**GSWSM Scholarship Essay**

 Receiving the Geriatric Social Workers of Southeast Michigan (GSWSM) Scholarship would enable me to continue my education and better serve those I support. It is difficult to put dedication into words, so I will allow my actions to speak for my commitment to learning and serving others. Growing up, I was very close to both of my grandmothers, and was there every step of the way as they went through the process of developing dementia and eventually passing from this life. I have worked in several various settings with older adults, including long-term care facilities, a housing center, and providing companionship and direct-care services. I currently work with adults who have developmental disabilities (many of whom are older adults) and am a student intern at a rehabilitation and long-term care facility. Every day, I passionately go above and beyond my job description to build trust, engage at the clients’ level, advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves, guide problem solving, and much more. Needless to say, I have a passionate interest in trying to empower older and vulnerable people.

 This passion led me to pursue my Master’s degree in Social Work from Eastern Michigan University, with a concentration in aging, and I chose geriatric social work as my future career. I see the faces of my grandmothers and many older adults whom I have loved in those I support, and it rededicates my desire to help them out of vulnerable situations. I am energized by expanding my horizons to new opportunities and stepping out of my comfort zone so I can be the best advocate for any older adult who needs my assistance.

 My future career goals focus on working with older and disabled adults. Older adults are often forgotten in a society that focuses upon youth and perfectionism, especially if they also are physically or mentally disabled. My goal is to always advocate for and guide them to empower themselves to use their own voices to obtain quality support and services. I would be happy to be employed in any setting where I could work directly with older adults and help them to achieve independence as long as possible, express their own views and wisdom, and be considered valued members of our society.

 The GSWSM Scholarship would greatly improve my ability to continue to pursue my education. It is my aspiration to develop as a professional, learn as much as I can, and offer better services to the older people I support. As a future geriatric social worker, receiving such a scholarship would be an honor, and I am grateful for the opportunity to apply.