

Legacy of Life Scholarship Essay

Applicant: Brianna Hameni Bieleu

Two Aunts, Two Outcomes, One Message: Be a Lifesaver

Good afternoon, everyone. I want to start by welcoming all of you, my fellow members of the Premedical Education Society Club, and thanking you for taking the time to be here today. Like many of you, I'm passionate about medicine, science, and helping others. That's why I'm excited to talk to you today about something very personal to me: organ, eye, and tissue donation.

This topic hits close to home for me. One of my aunts is alive today because she received a kidney from a donor. That single, selfless gift gave her a second chance at life. But I also had another aunt who wasn't so lucky. She needed a lung transplant but didn't get one in time. As a result, she passed away, and now her children, my cousins and friends, are growing up without their mother. That loss changed our lives and made me realize how powerful one decision can be.

As future healthcare professionals, we all talk about wanting to make a difference. But here's the thing: we don't have to wait until we're wearing white coats to save lives. Right now, more than 100,000 people in the U.S. are waiting for life-saving transplants, and 17 die every day still waiting (HRSA.gov). Those numbers aren't just statistics. They're someone's sibling, parent, or best friend.

A lot of people think becoming an organ donor is complicated or scary. But it's actually very simple. You can register when you get your driver's license, or you can go online and sign up in just a few minutes. It doesn't cost anything, and most religions support it as an act of kindness. According to Infinite Legacy, many common myths about organ donation, like thinking you won't get proper medical care if you're a donor, are completely false. The truth is, registering as a donor is one of the easiest and most impactful decisions you'll ever make.

I've always been passionate about helping others stay healthy. That's what inspired me to pursue biomedical engineering and, eventually, become a medical doctor. But before any of that happens, I'm starting here, with this conversation. My hope is that by speaking to you all, my fellow future doctors, nurses, and scientists, we can spread awareness together. We have a responsibility, not just to heal people in the future, but to use our voices now.

So here's my challenge to you: register to become an organ donor today at <https://www.donatelifevirginia.org/sign-me-up/>. Talk to your family. Encourage others

in our school to do the same. Let's make it our mission as the Premedical Education Society Club to be advocates for life; not just in theory, but in action.

I will never forget the relief I felt knowing one of my aunts was going to live. And I'll never forget the heartbreak of losing the other. I share my story in hopes that none of you will ever have to feel that kind of loss. Let's honor those we've lost by making sure others get the chance to live.

Say yes. Be a donor. Be a hero.