

Dear Volunteers of America,

Thank you for your support in my pursuit of higher education. Gratitude is an emotion I have become accustomed to lately. VOA has encouraged me to believe in my aspirations and myself. Generosity is a characteristic that defines VOA. Your heart for youth in the community is rare. Many students have been harmed by the harsh realities of life. Yet, your foundation as a whole is committed to being a light in the community and provides shelter and hope for those who are downtrodden.

After facing many traumatic events in my life, I can honestly say that our generation is reaping the effects of not only a fatherless generation, but a motherless generation as well. However, VOA has been a source of a major thriving revolution in the community to break the cycles of destitution. This commitment has impacted my life greatly. With that in mind, I am very grateful that VOA has helped piece families back together like mine. Your foundation truly has the heart of a servant.

Though I do not have my biological parents in my life, I have built a wonderful community around me and I am so blessed that VOA has become part of that community. Each individual I have encountered at VOA has been very tender and loving. Thank you. Through possessing these unique qualities others are drawn in and able to find healing.

As Dr. Moreland said in her speech at the ceremony adversity is an opportunity. I believe we have a choice on how we view our trials and when we try to view the, positively more blessings are able to seep into our lives. This has been true in my own life. For example, VOA has given me the chance to share my story and realize my family's past does not define me. Rather my past has become my drive to become triumphant.

VOA thank you for all your hard work. I can never explain to you the vast impact you have had on my life. You have not only believed in my educational aspirations but also my life ambitions. Your foundation encourages me to strive to do more for my community. To close, I would like to say that I am so appreciative of all your support and look forward to keeping in contact! Thank you for being a source of light in our community to the lost.

With love,

Dominique Cruz-Reyes