

"Errrrrtt.....boom."

The podium, which had been sitting in the middle of the table in the front of the classroom only a few seconds earlier, lay at my feet. It would have been on them, if I hadn't moved out of the way. The teacher introduced himself as Mr. Jamison and welcomed us to Calculus 1, which would be held at 7:45 every morning, Monday through Friday. He proceeded to tell us that not many would make it through his class, and to make sure the podium wasn't on the table next time cause he didn't like it there. This was the first class of my freshman year at Rocky Mountain College.

Many people think that this is the most discouraging thing that could happen to a new student, especially a first time minority student at a predominantly white university. However, it was this class and teacher that changed my attitude towards education. I grew up on the Northern Cheyenne reservation, and graduated from an off-reservation school that was one of the best in the state. Despite this, I never felt challenged or encouraged to continue my education. It was at college where I first met professors that saw my potential and challenged me to use it. It was at college that I first learned what I was capable of. I went to college with no clear goals in mind and did not even expect to finish. I came away from college with good grades, a firm idea of where I wanted to be in life, and the belief that with hard work and determination I could accomplish what I put my mind to. One thing that kept me going strong throughout my college career was my Northern Cheyenne heritage. School wasn't always easy, and many times I became discouraged. Every time I did, I thought of what my people went through in the past - the Cheyenne Exodus, Battle of Little Big Horn, Sand Creek Massacre, Washita Massacre - and how easy my life is in comparison. All my necessities were taken care of, my family was safe, and all I had to do was go to school and use my mind.

I have stayed as involved as possible with my Tribe while attending school and living off the reservation. During the summer, I volunteered for the Northern Cheyenne Natural Resources Department. Throughout the school year, I volunteered for the Native Reign Youth group, which promotes healthy lifestyles among Native Youth. More recently, I have been involved with the DKMC School to Work Junior Pathmakers

Mentoring Network, a network aimed at high school students. I have also returned to my reservation to work. It has not always been easy, but I feel committed to helping my Tribe.

I chose Computer Science because of the job availability and flexibility. I have worked on my reservation for the past year, and I know there is a great need for employment. After I gain experience, I am interested in coming back to the reservation to start my own company and provide employment opportunities. Technology has a bright future on our reservation because we are isolated; it doesn't discriminate in rural areas. In order to accomplish this goal, I plan to attend the Graduate program in Computer Science at MSU-Bozeman. Before I can enter the graduate program I must make up one year of undergraduate deficiencies. Since I already have my degree, it is difficult to find funding. Any help your organization could give me would be greatly appreciated.