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SNUCMAA 김태웅 Scholarship Progress Report

Last month, I received the disheartening news that my parents' long standing business, which had endured riots and lootings, would finally close its doors in less than one month due to financial challenges. The reality hit me much harder and faster than I had anticipated. In this precarious situation, to help support my family, I applied to various scholarships and used Federal Work-Study to secure part-time jobs off campus, including tutoring children who faced similar challenges to my own. What I once thought was financial freedom during college has now become a dual concern—juggling academics with newfound financial worries.

However, receiving this scholarship has profoundly impacted my life in numerous ways, it gave me hope and support to achieve both academic and personal goals that once seemed out of reach. The financial support alleviated the burden of tuition fees and living expenses, enabling me to focus wholeheartedly on my studies and extracurricular activities. This focus translated into academic excellence, as I was able to dedicate my time to research projects and internships that enriched my educational experience. Additionally, the scholarship gave me the confidence to pursue opportunities that I might have otherwise overlooked, such as studying abroad and participating in international conferences.

In gratitude for the support I received, I have actively participated in the community by serving as a board member in my school's Korean Association Club. In this role, I took on various responsibilities that contributed to the growth and vibrancy of our club, which serves as a hub for Korean students and those interested in Korean culture. My primary focus was on organizing events and initiatives that promoted cultural exchange and fostered a sense of community among our members.

As an aspiring U.S. ambassador, I'm excited to share that I've been accepted into the U.S. Foreign Service Internship Program (USFSIP), a two-year internship with the U.S. State Department. This opportunity is a key step on my path to fostering stronger connections between my Korean and American communities. My goal is to bridge these two cultures and advocate for a greater understanding, collaboration, and diplomacy between them, using my experiences and skills to contribute to both communities.

The 김태웅 scholarship has been a catalyst in my personal and academic journey, empowering me to reach my goals and contribute positively to my community. It hasn't just changed my life—it has also given me the opportunity to make a lasting impact on others, creating a ripple effect of support and inspiration.

