

September 22, 2016

CSDFEA 2016 Larry Itliong Scholarship Award  
County of San Diego Filipino-American Employees' Association (CSDFEA)  
1600 Pacific Hwy  
San Diego, CA 92101

**Re: Personal Statement**

Dear Scholarship Selection Committee:

My name is Winona Gabrielle Garcia and I hope to successfully answer the ultimate question: Why do I believe I am a good candidate for the 2016 CSDFEA Larry Itliong Scholarship? In my application, I demonstrated my ongoing desire to serve others in my community, whether that is through leading my student peers in college and my master's program or providing companionship to local senior citizens, disabled children, and foreign orphans. My past achievements show that I am a hard-worker and an eager learner who will do my absolute best in an academic setting. But what makes me stand out most, I believe, is my altruistic behavior and drive to become a truly compassionate social worker.

As a future social worker, I will serve people coming through my door who are homeless, displaced, or struggling financially. When I worked as a resident administrator for a low-income apartment community, I learned how I have a role to do social justice, critical thinking, and have empathy. About a year ago, I helped an applicant overturn her denied status. She was an older woman who had two small grandchildren and was recently widowed. Her family was driving home from a holiday gathering when their car was hit by a drunk driver. Her husband and her adult daughter were killed in a freak accident. So she was left to care for her orphaned grandchildren and unfortunately, the accident forced her on permanent disability. With her little income, she was struggling to pay her rent. I met her after she had been on our waitlist for a year. Soon after her initial interview and background check, she was told she had been denied because her credit was over our maximum allowance. She was quickly discouraged by the news and had given up on the process. However, instead of boxing her file away as my co-workers mostly did, I reviewed the file myself and found she had been denied because she had unpaid medical bills (an exception to our criteria). My manager informed me that denials are not often overturned no matter the case. However, I thought I ought to try anyway for the sake of the applicant. I immediately called the woman and encouraged her to come in to write an appeal. I even helped her type the letter she dictated to me because her hands were often pained by holding anything, such as a pen, for too long. One week later, her denied application was overturned! She now lives on the property and has more self-confidence and financial peace. She was almost a victim of the system and had I not known her story, I would not have thought to check her file for medical credit problems. One of my main goals in earning my MSW is to deepen my

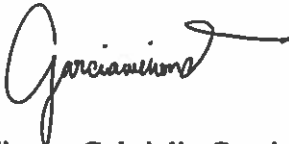
Personal Statement: Winona G. Garcia

understanding of how the aging population's needs are shifting in this technical age and what can be done to better connect them to social services that are already in place.

At this time, I imagine myself using my research experience to assist my future work in hospitals or skilled care facilities within the geriatric field. I want to apply the technical skills I will gain from the San Diego State University - School of Social Work MSW program to help address families' specific needs and connect them with the appropriate entities in innovative ways.

The County of San Diego Filipino-American Employees' Association Larry Itliong Scholarship Award will not only help me achieve my educational goals but also support me as I become an effective social worker for our San Diego community. It is with great appreciation that I submit my application. Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Garcia Winona', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Winona Gabrielle Garcia  
6384 St. Therese Way  
San Diego, CA 92120  
(951) 331-0592  
winonaggarcia@gmail.com