

Dear Hiranya A. Rajasinghe,

My name is Christopher Calixte and I want personally thank you for the Rajasinghe Vascular Research scholarship I received recently. This means a lot to me especially considering my humble upbringing. I was born in Flatbush, Brooklyn that was riddled with crime and socioeconomic distress. Thankfully I have two loving parents whom are immigrants from Haiti that always reminded me that my education should be my top priority. Though education always came first I balanced it with sports all the way through high school. I was a dual-sport athlete in basketball and football and was elected as captain for every team that I was a part of. Those experiences shaped who I am today. I am now a 4th year medical student at one of the best institutions in the world, and I owe it all to people who believed in my abilities. I currently live in Palm Bay, FL after moving from NY during my 10th grade year in high school. I attended Florida State University for my undergraduate education and graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa with a bachelor's degree in Psychology with a chemistry and biology minor. I also obtained a Master of Health Sciences in Clinical Research during my 3rd year here at Duke. Currently I am interested in pursuing Radiology as a medical specialty.

Throughout my undergraduate education I made an effort to always be engaged in my surroundings. I was immersed in the pre-medical community at Florida State University so I joined an organization called the Minority Association of Pre-medical students (MAPS). I started off as a general body member and worked my way up to President of the organization my senior year. MAPS is a very large organization at FSU with general body meetings reaching 100+ members in attendance. Being in a leadership role where students looked up to me for advice and pre-medical guidance was one of the most humbling experiences I've had throughout my educational career. I also served as the fundraising chairman for the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) here at Duke SOM. It has always been important to me to stay involved in my surroundings because I believe it enriches your experience wherever you are. Being involved makes me appreciate my experience at Duke even more than I already do. Deciding on Duke for medical school was an easy choice for three reasons. First, my brother and sister in law live in Durham and family has always been very important to me. My sister in law is a PhD and recently got hired as an academic advisor for Duke Undergraduate students. Second, because of the opportunity a school of this caliber provides for my career aspirations. And last but not least, Duke Basketball! I grew up a fan and everyday I wake up in disbelief that I am now apart of such a legendary tradition. I attended the 2015 national championship game in Indiana and it was phenomenal. Duke has treated me very well so far and I have enjoyed everything about it.

Once again, I want to thank you for this scholarship because it will help fund my medical education, so I do not have to relive some of the economic struggles I've