

To whom it may concern,

As you may know I was unenrolled from school twice last spring which means that I am ineligible to play volleyball this fall. Last year was very difficult for me due to both personal and medical conflicts. I went through a series of treatments for several illnesses and injuries that include chronic urticaria, gastritis, a fractured arm, and lastly clinical depression. Simultaneously I was facing many family issues that caused me to leave town for a while.

It started with the chronic urticaria or more commonly known as chronic hives. I started to break out in massive amounts of hives all over my body and it got to the point where I could not attend school. I spent a week trying to figure out what I was having an allergic reaction to as well as taking medication (Benadryl). The hives would go away for a day at most and then I would break out again, and after about two or three weeks of breakouts, I decided it was time to see a doctor. The first doctor I saw prescribed me with a medication called hydroxyzine, that is supposed to stop the histamine levels in my body, however, the downside is that it is about two times stronger than benadryl. I was out of school for a while due to the side effects of this medication. I tried to go to school while taking the hydroxyzine but I couldn't focus in class. This medication worked very well at first and I eventually came back to school, but then the breakouts started again. I immediately made an appointment and the second doctor I saw started a different treatment of steroids and antacids that were essentially supposed to do the same thing (shut down the histamine levels in my body), but again the side effects were harsh on me. This worked for a while and again I was breaking out, but it wasn't as bad as before. My mother took

me to an allergy specialist who said that the steroids did the trick but I would need to be on one last medication (Zyrtec) for a few months before the breakouts would stop completely.

Soon I was back in school regularly and I missed a few days here and there but for the most part I was okay. By then I was already behind in school and I even had to drop a few classes like AP Language and Composition and Spanish IV. During the time I was also dealing with some very harsh family conflicts.

My mom had been really sick and still had to make it to work in Salem. She finally went to urgent care after work one day and found out she was severely anemic and needed several blood transfusions. They wanted to put her in an ambulance to the nearest hospital but due to some financial issues we couldn't possibly afford to pay for the ride. They wouldn't let her drive so my mom had no choice but to get a hold of my father who, just the year before, was kicked out of the house. The year before last year was also very trying because of all the tension in my family. My father was not making the best choices and actually put us all in a lot of financial turmoil due to his addictions. He was a drug addict and was very abusive both verbally and emotionally, but never physically. However, being around him was always a very scary experience and we never really knew if things were going to escalate. He wasn't the father that raised us anymore and that's why we needed to kick him out. My mother got a restraining order against him and we kept in touch but we didn't really see him for a year.

When my mom got sick, she was stuck in Salem and we had no way of getting to her. That is why she called my father. He came home that week and it was very, very hard for my sisters and I. Things were really tense at home and it started to get bad again. We (my sisters and I) left town the next week and we were gone for about two weeks bouncing from one family member to

the next. Finally we came home because we needed to go to school and to be completely honest, I could not focus in class. It took a long while but we finally put the past behind us and my father started making amends. He went through rehab and things got a lot better, that is until I got sick again.

That is when I was diagnosed with gastritis; a condition where the stomach produces too much acid and it starts to eat away at the stomach lining. This is similar to an ulcer in the way of its symptoms. I could not hold any form of food or liquid down and spent a week vomiting. I also had very bad stomach pains and it eventually got to the point where I couldn't even keep water and saltines down. I lost five pounds in under a week and I thought maybe I just had some sort of stomach flu, but the intense pain I felt in my stomach and sides was too much to overlook. I saw a doctor who diagnosed me and prescribed me with probiotics and antacids which helped a lot. By this time I was unenrolled from school and I had to have my parents take me in. This is when I started to talk to my counselor, Brooke Davidson, about my classes and my future at Westview. I was re-enrolled into my classes and again I would miss a few classes here and there but it was all back to normal. However, I started to realize that I was failing classes and I was so behind that I thought I wasn't going to be able to graduate on time. This is when I broke my arm and in the most inconvenient time too. I was waking up for school one morning when I slipped and fell on the ground in the kitchen. My dad took me to the ER where a few doctors took x rays and told me I broke my arm. They put me on hydrocodone and ibuprofen for the pain and I planned on going to school but I couldn't even hold a conversation. I had ACT testing the next morning but again I was not in the right mindset for such an important test. The next week I was sent across town to a different clinic to get a cast put on, but they decided to take a few more x rays. They

then discovered that the fracture was actually a sprain and severe contusion along my ulna and radius. I got a wrist brace and had to do strengthening exercises.

By this time I was so far behind in school that I just gave up and I withdrew from everything. I stopped going to school, I stopped talking to my friends, I stopped talking to my family, and I stopped participating in anything I ever enjoyed doing. I couldn't complete simple tasks without being completely winded afterwards and I stopped eating and then soon I stopped sleeping. I couldn't move out from underneath my sheets and I felt drained and lethargic constantly. Some days I would do nothing but cry and then some days I was so far beyond emotions and I felt absolutely nothing. I would just stare at my ceiling for hours on end. Soon it got so bad and I was in such a dark place in my mind that I had suicidal thoughts daily. And it was so scary because I didn't want that, I didn't want to end my life. I was so scared that I went back to school and I started talking to Brooke. I didn't plan on telling her about my thoughts, but it came out like word vomit and I am so glad that it did. She helped me so much and immediately got my parents involved. I made an appointment with my doctor and got a psych evaluation. I was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and Social Anxiety and I found out that not only did my mother and sister have depressive disorders, but my aunt and grandmother on my father's side also had mood and anxiety disorders. My therapist told me that I was unfortunate enough to inherit these genetic disorders and that it wasn't my fault. This is a condition that I will most likely have to deal with for the majority of my life and it took everything that happened this past year to trigger it. I am now in treatment with antidepressants and weekly therapy and I actually feel in control of myself for once. At first I was in such a bad spot that my therapist wanted to put me in a hospital for a short time, but neither my mother nor I wanted that.

I am excited to say that even though I am still trying to find the right medicine for my condition, I have not felt this happy in a long time. I am excited about school, seeing my friends and teachers, and hopefully about volleyball this fall.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ku'ulei Wong