

Gavin Berrett

Year in School: 10

Roy High School

Utah

Driven by Psychiatry

Ever since the early years of my adolescence, I've struggled with a condition known as misophonia. Simply put, certain sounds trigger emotional reactions in my brain, leading me to become extremely distracted and agitated by these sounds. Noticing this in myself led me to look for prevalence of mental illnesses across the population and even among those that I know. In my searching, I found a shocking statistic: about $\frac{1}{4}$ of all adults suffer from a diagnosable mental illness each year.

My fascination with mental illnesses continued to grow as I enrolled in my AP Psychology class at my high school. I learned about the wide variety of neurological and psychological disorders, and how to treat them. I even began to do personal study, and soon enough, I found myself deep in a research rabbit hole. I was learning all about how the field of psychology branches out, and all of the potential careers associated with it. Could I possibly turn my newfound love for psychology into a career that would allow me to help people like myself everyday?

Soon enough, I had my answer. The field of psychiatry uses psychological principles and treatment techniques accompanied by medicinal and biomedical treatments to give an eclectic treatment to clients who are struggling with mental and neurological illnesses. However, this is an incredibly difficult career to obtain. Not only must a prospective psychiatrist have a degree in psychology, but they must be a licensed practitioner of medicine as well! Due to such high qualifications, there is a severe lack of psychiatrists in the state of Utah. Moreover, this lack of available treatment and the high prevalence of mental illness within the state of Utah means that

a lot of people struggling with debilitating conditions aren't getting the help they need and deserve. My learning of this information lit an even brighter fire within me.

I've now become a leading member of my school's Psi Alpha Honor Society (an honor's society for psychology students, and we happen to be the first branch in Utah and one of only a few in the west half of the U.S.), thrived in my AP Psychology class, searched for internship opportunities in this field, and so much more. I've even become a member of my local HOSA chapter (an organization for future health professionals) and led my team toward winning first place medals in our competitive category and even qualifying for international competitions.

Most everything I do in school and extracurriculars is geared toward my future career. I fully intend on continuing these activities and my education, in the hopes that I will someday accomplish my goal of becoming a psychiatrist. Receiving this scholarship would help me move forward in my career path, allowing me to help those who need it most.