

Studying Today to Make the World a Better Place for Women Tomorrow

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Tiffany Hwang didn't know that most children don't have to wake a sleeping mother just to be able to eat dinner. She didn't know that in most homes there is a parent – or two – to help you get ready for school, prepare your meals and maybe, help with homework. It wasn't until she arrived at Milton Hershey School that she realized her home life was not the norm and that there could be something better.



Today, Tiffany looks back on her home life, at how her mother struggled with depression, her own loneliness, and knows the law degree she aspires to will help bring about healthier and more just environments for women. As Tiffany approaches her junior year at Dickinson College where she is pursuing a degree in Global Feminism, she thinks about her future.

"I know there are many things I can do, but a part of me just wants to make the world a better place."

Tiffany's parents emigrated to the United States from Taiwan to earn their Masters degrees and better their own lives. But things did not turn out as planned. Once here, Tiffany's mother put her own dreams on hold to help finance her husband's education. Their plans were further stymied by a rocky marriage – so turbulent that at one point Tiffany's father kicked her mother out of the house. Speaking no English and suffering from severe depression, Tiffany's mother was forced to find refuge in a homeless shelter, where she discovered she was pregnant.

As a single mother, she did the best she could to support her daughter. However, her poor mental health was disabling, requiring a two-month stay in a psychiatric facility. Fortunately

for Tiffany, chance intervened. When Tiffany was seven, she and her mom met a young woman who had attended Milton Hershey School (MHS). A few months later, Tiffany entered MHS. It wasn't an easy decision for her mother, but she wanted her daughter to have the emotional and financial stability she couldn't provide.

"MHS provided stability and structure. At MHS, I learned what healthy relationships are and realized that life could be better."

Tiffany spent ten years at MHS. "Before I went to MHS, no one told me that I was special or smart. I felt disadvantaged and that people treated me differently because of my family's situation. MHS gave me a supportive environment, which nurtured me."

A confident and driven woman, Tiffany attributes her self-confidence to her experiences at MHS. During her junior year, Tiffany was selected to be a Rotary exchange student. She spent the year studying in Hungary, living with a Hungarian family. Today, she travels to The Hershey Company's sites around the world talking to employees about her experiences at the school. She lets them know that what they do at Hershey contributes to making a difference in young peoples' lives.

"When you come from a dysfunctional family, your primary focus is on the basic needs like food and shelter. Coming to MHS, the basic needs are taken care of. We can think of other things and with the support of teachers, houseparents and coaches, we are able to get the skills we need to live our lives to our fullest potential."