

Dear (name withheld),

Just yesterday I received the unexpected news that I will have the honor of receiving support in the form of a scholarship from you. I would very much like to express my gratitude as your help is much needed in these trying times: my father is fighting an uphill battle against cancer which has drained most of my family's savings. It is in part due to your generosity that I will be able to continue my medical education at Johns Hopkins.

Please allow me to tell you a little more about myself, my ongoing medical training as well as my goals and aspirations. I am originally from Germany; I grew up in the city of Hamelin where the pied-piper story takes place. After high school, it is mandatory for young men to either join the army or serve their country in another way for one year – the government assigned me to work as a paramedic on a local ambulance. I must admit that at first I did not like my assignment: working long hours, nights, weekends. I wanted to become a chemist and the mandated year seemed to be holding me back. However, as time passed, I surprisingly found myself enjoying my work: not so much the adrenaline of a trauma-call, but the stories of my patients. Many were elderly people who had lived through the Second World War, some of them were civilians scared in their basements during a bombing raid, and others were soldiers who had never come to terms with what they had done. Their stories were educational, emotional and sometimes tragic. I enjoyed listening to them and quickly learned that my ears could heal more than my hands.

After my mandated time was up, I volunteered to work for another year as I felt that there was much good left to do in my community. Yet soon I came to realize that my training as a paramedic was too limited, too basic. There were so many things I could not understand, symptoms and diseases I could not figure out. In the course of my second year as a paramedic, I began to abandon my plans of studying chemistry and slowly developed an interest in studying medicine. I enrolled at a university on the other side of the world, packed my bags and began my journey to becoming a doctor.

During my time as an undergraduate at the University of Montana, I met my wife who was studying physics with plans of passing on her knowledge to the underprivileged in America's inner cities. In that respect it was very fortunate that Johns Hopkins was willing to take me on as one of their students as there is a great need in this city for the skills of a physician as well as the skills of a teacher. I am now in my second year of my medical training and am looking forward for the chance to apply what I have learned thus far on the wards next year. My plans for residency are not yet set in stone, but I am much intrigued by the field of emergency medicine or an intensive care specialty. Each will give me the chance to interact with patients from all walks of life, listen to their stories and hopefully mend their wounds, whether of the body or of the mind.

Again, thank you very much for your support and making it possible for me to pursue my dream.

Sincerely,  
(name withheld)