**SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY EXAMPLE**

**Questbridge Finalist essay earning $3,000 in application waivers plus $3000 in local scholarships by Jordan Sanchez**

Prompt: Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

Recall the most cherished memory with your father figure. For some it may be when he taught you how to ride a bike, for others it may be memories of him taking you out for pizza when mom said the family has to eat healthy, for others it’s the ability to confide in somebody that won’t judge or stop loving you because of the mistakes you have made. When a child is born, he or she is given a birth certificate, which provides information such as name, date and place of birth, but most importantly it provides the names of the parents of the child. On my birth certificate I have the name the name of my beloved mother Lurvin, but right above her name is an empty space where my father’s name should be.

As a child I would often compare my life to my peers; I would often go through all of these hypothetical scenarios in my mind thinking, “If my dad were around I could be like all of the other boys.” As the years went by I always had a sense of optimism that one day I would meet him and he would tell me “I love you and I’ll never leave your side again.” But when the time came and I met him on January 2014 I learned that a man can reject his only son not once, but twice.

My father left when I was one year old and I will soon be turning 17; I did the math and found that for about 5900 days he has neglected me. He was able to sleep 5900 nights without knowing whether or not I was dead or alive. Even though he’s been gone for 5900 days,  my life did not get put on hold. In those 5900 days I learned how to walk, talk, and I became a strong young man without the provider of my Y Chromosome because he is nothing more to me than that.

In the past I believed that my father was necessary to rise but instead I found that false hope was an unnecessary accessory and now I refuse to let the fact that I am fatherless define the limits of the great things that I can accomplish.

It’s said that boys learn to be a man from their fathers, that they learn what it means to be a man that has values and can stand up for what’s right. I, however, have found that grit can come from anywhere. When I was in middle school I was overweight and many other boys would call me names, and even after going to administration several times nothing changed and for several years I kept myself at bay because if I had done anything in return I would be no better than those guys who bullied me. I previously had this perception that somebody else would come to my rescue, that somebody else would provide the mental strength to combat the hardships that were sent my way. But as time passed I grew tired of waiting for help that was never going to come so I had to become my own hero. Since making that decision I have been liberated from the labels that previously confined me and I took back control of my own life.

My ability to be self motivated has assisted me in becoming a leader in several of my extracurricular activities. I was one of the 4 male students of my school district that was selected as a delegate by the American Legion to participate at the Boy’s State program and I am also the captain of my group in the Young Senator's Leadership Program that is run by California Senator Tony Mendoza. I also developed skills on the wrestling mat.  On one occasion I wrestled the person who was ranked the 9th best wrestler in the state and although I did not win there was not a single second that I was afraid to fail because I knew I gave it my all. Similarly I have put the same effort into becoming a successful.

My father’s name is not on my birth certificate, but it is MY birth certificate. My origins are not the brightest but I was given a life that is mine to live and because “Life is made of two dates and a dash..” I have to “...Make most of the dash.” I am not going to live forever but if I were to leave this world today I would feel content with the person I see in the mirror.

I know the difficulty that latinos face in this day and age I can envision assisting other young latinos achieving their dreams. I believe the most valuable thing in this world is opportunity because sometimes all it takes for someone to be successful is a chance to do so. Consequently I would like to be part of that chance that can foster the growth of future success.