

Women's Essay for EEWN Scholarship by Jessica Lownes

The subtypes of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder can be characterized by symptoms of inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsive behavior; all of which at times I exhibit. I was diagnosed with severe ADHD during Kindergarten in 1998 and it has since proved to be the greatest challenge in every aspect of my life. I have had to endure and learn to overcome the obstacles this disorder and its symptoms create for me every day. Even though I was diagnosed at a very young age and given medical help, my obstacles became more challenging as I got older. As a child I had difficulty making friends. Because I was so young, I did not equate this to my ADHD. Perhaps because the "hyper" part of this disorder was so prevalent at the time, girls in my class left me out of plans. This was quite hurtful and I felt very isolated. It was not until I entered Middle School that I was able to understand and teach myself to temporarily halt the behaviors that previously had left me so alone. Through it all my Mom was my rock. Looking back now I realize that her efforts and constant attention to my disability changed my life. First she had me evaluated at a very early age with medical professionals which I now understand was key. Many of my teachers throughout my Middle School and High School experience did not understand ADHD and its symptoms. They thought when I was not paying attention or didn't hand an assignment in that I just didn't care or wasn't a good student. My Mom was my advocate; she battled the school administration to get me the resources services that enabled me to stay on top of my studies and helped me out when I deviated. When the SAT and ACT board turned down my application for extended time for testing services I was allocated during my school years due to my ADHD, my Mom took on the challenge and got all the documentation together, made the calls and got the decision reversed. I am proud to state that I was accepted into the National Honor Society and was accepted to the University of my Choice. Had my Mom not fought for me I am not sure I would be in that position today. My life experiences living with ADD have taught me so very much. I was shunned in Grammar School by the girls in my class because I was hyper and different. I vowed that I would never treat any girl I interacted with on any level badly. I am proud to state that I have so many friends and acquaintances in High School. This winter I attend a High School leadership conference in Buffalo and my take away from that experience is that everyone's opinions matter and everyone can have a positive voice.

My Mom is a very strong woman. She has worked all her life as a sales representative for large corporations. I observed during my personal struggles that many people had a hard time dealing with her because she was so direct and wouldn't take "no" for an answer. It's funny but when my Dad was at some of those same meetings he got treated differently. It made me realize that in certain situations women are treated differently and it made me angry. Unfortunately though we studied about the history of women's rights throughout many social studies classes there is still discrimination that occurs today. Studies have shown that women's salaries are still 10-20% below men's. There are still many more men in leading government roles; and those are just two examples. But those numbers are changing, even if ever so slowly. I personally believe that women have to continue to become educated. Studies also show that there are now more women attending Universities than men. "Knowledge is power," or so the saying goes. Therefore I know that I can make a difference. I look forward to attending college, meeting people from around the country, especially other strong young women who want to make a difference in the world. I believe that if we support each other we can do anything we want to do and I have plans to do just that.