

When people think of inequality, they often imagine something dramatic like protests, speeches, or even history books. But I learned what inequality looked like in my own home. I saw it in the opportunities my brother didn't get, and the programs that made it impossible to provide for him. Growing up with a brother on the autism spectrum has shown me that the world is not built equally for everyone. Because of him, I have developed a drive not just to notice the injustice, but to change it for those on the autism spectrum whose voices are often unheard, not because they lack thoughts, but because the world has not learned how to listen.

My brother experiences the world differently. He learns differently, communicates differently, and sometimes needs extra support. But needing support does not mean lacking intelligence or potential. Too often, instead of adjusting the system to include people like my brother, society expects them to adjust to the systems that were never accommodated for them. Watching him miss out on opportunities that "normal" kids have just handed to them has been difficult. It had made me and my family frustrated at times. But through these challenges, it has also given me purpose.

When I think about the dream described by Martin Luther King Jr. during the March on Washington, I think about dignity and fairness. In his "I Have a Dream" speech, he envisioned a world where people are judged by their character. My dream is similar. I have a dream where neurodivergent individuals are valued for who they are and where accommodations are treated not as special favors, but as basic fairness.

One moment especially shaped me. My brother was given the opportunity to use a communication device. To us, it wasn't just a tablet, it was a voice. For a moment, it felt like a solution. But when we saw the cost, the excitement faded. I remember the heavy silence in the room and realizing that something so essential was simply out of reach. That was when I understood that opportunity should never depend on a price tag.

That experience is one of the reasons I want to become a pediatrician. I don't want to simply witness families navigate these challenges, I want to support them through it.

Because of my brother, I will build a future where no child's voice is priced.