

I Can Do It

By Diane Tiongson

“Even though I had a tough childhood, I have learned that I can take control of everything I do and with what life challenges me to do...”

All of my life I have been influenced by negative thoughts from many people. Those negative statements drove me to believe that I could not become successful. At the age of 12 I was placed in the Foster Care “System”—with several different relatives. From the ages 16 to 18 my social worker placed me in two different non-relative foster homes because she thought it was in my best interest. These important years of my life were very unstable. I had to adapt to many different living situations I attended several schools and had eight different social workers, of which only four were truly concerned about my regard. Aside from these problems I faced serious health problems that affected my hearing as well as my everyday life. I am deaf in my right ear and lost about fifty percent of my hearing in my left ear and I battled serious effects including high fevers and vertigo as a result. My health problems affected my education; my senior year in particular was very challenging because there were many days that I was not able to focus on school because I did not feel well.

Although I had to overcome difficult obstacles, I also had many positive influences. I realized that I needed to take control of my life and find happiness. I substituted every obstacle with a positive activity. I joined clubs in high school, cheerleading, badminton, leadership and was involved in school plays. I also worked as a tutor at my high school and began attending ILP (Independent Living Program). I participated in these various activities to keep myself busy and keep my mind off of my horrible experiences. I was also fortunate to have the support of caring adults in my life like teachers, advocates, mentors, and ILP staff. These positive

relationships and experiences helped me to realize that “I can do it.”

Even though I had a tough childhood, I have learned that I can take control of everything I do and with what life challenges me to do. Wanting a better life meant that I must set my goals and that I need to be motivated and most importantly I need to challenge myself to strive for a better future. The goals that I have set for myself are to receive an AA at Evergreen Valley College then transfer to San Jose State University where I will earn my Bachelor’s Degree with help from the Silicon Valley Children’s Fund’s YES™ Program. I am also looking forward to obtaining a Masters Degree in Social Work from San Jose State University. My dream is to be able to work with kids of all ages and to make changes to improve the foster care system. I recently attended a state conference called Foster Youth Transition Initiative Convening as a youth representative of Santa Clara County. This was an incredible opportunity. I feel that it is very important to speak out and have my voice be heard regarding the foster care system as well as services for emancipated youth and I was proud that I took the initiative to share my views. In addition, I would like to support scholarships for other foster youth who would like to pursue their dreams by continuing their education—the way SVCF has supported me.



Diane Tiongson, SVCF YES™ Scholar

I continue to believe that I can accomplish my goals with the support of the many people who believe in me including SVCF, ILP, former teachers, Evergreen Valley College Staff and most importantly my loving grandmother who gives me emotional support. I have drawn a road map for my future and have the will power to make my goals and dreams come true. I now know that my future will be set because I am a determined young adult who has a passion to achieve my roadmap to success. Believing in myself and pushing myself will take me where I deserve to be. I am very thankful to the Silicon Valley Children’s Fund and the Youth Education Scholarship (YES™) because this program is helping myself and others reach our goals. With the support of caring people in my life like SVCF, I can definitely say “I can do it” because I know I am smart, loving, caring, determined, motivated and a passionate person. ✨

“With the support of caring people in my life like SVCF, I can definitely say “I can do it” because I know I am smart, loving, caring, determined, motivated and a passionate person.”