

ESSAY

In fourth grade, I went through weeks of extreme dehydration and nausea. During that time, I was terrified, I didn't know what was happening to my body. When I was eventually hospitalised and diagnosed with diabetes, I was told I had an extreme case of hyperglycemia, though it did not serve the relief that I had hoped for. Instead, it posed more questions and fears. I was so overwhelmed with new information and vocabulary, and accepting this lifelong condition seemed impossible.

My resentment towards my diabetes only worsened when I returned to school. I quickly learned that I could no longer experience a regular school day like my peers. For instance, I missed out on lunches and recesses with my friends, felt fatigued and light-headed during gym class, and had to excuse myself frequently to the washroom. I even recall being forced to run laps around the school by my principal to 'lower' my blood glucose levels. Too often, I felt embarrassed and like a burden to my teachers and friends, always having to ask for special privileges and requests for my diabetes. Eventually, I started taking my glucose readings less frequently and stopped properly monitoring my diet.

To me, diabetes was isolating, embarrassing, and confusing...so imagine my surprise when I realised others saw it differently! Friends, family, and teachers viewed my adaptation to this new lifestyle as brave and courageous. Many also noticed that my feelings of isolation taught me to be more inclusive of others. I remember a friend writing a school project about 'Heroes' and choosing me because she was inspired by my endurance in handling diabetes. From those encouraging and positive comments, I learned that perseverance and empathy were my superpowers, and diabetes would just be one of several villains I'd encounter and eventually learn to love. I definitely appreciated having an early excuse out of gym classes!

As I got older, I combined both my knowledge of diabetes and value in inclusivity to educate and advocate. For example, I wrote chemistry papers on insulin molecules, video projects on teaching diabetes to non-diabetics, and a website on how to use basic math to monitor glucose levels. Also, I often engaged in meaningful conversations with recently-diagnosed diabetics and non-diabetics, sharing my experiences to help them understand their own or their loved ones' struggles with diabetes. Through these, I educated students and teachers on diabetes, in the hopes that they would help the diabetics in their lives. I felt fulfilled knowing diabetics like me would have more knowledgeable and compassionate people surrounding them through this tough journey.

My passion for inclusivity and advocacy only grew in high school and developed into different social issues. I joined several school clubs that promoted these values, such as the Gay-Straight Alliance, Land Acknowledgement Council, and Best Buddies Club. I was also elected as the Equity Officer for my school's student government!

While I strongly identified myself with my values and passion for equity, diversity and inclusion, I was unsure how to apply these skills to a career. Fortunately, conversations with my social worker at my diabetes clinic opened my eyes to the potential of my knowledge and empathy. I was inspired by her questions, mannerisms, and the impact she had on my 8-year journey with diabetes. She sparked this idea that I could use my own experiences and skills to impact the lives of people (with diabetes) through education,

support, and advocacy. Although my future career in social work may not focus solely on diabetes, she showed me how flexible and impactful a career in social work could be.

Thus, my journey through integrating diabetes into my life led me to my passion in equity and inclusion. To me, this is the core purpose of social work, to use my knowledge and experiences to help others learn to love themselves, scars and all. I want to help those that are fearful of a major change in their life, inspire people to appreciate the most difficult parts of themselves, and teach others to be inclusive and equitable. If my 'superpower' is my perseverance and empathy, then it only seems right that my purpose is to love and help others!

PROOF OF DISABILITY



William Osler
Health System

Date: July 24, 2024

Re: Sophia Alisa Pimentel

DOB: 29 Nov 2006

The patient named above has ☒ Type 1 ☐ Type 2 diabetes and requires diabetes supplies including but not limited to:

- Insulin
- Glucagon
- Pen needle tips
- Glucose test strips and lancets
- Ketone test strips (urine or blood)
- Continuous glucose monitor (Dexcom, Guardian)
- Flash glucose monitor (Libre 1, Libre 2)
- Other: Insulin pump reservoirs, infusion sets, tapes

Their diabetes is treated with: Humalog and Tresiba insulins

Sincerely,

☒ Dr. A. Bahm



☐ Dr. S. Gerber

☐ Dr. S. Zborovski

Pediatric Diabetes Program
William Osler Health System
20 Lynch Street, Brampton Ont.
L6W 2Z8
Tel: 905-863-2562
Fax: 905-863-2516

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA



Ontario

Ontario Secondary School Diploma Diplôme d'études secondaires de l'Ontario

This Diploma is granted to
Ce diplôme est décerné à

Sophia Alisa Pimentel

a student of
élève de

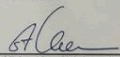
Holy Cross Catholic Academy

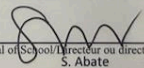
who has fulfilled the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma
in accordance with the provisions of the Ministry of Education, Ontario.

qui a rempli les exigences prescrites pour l'obtention du diplôme d'études secondaires de l'Ontario,
en vertu des dispositions du ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario.


Dated at
Délivré à **Vaughan, Ontario**

the
ce **27th** day of
jour de **June 2024**


Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation


Principal of School / Directeur ou directrice de l'école
S. Abate

PROOF OF UNI PROGRAM (York)


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Congratulations - You have 2 offer(s)!

Note: Offer details may be different from the details of your selected program choice.

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<div>Offer</div> <div>McMaster University - Social Sciences I - For Choice 03</div> <div>Program Code: ML Offer Description: SOCSCI1</div> <div>Expired: 2024-06-03</div>	<div>Offer - Accepted</div> <div>York University - Social Work (BSW) - For Choice 04</div> <div>Program Code: YFS Offer Description: Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies Bachelor of Social Work Social Work</div> <div>Expires: 2024-06-03</div>
<div>Offer</div> <div>York University - Sexuality Studies (BA, IBA) - For Choice 05</div> <div>Program Code: YBN Offer Description: Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies Bachelor of Arts Sexuality Studies</div> <div>Expires: 2024-06-03</div>	


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