

LUKE SKYWALKER

STATEMENT

Doctors said she would never walk on her own. She walked at two years old. They also said she would never be able to communicate, but she can do that too. My sister Leia is a testament to drive, desire, and inspiration. Born with Leukemia, she was never given much of a chance at a normal life, but through the help of those around him his life has been filled with a multitude of opportunities and triumphs. Growing up with an older sibling like Leia has shaped me into the person that I am today; one who is motivated, passionate, and eager to serve others. Her presence in my life has provided the drive to be the best I can, while maintaining the core ideal of serving those in need. Dentistry is an avenue by which this may be obtained; allowing one to flourish as a professional, while placing them in a position where their skills can improve the lives of others.

Throughout dental school, I participated every year in a student-run homeless clinic, providing dental care to over 500 homeless individuals throughout the San Francisco area. I was nominated the *student of the year* for my dedication to serving this clinic. I also helped organize numerous community service events, learning the program organization, supervisory and leadership skills and strategies to efficiently and effectively serve underserved populations in urban communities.

During my third year, I was elected class president. As president I was responsible for easing the transition from pre-clinical studies to the student clinic. One initiative was to organize brown bag lunches focused on skills development, including D4s sharing their transition experience or faculty discussing efficiency techniques. Partly due to these efforts, the clinical production for my class was nearly double that of the class before it. At the end of my term as class president I was elected by my classmates to receive the Outstanding Peer Award. It feels great to be recognized by your peers, and to know you have earned their trust and respect. Recognition of clinical and academic skills by faculty is also a great honor, for which I received a scholarship from the National Dental Honor Society. Although recognition and awards are a nice bonus, they are merely a product of the hard work, self-discipline, and desire that I have carried with me throughout my life.

My career aspirations include becoming a leader in the field of general dentistry. I plan on doing this by shaping my own practice around some of the core beliefs given to me by my sister. This includes serving those with the highest need. The medically compromised, and mentally or physically challenged population represents a demanding subset of patients whose dental needs often go unmet. Integrating hospital dentistry into my practice will help serve this population. I hope to serve this group of patients, by utilizing proven techniques and the newest, most proficient technology available. I also plan on being a leader in the dental community, relying on my experience in various leadership positions to help progress the role of a general dentist in today's society, with the ultimate goal of improving overall oral health.

A general practice residency is a key aspect in obtaining my future goals. Through it, I can increase my skill and efficiency while learning new techniques, and let me serve a patient population that is especially close to my heart. The advanced training in hospital dentistry will give me the opportunity to treat patients like my sister: patients whose medical and/or mental status would normally limit the amount of dental care they receive. The care and diligent planning required to treat this patient population in a general dentistry setting can only be obtained through the training received in a general practice residency.

Author Ganga Stone put it perfectly when she said, "the desire to serve others is the highest impulse of the human heart and the rewards of such service are beyond measure." The advanced training provided in a general practice residency offers me the opportunity to serve others to the greatest extent possible. The mere thought that I will be able to utilize the drive, desire, and inspiration taught to me by my sister as a means by which I can serve people like himself is more reward than I could ever dream of.