

“With her condition, we can either go two ways: A more vigorous path where she is hooked up to more machines to preserve her life, or a calmer path in hospice care where we focus on quality of life.” I looked over at my grandmother in the hospital bed, then back at the doctor who was giving us a choice on what to do since she was not getting any better. I knew that when we got the call that she had internal bleeding in her brain, she was not going to live for too long, but I had hoped that it would magically go away and that she would miraculously recover. I prayed and prayed that the doctor could do something, but deep down I knew that they had done everything they could already, and now they were providing us with a choice that would be best for her and us. For the first time, I realized that physicians do more than just treat patients to make money and pay bills.

While reading an article online, I came across a quote by William J. Mayo that states, “The aim of medicine is to prevent disease and prolong life; the ideal of medicine is to eliminate the need of a physician.” These words stuck with me because they changed how I perceived doctors and healthcare workers alike. This inspired me to participate in the EVMS Health Sciences Academy throughout high school. I wanted to learn what it was like to be a doctor and experience what they did on a day-to-day basis, even if it was just a sliver. Hearing different doctors from many different departments speak about their stories, learning how to do basic suturing, ultrasounds, and other surgery techniques, and overall talking to the different residents and medical students was an opportunity that I am truly grateful for. There was one mentor, Kayla, that interested me the most. She worked in the ICU and she told me that it is so rewarding to know that, as a doctor and a human being, she can treat her patients with the proper care they need, as well as their loved ones who are praying that they get better by giving them a peace of mind.

Through volunteer work at my church, I have learned what it is like to want to help people in need not only because they need it, but because you want to be the one to help them. For instance, there are many deaf/hard of hearing children that come to Sunday school and they do not have anyone to interpret for them, making them feel left out. Being the one to interpret and help make them feel included has been such a gratifying experience. It was not about just doing a service job for a random person, it was about being able to assist and help a specific person in a situation where they could not do anything. Another opportunity that I was able to help someone in need was when my church housed a group of homeless people for a week. Through this experience, I was able to treat minor wounds that they had. This also gave me a chance to engage in several conversations with them, asking about lives and old stories they felt like sharing. It was not anything significant, but I learned that taking care of people requires compassion, willingness to provide help, and a person that is understanding.

Physicians overall may be seen as cold people who just treat patients like a programmed robot doing a routine every day. However, that is not the kind of doctor people want to look after

them or their loved ones. They want someone who cares about them and wants to help them outside of the fact that it is just their job to. I want to be a physician who not only provides the best care and service to the patient but also honest care and compassion to them and those who are around them.