

Up until December 1, 2011 I was a 20 year old with big dreams and huge plans. I was still dating my high school sweet heart and was sure we would get married after I finished college. That fantasy was stripped away from me as soon as the doctor told me I was pregnant. No only did my boyfriend at the time leave me, I was forced to drop out of college and get a job making \$9.50 an hour. I thought once I had my daughter life would somehow get better, I'd go back to school and maybe even her dad would come back. But the reality of my situation was I was a 21 year old with no college degree, no spouse and losing an intense battle with post-partum depression. I remember reading a magazine at my daughters checkup and there was a passage that said: "Children growing up in a single-parent families typically do not have the same economic or human resources available as those growing up in two-parent families. Compared with children in married-couple families, children raised in single-parent households are more likely to drop out of school, to have or cause a teen pregnancy and to experience a divorce in adulthood." I can vividly remember wondering, what have I done? My daughter has no chance to make it in this world. I felt like such a failure and was the definition of a broken woman. I was not living, nor enjoying life, but purely existing in misery. Until one day I walked in on my mother and sister having a conversation about which program my sister would attend for her Master's degree. Because I didn't complete my own degree, I couldn't contribute to the conversation. Along the years I did complete an 8 month program in Dental Assisting but I grew complacent. As I sat there listening to them talk about a world I so desperately wanted to be a part of, I decided I was going back to school. My daughter was 3 and my parents agreed to help me in any way. I met with a counselor at Bakersfield college that mapped out all the courses I would need to take in order to apply for Dental Hygiene. The list was long and discouraging but I kept remembering the passage I had read at my daughter's appointment. The only way I could

break the cycle was to give her a fighting chance. I couldn't change our circumstances, but I had full control over providing her with the economical and human resources she would need to compete with the children coming from two- parent homes. That became my motivation. I am in my second semester in the Dental Hygiene program where I am the president of the TCDH club. My motivation is to give my daughter a better life and to ingrain in her that it doesn't matter how you start but how you finish. My end goal is to practice Hygiene while getting my bachelor's degree and eventually teach it. I also plan on serving the under-privilege children in my community that lack the means to obtain oral hygiene care and instructions as well as serving the elderly community. I worked two jobs prior to my first semester in the hygiene program, night and day to be able to afford all the supplies I needed. This semester requires an array of supplies that I have yet purchased due to the financial hardship of not being able to work during my time in this program. I'm in need of assistance and would greatly appreciate any help offered to me.