

When I was younger, I looked up to the superheros my father showed me through movies, comics, and cartoons. Even as a child, I could relate to these tragic heroes who decided to help the world despite the challenges we have gone through. As I got older, my father became one of my heroes, and then I started to watch him get sick, and eventually died of a heart attack when I was 17. That moment changed my life forever, and for years I blamed myself, and harmed myself in response to my intense emotions. I did not find out I had severe mental illness until I was deep in my own trauma a few years after graduating high school, and I watched my life fall apart.

Three and a half years ago, I was in the darkest place of my life so far. The lockdown affected my long term relationship, and after a messy breakup, I started to drink myself to death. That is when I decided to open my eyes, and take my life into my own hands. I put the bottle down. I started HRT as a non-binary trans person, and I found a love that would inspire me to take better care of myself. After I made these intense changes in my life, I decided I wanted to do something special with my career. I got a job at a homeless shelter overnight and for about a year, worked with a population struggling from the same things I had struggled with. I got a promotion to case manager and decided to go back to school. That is where we find ourselves now, looking forward to a future where I can be the hero I always dreamed of.

With this scholarship, I will further my education and use my experiences to help those who are truly struggling the most. We are all one bad day away from ending up homeless or worse. I want to learn everything I can so I can share hope and love with a population that has been stigmatized for so long.