

MSU – Katrina Tagget Fellowship 2010

Thank you Mike Hudson, Ann Marie Lindley, Val Nilson and the rest of the RCPD staff. Not only have you been supportive establishing the Katrina Tagget Fellowship but also for the support you gave Katrina while she was a student at MSU.

The Katrina Tagget Fellowship is a fully endowed scholarship established in my daughter's memory to be a living legacy of Katrina. To all appearances, Katrina seemed an ordinary student. But in reality, her success was hard earned. She was dyslexic and ADHD. I recall in 4th grade when she still couldn't read, the school psychologist said, "don't worry Ms. Tagget, she is so smart she will be able to read."

In her own words from her personal statement for her application to MSU,

“As a child, I thought I was stupid. I couldn't read even a simple street sign. I memorized books according to the pictures on the page. I continue to have trouble remembering things. I have to really concentrate to read, and sometimes I have to read a paragraph several times to understand the meaning. I can read the same sentence several times without finding any grammatical errors, but someone else may find several errors. I am not dumb, and I am not lazy. I am dyslexic. I can't learn the way other kids learn. At seventeen, I am functioning well, but it has been a long struggle to get to where I am today. “

“Everyday I must live with my dyslexia. It is frustrating having to always read and reread parts of books or my own work in order to seek perfection, but I refuse to give up. I feel that learning can be very enjoyable. Learning has become all the more precious to me because of the hard work and concentration I must use as a result of my dyslexia. The challenge of living with dyslexia will be with me forever, but I see being dyslexic as a positive challenge that can bring me much success and happiness.”

Just two years ago, she stood here accepting a Samaritan award. RCPD was instrumental to her success at MSU. RCPD helped her become an advocate for herself. A 4.0 student, and RCPD mentor. It is no secret she took her life. She suffered severe depression and anxiety. But her death and how she died does not define all the hard work and success she earned during her 21 years with us. Katrina made a difference in this world. Just like in her life, change can come from hardship, adversity and tragedy. Courage and perseverance, two words that define Katrina, in fact, define most of you in this room. Katrina would have loved to see a scholarship in her name, to see other students receiving financial rewards for their success. So, Katrina Tagget fellows, thank you for all you have done to become a “Katrina Tagget Fellow”. Keep doing what you are doing. Inspire the world like Katrina did in her brief 21 years. Best of luck to all of you.