**6.  Describe your favorite academic subject and explain how it has influenced you.**

Volunteering at the reception desk in a hospital gives me the opportunity to interact with different people, some who only speak Spanish. They always approach the desk looking for someone who speaks their language and could give them the information and directions they need. Because of my appearance, however, they do not look at me to help them, but as soon as I say “Hablo español. Puedo ayudarle,” their eyes immediately light up. I get so much satisfaction knowing how much they appreciated the fact that I knew their language. I’ve learned that people don’t just want to be heard; they want to be understood.

Spanish has been my favorite academic subject since I first started learning the language in fifth grade. Learning a different language has introduced me to the different cultures and different styles of speech in each Spanish speaking country. My future plans include becoming a registered nurse and by knowing a second language, I will be able to connect with and help more people than I would have been able to. My patients will receive the treatment that they need, and I will receive the gratification and joy of being able to understand and connect with people who live a different life than I do. I can listen to their stories, sympathize with them, and make them feel heard.

Spanish has had a substantial influence on what I want to do in life. It all goes back to the front desk in the hospital where I watched the non- English speakers’ eyes gleam. In that moment, even if it was just a sliver, I had a positive effect on that person’s day and nothing makes me happier than knowing that I helped. On the surface, it seems as if all I did was give them directions to a room in the hospital, but really, I connected with them on a personal level. I showed them that I appreciate their native language and culture and helped them feel understood, not just heard.