

Coming from a family where my father is a vet and my mother a nurse, I have plenty of accesses to living things. When I was in kindergarten, I had my first pet, a silkworm, brought home by my parents. Living with this little creature that built beautiful cocoons, I decided to discover how things worked inside her. I kept asking why, but my parents only told me some, and they encouraged me to find the answer by myself. This opened the gate between biochemistry and me.

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Attracted to those mysteries, I entered a program in which kids like me worked together to take care of the silkworms. My dad taught me how to do simple research, and I observed my silkworms, collected data and attended lectures about the mechanisms inside the silkworms' bodies. My parents encouraged me to dive deeper in life sciences, and so I was fortunate to participate in a course offered by American Heart Association about how to save people when they are in danger.

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During the time I spent in my boarding high school, my parents could no longer influence me everyday. However, my interest in life sciences has already grown, and I have begun to direct it by myself.

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I take chemistry class every year. The more I learnt the content, the more I became addicted to biochemistry. All the organic particles come together to form living creatures that broaden my horizon. The knowledge I learn in and out of class starts to answer those questions hovering in my mind. The independent research skills my parents taught me when I was little now assist me to discover answers with my own hands, and my self-confidence guided me to participate in programs that interested me but were out of my comfort zone.

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In the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, I participated in the volunteering program Elephant Protection, settled in Sri Lanka. I spent a week to company the elephants in the elephant orphanage, sweeping their habitat, preparing their food, cleaning their excreta and bathing them. I learned a lot from the local breeders. They shared interesting stories between elephants and themselves, and their success in rescuing dying elephants with knowledge of biology and veterinary science fascinated me. I wished I could be the expert one day to help these animals myself.

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Benefiting from the influences my parents had on me, I am now determined to study more about biochemistry in college and pursue a career that can enable me to help both human beings and animals.

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