

My name is Teagan Harris, and I am a recent high school graduate. This August, I will begin attending Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where I plan to study robotics engineering. I have always enjoyed learning how things work and finding creative ways to solve problems. My goal is to design robotic systems that make workplaces and healthcare environments safer. Receiving the Team Telomere scholarship would help me focus on my education while managing the challenges of living with a rare disease.

At 14 years old, I was diagnosed with Telomere Biology Disorder. I have also lived my entire life with Hemophilia A, von Willebrand Disease Type 2N, congenital heart disease, Chiari I Malformation, asthma, pulmonary AVMs, and several other health complications. These conditions require frequent doctor visits, medical tests, and treatments. Although they have created unexpected challenges, they have also taught me resilience, determination, and the importance of adapting when life doesn't go as planned.

Living with rare diseases has shaped the person I am today. I have learned not to let my diagnoses define my future. Instead, they have motivated me to work harder and make the most of every opportunity. I have loved building robots since I was young, and my experiences have inspired me to pursue robotics engineering to develop technology that improves safety for people working in hazardous environments and for those facing health challenges.

When I graduated from high school, I didn't just earn my diploma. Through Butler Tech's Mechatronics Program and Sinclair College, I also earned an Associate of Applied Science in Electro-Mechanical Engineering Technology. I further strengthened my engineering skills by earning my Certified SolidWorks Associate (CSWA) certification. Competing in the FIRST Robotics Competition gave me valuable experience designing, building, and improving a competition robot while developing teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. These experiences confirmed that engineering is the career I want to pursue.

As I begin my journey at Miami University, I look forward to expanding my knowledge and gaining the experience needed to design intelligent robotic systems that improve

safety, accessibility, and quality of life. I also hope to encourage other students living with rare diseases to pursue their goals despite the challenges they face.

The Team Telomere scholarship would make a meaningful difference during my time at Miami University by reducing the financial burden of earning my degree. It would allow me to focus on my coursework, engineering projects, and managing my health instead of worrying as much about college expenses. Receiving support from an organization that understands the challenges of living with a Telomere Biology Disorder would be especially meaningful and would motivate me to continue working toward my goals.

Thank you for considering my application. I am grateful for this opportunity and hope to use my education, determination, and experiences to create technologies that improve lives while showing others that a rare disease does not define what they can achieve.