Throughout my life I have been exposed to inequality. Being raised in a Northern Michigan rural community, diversity was limited and education on diversity was even scarcer. My best friend and her sister were adopted from Ethiopia and raised by two women in what seemed to be a world that worked against them. As a young girl I realized that she was treated differently in school and dance class. I became interested in the Civil Rights Movement, enrolled in history and racial justice courses, and spoke against racism at protests and in class. In some way, my passion for equality led me to work with older adults, as I witnessed my family, residents, and clients struggle to receive the care they deserved. I was exposed to elder abuse, disease, and watched many people take their last breath. I chose to focus on the elderly because of these experiences. I care about the well-being of older individuals, their families, and am highly skilled at communicating and forming relationships with them.

My future aspirations as a social worker include increasing access to feasible and adequate resources for the elderly living in rural communities by creatively establishing programs that address issues such as lack of transportation, poor nutrition, and social isolation. Innovative ideas that I have include to combine a home delivered meals program and a companion program to develop a lunch buddy service that allows elders to have both a nutritional meal and someone to eat along with. I also hope to increase the knowledge that elders have about tax rebates and medical insurance by presenting at senior and community centers to ensure that all older adults are receiving affordable benefits.

Two skills that I hope to develop during my field placement and future career, is a greater sense of coordination and to become a better self-advocate. It is important that social workers can connect individuals to various resources and that they have the means to do so, which involves coordination of roles and services. I also hope to increase my ability to be a self-advocate, as this learning experience needs to be beneficial and influential. I will address concerns and ideas with my supervisor to ensure that my field experience is all that I need and want it to be. With the development of these two skills, both efficient coordination and the ability to self-advocate, I will be suited to assist vulnerable populations by maintaining professional boundaries to ensure ethical and proper service delivery.