

Living with my single mother, a nurse who often works over 60 hours a week to support my family, has taught me the value of hard work. From her, I have learned to be passionate and meticulous in all the work that I do. She instilled in me need to constantly stay busy and involved. I thrive in an environment that challenges me and requires quick thinking. Due to the influence of my mother, I have developed a strong perseverance and sense of determination. My parents' divorce kept me in a changing environment growing up – I had to adapt to a variety of living situations with little finances to support us. From this, I acquired the skills of being thrifty and knowing how to make sacrifices. The characteristics I have developed through my home environment growing up made me into an ideal candidate for vet school and a future veterinarian – a person who is passionate and dedicated to their work, but who also can cope with a fast-paced environment and problematic situations. For the past seven years, I have applied these qualities volunteering and caring for animals, developing my interest in veterinary medicine further.

When I was thirteen, I volunteered at Birmingham Zoo in Alabama. A large part of my role there included guest education about the animals on exhibit, usually using artifacts such as animal hides and skulls to explain various topics. I worked mainly in the lorikeet exhibit, where I stayed in the exhibit with the birds while guests walked through. My jobs were to watch over the interactions between the birds and the guests, as well as to educate the guests about the birds. From working there, I realized that I really liked getting to educate people about animals, a large portion of the job of a veterinarian.

The most influential experience I've had on my decision to become a veterinarian was working at Elk Grove Pet Clinic. I have been a kennel attendant there since 2007, where my job is to take care of all the in-house pets, care for the boarding animals, assist in appointments, give medications, and help with the cleaning of the clinic. I have observed numerous surgeries, including routine spay and neuter surgeries, but also more unusual surgeries such as a 6 pound tumor removal from a dog and a surgery on the clinic's ferret to remove tumors from his pancreas. I have handled and cared for not only cats and dogs, but also macaws, cockatoos, snakes, ferrets, chinchillas, and tortoises. Through working there, I had the opportunity to observe the duties of a private practice vet and see how they normally handle appointments, surgeries, and client communication in difficult situations. I have observed the doctor discussing with clients care options and the possibility of euthanasia, as well as assisted in euthanasia. I have also assisted during emergencies, such as immediate care for dog hit by a car. Through working at Elk Grove Pet Clinic, I have seen the responsibilities of a vet in caring for an animal in appointments and emergencies, as well as the importance of educating and discussing options with the pet owners.

I spent my junior year of college interning at the Champaign County Humane Society. I did an Animal Care Internship in the fall and a Medical/Lab Internship in the spring. The Medical/Lab Internship reaffirmed my decision of wanting to go to veterinary school. While interning, I was able to gain experience performing physical exams, drawing blood, giving treatments and medications, restraining animals, microchipping animals, trimming nails, and learning what signs to look for in a sick animal. I learned how to make and read an ear cytology slide, as well as how to tell if an animal has a bacterial ear infection or ear mites. The animals that I worked with were mainly cats and dogs, but also included guinea pigs, rabbits, ferrets, hamsters, chinchillas, and bearded dragons. I was able to compare

the duties of a shelter veterinarian and a private practice veterinarian, which varied due to the financial constraints of a shelter and the fact that the animals in the shelter do not have owners for the veterinarian to consult with. Through my internships, I learned how much I enjoy doing physical exams, finding out what is wrong with an animal, and learning how to treat it.

As a veterinarian, I would be able to apply all of these experiences by working in a science that is continually advancing, while contributing to the field through research and public education. The skills that I have developed and the knowledge I have gained through working with animals have strengthened my interest in veterinary medicine. Overall, my experiences with animals, my profound passion for science, and the characteristics I have developed through my home environment have shaped me into an excellent candidate for veterinary school.