

### **Mono Lake Committee Scholarship 2008**

Living in the Mono Basin and around Mono Lake has influenced my life and choice to go to college. I have benefited from its natural wonders and the peace that comes with them. I would have never been the way I am today growing up in the city. I have an appreciation for the world and have been able to see first hand what destruction humankind can do to it. This has inspired me to commit to little things that lessen my carbon footprint. The Mono Basin is as much a part of me as my smile when I'm home.

As a little girl I enjoyed hiking to lakes. My mother would bribe me with a carrot to get to the next tree. I know that growing up in an atmosphere where I could carelessly run through the trees benefited me as I grew into the person I am. I was able to smile everyday and play at the park without the fear of finding things that could hurt me. I also loved lying in the grass watching the sunsets and admire the summers that make everyone wish they could live in our shoes, but the winters, regardless of my skiing passion, always frustrated me. When I was thirteen I was determined to go to college to get away from here. I couldn't stand the thought of continuing on with my life in the mountains. I was concerned with iPods and new shoes. I hated the cold air and the wind that whirled my hair into my face. As I got older and I started to venture out in the wilderness again with my friends, I once more realized that I can't stand the city. I would travel there for a few days and be sick knowing I was sucking in the toxins of modern day society. I longed to be back in the snow of purity. I needed to be back in the environment that was comforting, beautiful, and unique,

For the longest time I desired to attend a school near the ocean. This quickly changed one day last year as I was sat on Lundy Lake's Dam watching the birds soar over the water. The wind that I had hated so much had calmed and the leaves were slowly turning to the glowing yellow. I was not originally there to think about my future but to get away from the stress of class. The snow capped mountains and glistening water made me remember that in just two years I would be off to the concrete jungle that wouldn't ever substitute my secret hiding spot tucked next to the creek. As I sat there and contemplated more things from my childhood that I would miss I realized that I did not want to leave so I will be attending the University of Nevada, Reno in the fall. This school was an easy choice for me because it is less than three hours from the smell of Mono Lake mud and Jeffery Pines. Many people doubt that I will be home often by looking at me. I could fit in, in the city just fine to them. But what I know is that malls do not replace the Fishers, street lamps do not substitute stars, and plastic ponds do not replace Grant Lake.

Growing up in the Mono Basin has shaped me and my decision to go to college close to home. I will always have the memories of playing carelessly in the woods and will be able to set myself back into peace during stressful times thanks to the Eastern Sierras.