

Biography

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Personal Data

My name is Gabriel Olufemi Ologun from Ayere, Nigeria. I am a third year undergraduate student at the State University of New York at Albany. Before coming to the United States I was enrolled for three months at the University of Jos, Plateau State Nigeria, to study medicine. However, I chose to sacrifice my enrollment in the Nigerian University to begin afresh with the pre-medical program in the United States. I made this choice because the medical schools in the United States are so much more advanced in the knowledge and technology associated with medical practice. My goal is to transfer knowledge of modern medicine back to my African community. Presently in my community, most people rely on traditional medicines using herbal products made from roots and leaves to treat certain diseases. This system has proven helpful in treating such things as fever and headaches, but there are many more serious ailments and diseases that require surgery or treatments unknown in my community. Africans are dying from illnesses and minor complications that one hardly hears of in more developed countries; ailments from which inhabitants of modern countries rarely die. Developments in medical knowledge and technology have helped doctors in the western world to be able to diagnose diseases that are not possible to diagnose in my country.

Access to medical treatment is very difficult in my community. My late grandmother died of an untreated appendicitis in 1996. This was especially sad because there were neither clinics nor doctors in my village to treat her. It would take a very long time to transport a sick person to a hospital or clinic in a far away neighboring village using the common means of transportation: a bicycle. My plan is to; complete a medical degree in the United States, return to Nigeria to build a clinic in my village, and work with local pharmacists to set up pharmaceutical stores both in my village and in

neighboring villages. I hope to bring readily available medical services at affordable prices to the community. If I can obtain support from private and government bodies, I would like to make most services free to the local people who are poor and live by subsistence farming.

Academics

Academically, I have successfully completed four semesters of college, earning 68 credits hours, with a cumulative GPA of 3.97. My classes included General Chemistry I and II, Organic Chemistry I and II, Physics II, and Calculus I, II, Algebra, and Statistics. In the fall of 2006 and spring of 2007 I worked close to 60 hours per week on campus to pay for my tuition, and at the same time I was able to maintain my strong grade point average. Additionally, I tutored Peter, a “Lost Boy from Sudan” (Spring and Fall 2006, Spring 2007). The tutoring required me to read and become familiar with all of Peter’s textbooks and course content to be able to provide him instruction with his courses.

Community Service

I have participated in group and individual community service projects while in school. Green Mountain College has a liberal arts curriculum with a special focus on the environment. One project I participated in lasted four months and involved removing garlic mustard from the Poultney area environment. This project was supervised by Professor James Graves, Associate Professor of Botany. Garlic mustard (*Alliaria Petidata*) is a flowering plant native to Europe, western and central Asia, and northwestern Africa. Although edible, it is an invasive species introduced in North America; I took pride in participating in an activity to prevent this plant from crowding out native species.

I am an active member of the Poultney Methodist Church in Poultney, Vermont where I sing in the church choir weekly and participate in other church sponsored activities.

In the spring of 2006 and 2007 I visited Hudson Falls Central Schools, Hudson Falls, New York, and Granville Middle and Elementary Schools, Granville, NY. I gave presentations about Nigeria and life in Africa to students and faculty to describe how different life in Africa it is from life in

the United States and how fortunate they are to be Americans. Also, I talked about cultures, traditions, myths, politics and schools in Nigeria. Although none of the students had ever been to Africa nor seen a “born and bred” African such as myself, they had the sense of what life is like in other continents of the world.

Financial Needs

Winning a scholarship or receiving private financial support means a great deal to me. I am personally financing my education at Green Mountain College and now SUNY Albany. My dad is sick of a stroke with partial paralysis and can no longer help with financing my education. Thus far my family has used all their retirement funds for my first semester and travel costs at Green Mountain College. I have been going to school full time and working full time since the second semester of my freshman year. I was a math tutor at the Jose Calhoun Learning Center at the college and a private tutor for a student who is a “Lost Boy from Sudan”, and I work in the on-campus college dining service daily (5:00 PM – 11:00 PM) totaling over 60 hours per week. In the summer 2006 I worked in Alaska for a Seattle, WA offshore fish processing company named Icicle Foods. This summer (2007) I have been working in the factory at Saint Gobain in Granville, New York (12:00 AM to 12:00 PM) for six days per week and at Walker Sawmill in Fair Haven, Vermont as a sawyer helper Monday through Friday (7:00 AM to 11:00 AM). On my day off I have done odd painting and yard work for members of my church in Poultney, Vermont.

Foreign students, with the exception of those who have special status due to adverse situations in their home country, are not eligible for low interest student loans or grants. Additionally very few private grants are available to students with my classification and student status.

All my efforts thus far have been to raise funds to pay my college bills to work towards achieving my dream to obtain a medical degree to return to Nigeria to help my community and country.