*If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need, but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?* I John 3:17 (NN)

This is a quote handwritten by my grandmother that I keep on my desk to remind me of the path I’ve chosen in my life. Growing up with my grandmother had a profound experience on the person I have become. She was an artist and advocate for those who she considered vulnerable and in need. I followed in her footsteps by starting my career in art, and my values steered me into social work.

I fell into working with older adults through volunteering and living with my grandmother. My grandmother fell victim to abuse and financial exploitation by family members, and this greatly impacted my view of older adults. I noticed how our society isolates older adults into institutions and how they have become out casted. Many older adults are vulnerable and more individuals need to advocate on their behalf. I consider it a personal responsibility to advocate for vulnerable populations by offering my skills and living by example.

I am currently earning my Masters of Social Work at the University of Michigan and also a Specialist in Aging certificate. I am doing fieldwork at a hospice and enjoy working with individuals and their families to bring peace at end-of-life. I have found many ways to advocate for my patients and their families whether it be through education, providing resources, or empathetically listening.

After I earn my MSW, I will return to school to earn my art therapy degree so I will be a nationally certified art therapist. Creativity has been shown to be effective in working with older adults and has shown to help those with dementia, depression, and aids in coping with loss. Making art can be an effective way of communicating with patients by giving older adults a voice.

The scholarship provided by GSWSM will help me continue my career path as a geriatric social worker, and also aid in my long-term goal of becoming a geriatric art therapist. Thank you for your time and consideration while reviewing my application.