

BRIA'S STORY

girls
inc.®

Inspiring all girls to be
strong, smart, and boldSM

I was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska – North Omaha to be exact. When people think of “North Omaha,” violence and crime encircles it. Sad, but true. That is where I came from and college is a foreign language.

All my life I have wanted to become a nurse. I just never knew how I would get there. My mom was addicted to crack cocaine for fifteen years of my life. I witnessed her being in domestic violence relationships. This took a huge toll on me personally. Living in section eight housing all while counting on state assistance for basic life necessities did not make my environment any more positive. My mother, including her family members, never attended college.

I was blessed enough to be a part of Girls Inc., which I can say has hugely impacted my life. Both my teachers and mentors at Girls Inc. would continuously tell me that education matters.

When you are a kid, you believe what you see and not what you hear. All through my childhood years, I was always fighting, getting suspended from school, in and out of the principal's office, getting kicked off the school bus, etc. Anything with trouble, I was around.

My senior year of high school, I was diagnosed with a rare neuromuscular skeletal disease known as myasthenia gravis. I thought my life was over and it sure felt like it. By age 20, I had gone through open heart surgery, a total hip replacement, and almost died from my illness. I had to quit school at the University of Nebraska at Omaha because I was always too sick and weak to live my life as a normal young adult.

I had small peaks of times when I was strong and full of energy. I would use that time to hang out with people I grew up with that I knew were up to no good. I did not care too much because I had lost all hope of becoming a nurse. I was deemed disabled at an extremely young age. Just as I thought my life was beginning, I was now facing another barrier that was telling me otherwise. My behavior and motivation quickly started to die. I really began to give up on wanting to become a better person and rise above the environment I had grown up in. It was not until I ended up in serious trouble that I realized I had lost hope and I knew I could not live my life like this. I was blessed again. Life was giving me a second chance. I owed it to myself and my community to embrace this second chance.

With a Girls Inc. scholarship, I entered at Metropolitan Community College in the fall of 2015 and excelled in every course I took. I still wanted to become a nurse, but with my record, pursuing nursing was intimidating. When I applied to Clarkson College and got accepted, I felt myself starting to break the chains that once held me down. I was a minority, raised in poverty, had a criminal background, and I was given another chance.

When I worked at Girls Inc., I would always share my story with young girls that I saw heading down the same road. I became a volunteer mentor through the Girls Inc. Pathfinder Program.

I am in nursing school. I am living proof that it is not how you start but how you finish.



Bria with her mentees