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Shirley Chisholm Activist Award

The air is dry, the sun is beaming and the only thing running through my mind is when this race is going to start. Yet, when I reach the halfway point, all I imagine is reaching the finish line. The halfway point, this is where I stand today as a graduating senior at The City University of New York, Brooklyn College. The journey of life for me, thus far is similar to one of the many 6k races I have competed in throughout my college career. During my four years in college, I have learned and encountered many truths about myself and where I want to end up in the future. Ever since I was a little girl, when asked what I wanted to be when I grow up, I always replied, a doctor. Today, at the halfway point in my life, I ask myself the same question and I have the same reply. Becoming a medical doctor and helping those in need, is the finish line in my race.

I have conquered the hills and hear my coach telling me to push it out, I am half way through. Half way through, a moment to breathe and realize the end is near, is my thought at this very point in a race. After graduating Brooklyn College in the Spring of 2012, I plan on attending medical school in the Fall of 2013. My decision to take a year off between my undergraduate and graduate studies, was mainly due to my keen interest in exploring medicine in another realm other than education. This past summer, I was fortunate enough to visit Honduras on a medical brigade with the Brooklyn College Chapter of Global Medical Brigades. For most people, a trip to Honduras revolves around Mayan ruins and reef diving. For our group of twenty four students, however, it involved something much more meaningful. Throughout the week long brigade, we provided medical care to over five hundred locals of the village, Cuesta Grande, distributing medicine and giving out advice on matters of health and hygiene. The trip made me realize what I had at home and how life is different for people in other parts of the world. The ability to practice community medicine and gain a hands-on opportunity from this brigade was the perfect clinical and public service learning experience I was waiting to encounter.

As the Vice President of the Brooklyn College Chapter of Global Medical Brigades, this year we are planning our second medical brigade to Panama, this coming June. Researching and filling out grant applications, preparing events, and recruiting new students are some of the many responsibilities I have as the Vice President. Our goal this year, is to fundraise approximately seventy five percent of the money needed for our mission, twenty five percent more than we fundraised last year. Being a member of this student led, non-profit organization has allowed me to build character and leadership qualities, I never knew I embodied. Not only have I grown as a student, but I have also grown as a volunteer. The Global Medical Brigades organization is a great way for me to pursue my interest in global health care and become a catalyst for change.

Similar to Shirley Chisholm, I am a catalyst for change. A change in providing health care to those in the world who are less fortunate than me. Those who can not walk to the nearest drug store to fill a prescription, those who only have money to buy dinner for that night, those who inspire me to become the best student, volunteer, doctor and human being I can be, those who have touched me in an unforgettable way. As Chisholm, I want to be remembered as a woman who fought for change and made a difference. My adventures in practicing global health care do not stop when I graduate Brooklyn College. I plan on using my year off to travel and

provide health care in India and Africa through programs such as Foundation of Orthopedics and Complex Spine. My passion for global health care will allow me to fulfill the duties of a medical doctor. The main duty of a medical doctor is to relate to their patients on a very serious matter, their health. Not only does a medical doctor have to diagnose a problem, but they also have to provide their patient with a sense of comfort and ease. Chisholm's finish line has inspired young women to reach for their goals. Her story and courage has made me push to reach my finish line. My finish line is a place, that I hope to one day be prepared to fight any medical battles that come my way.