetus meant is that education releases people from the binds of their ignorance and gives them the freedom to pursue their dreams. College is important because it provides the guidance, resources, connections, experiences, and opportunities to fulfill one's goal in life – it is the key to not only realizing an ambition, but also to contributing to the welfare of the entire community.

I aspire to one day be a psychiatrist, and attending college is essential for me to achieve this goal. I have volunteered at a senior living center on a weekly basis since eighth grade. This has allowed me to observe how elderly people deal with depression and sickness, and was the inspiration for me to become a psychiatrist. Music seems to positively influence the residents, so I often play classical music, my compositions, and old tunes on the piano for them. To further my exposure in the field of psychiatry, I have also taken advanced classes in psychology, chemistry, and medical science, as well as assumed a leadership position as secretary of Health Occupations Students of America at school. These experiences have allowed me to explore the science behind the human mind as well as have increased my knowledge on psychological disorders through active participation in class and involvement in the medical community. In college, I plan to learn more about the human psyche by majoring in psychiatry, taking medical courses, and joining clubs on campus that relate to this field. This will give me the opportunity to apply for an internship, perhaps at a psychiatric ward.

Thus far in my life I have been exposed to a wide range of cultures, enhancing my understanding of both personalities and communication methods; however, college will introduce me to an entirely new set of experiences to develop my knowledge in these areas. This past summer, participating in Africana Studies at UNC-Charlotte allowed me to study a major ethnicity and culture in American. Also,

as a Korean-American, promoting harmonious cross-cultural relationships is important to me, especially as America becomes increasingly diverse. I often mediate conflicts between Koreans and Americans, helping both races respect and acknowledge each other's cultural differences. College will immerse me into a large community of people, exposing me to a greater variety of issues and beliefs both educationally and socially. This will expand my mind and minimize any ignorance or misconceptions I may harbor against other social groups, heightening my knowledge of the human mind and emotions, this, I will be able to become both a better psychiatrist and more influential leader in society.

College offers me the chance to take the next step in my education, and to continue breaking free from the oblivion of ignorance. It provides the unique environment in which I can learn about and explore new topics in the classroom, as well as experience new cultures and personalities on campus. Ultimately, college will enable me to achieve my aspiration to become a psychiatrist through the abundant opportunities and knowledge that I cannot acquire anywhere else.