

2011 Dollar General® Literacy Foundation
“I Can” Essay Contest Submission
by Andy Gowman

Q: What would you do with \$50,000 for your education?

A: With an educational grant, I can fund my special education degree to pursue my dream of helping academically challenged children overcome obstacles with literacy, writing, and mathematics. I have an affinity for students who struggle to learn. I had a rough educational experience myself.

I battled illiteracy throughout my childhood. In the fourth grade I could barely read or write. I was evaluated and labeled with a learning disability. The next year I was placed into special education. In this setting I was paired up with exceptional teachers who provided me with the personalized instruction I needed to overcome my cognitive struggle. As I progressed through middle and high school my special education services continued to decrease until I was eventually declassified as having a learning disability in the 11th grade.

Currently, I am a 4.0 graduate student at a Michigan university. I am diligently working my way through school with escalating student loan debt to cultivate my pedagogical techniques and pursue my career aspirations.

I remember my life when I could not read. It was a frustrating and confusing place. When words finally starting coming together for me in the fifth grade, it was like the sun had finally risen on my horizon and lifted the darkness from my eyes.

Literacy is the foundation for which knowledge comes forth. I commit my future career to serving students in any capacity I can so that they too can live in a bright and literate world ripe with opportunity.

Andy Gowman