

My name is Abigail Eli, a 38-year-old DOE substitute teacher. I mainly work for Waianae High and Intermediate School and aspire to a full-time position there. I am the 2nd oldest child of a family of 11. I have 13 children that I am raising, nine of which are legally mine. We are voluntarily raising the other four without any assistance. We provide for their needs out of our own pockets. We also care for another 8-10 children from transitional shelters every weekend and on school breaks. I would love to set an exemplified example for all of them.

I myself have experienced tremendous hurdles in life. To be self-sufficient was a necessity because I was the 2nd oldest. I began working at McDonald's between the ages of 15-18 years old as a crew trainer. Due to difficulties that arose, I left high school my junior year and took my GED exam and passed. As soon as I turned 18 years old, I attended the International Air Academy and graduated second in my class. I immediately began working for United Airlines, quickly being promoted to a reservations department trainer. I was married by the time I was 19 years old and had my first child at the age of 20. From 2001-2016 I was a homemaker. My oldest is 18 years old and my youngest is eight.

I decided to go back to school to become an ordained pastor in 2014. Attending Global University, I pushed myself to complete my courses as fast as I could. I am self-driven and do not like to procrastinate. I always give my best, so everything I do, I do it well. I took 27 courses in one year attaining a 4.0. I was told this usually takes most people six years to do. Taking those classes boosted my self-confidence and helped me to believe that I am smarter than I had given myself credit for. I began looking for ways that I could make an impact in my community and since I have always had a passion for teaching, I took a course to become a substituted teacher, passing the final exam with a 99%. I have been teaching ever since.

I truly love helping people and love to educate myself on everything that I am curious about. After taking care of my aunty and an elderly woman who passed away from cancer, I wanted to be a trained caregiver because I know that I will be doing this for others. I attended Healthcare Training & Career Consultants, Inc. and completed a rigorous training for all CNA (Certified Nurse Assistant), PCT (Patient Care Technician) Course, and Medical Terminology courses. All of my written and skills exams, I passed with a 95% or higher. I had originally thought to go into the medical field, but I was asked by some of our local teachers to reconsider going back to school to become a full-time teacher. I know in my heart that I light up every time I walk on the campus and enjoy working with the students.

All these years I never attended college because my parents told me that we wouldn't be able to afford it, that I wouldn't qualify for scholarships, and that women should raise their family. Today, I know that having a quality education is a great benefit for my family. Although I am older, I have decided to pursue my goals, but I desperately need financial support. Without it, I know this dream will not come to fruition.

Currently, I am completing my final semester with Leeward Community College and heading towards Chaminade University of Honolulu in the Spring of 2020 to continue working towards my Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education in Mathematics. As of December 2019, I have earned 61 credits while sustaining a 4.0 GPA. Funding permitted, I would love to continue on and get my master's degree I education.

My long-term goal is to one day, have a home, where I take in many more troubled teens. One caring adult can change anyone's life for the better. In the summer of 2016, I took my family to live with the

homeless community here in Waianae for two months. I saw one outstanding factor: most of the adults there never graduated from high school. I saw three generations in that encampment, all of which were high school dropouts. Tough living environments often mean education is placed on the back burner. If no one lives life with these wonderful people, then they will never see their value. I already have plans to open a tutoring center in Makaha under our non-profit organization, Makaha Community Center, that is currently under construction. I work with 11 homeless/low-income communities and tutor many children from my home. The greatest reward is when they show me their report cards with 3.5 GPA and above, for the very first time in their life. I live alongside many people, and I have seen the greatness that can come from someone sitting with them every day and helping them educationally. Right now, I can only help them get through high school. I desire to educate myself further so that I can help many people through college, too. If given this scholarship you will not be disappointed. I will make a difference in many lives for generations to come.