

Natalie Persaud - Tri County Scholarship Fund - April 12, 2018

It is truly an honor to standing before you all today. My name is Natalie Persaud. I am currently a junior at Paramus Catholic High School, a wonderful school that I would not be able to attend without the help of Tri-County. I would first like to thank Tri-County and all of its sponsors for the gift they have given me and so many others – the gift of a better education and the opportunity to succeed.

I live in a single-parent household with my mother, my brother, my nieces, and my bed-ridden grandmother. I am the youngest of five children and if that sounds like a lot, it's because it is. I have always lived in chaos and commotion but I wouldn't trade it for anything. I believe that those experiences have made me more grounded and practical, which are important virtues when facing the real world. My parents are divorced and my father has never been part of life, leaving my mother to raise us all on her own. She emigrated from Ecuador at a very young age. Since then, she has worked hard every day to provide

a better life for our family. She worked multiple jobs while still cooking dinner for us, making sure we did our homework, taking care of us while we sick, and being there whenever we needed her. Just before I was born, my mother was in serious car accident. She almost lost her life, but she fought hard and pulled through. Although now living with a disability, she still manages to take care of everyone around here. She exemplifies kindness, compassion, and determination. My mother sacrificed everything for my siblings and I, and all she asked in return was for us to succeed and create a better life for ourselves. All my life I have watched my family struggle to keep their heads above water, and I made a promise to myself and to them that I will be the one to pull them up. My idea of success is to be able to take care of those who have taken care of me, and to help those who cannot help themselves, just as my mother has taught me.

Because of Tri-County, I have been able to attend Paramus Catholic High School. There, I have access to a safe environment with a

great education and an endless number of extracurricular activities. I have met wonderful people and have gained friends for life. I work hard to excel in the classroom and to maintain my status as a Freedom Scholar. I have been inducted into the National Honors Society and the International Language Honors Society. I am also a part of the soccer team, Spanish club, disability awareness club, and ambassador society. I participate in the school's annual Relay for Life, a cancer awareness fundraiser and I volunteer at a pregnancy resource center. None of this would ~~not~~ be possible without Tri-County and its donors. Tri-County has provided significant financial relief for my mother and has given me the confidence I need to succeed. The financial support that the Tri-County Scholarship Fund provides is important, but so is the emotional support I feel. Knowing that this organization is behind me, knowing that my family is behind me, this gives me everything I need to persevere.

I hope to be accepted into a top university with a leading business program. I plan on continuing to work hard through college and to bring that same drive to the workforce. I have three young nieces and I hope that I can be the person they turn to for advice and guidance. My dream is to become successful enough that my mother will never have to work again.- I want to make my family proud and show them that the sacrifices they made for me were worth it. I also dream that one day I will be able to sit where you are sitting and give back to the organization that has already given me so much.

I am beyond grateful for all Tri-County has done for my family and me. The Tri-County Scholarship Fund allows me to attend an amazing school and become a Paramus Catholic graduate. You have given me the tools I need to one day achieve my dreams of providing a better life for my family and becoming a role model for my nieces. I have learned that all anyone needs is a chance. Tri-County has given me that chance.

Thank you.

