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As someone who has never had the same privileges as others, the Maine free college program changed my life in ways I never thought were possible. For most of my life, it has only been my mom and me. She is sick, and while she does everything she can to support me, there is only so much she is able to give. Because of that, college always felt impossible—like something meant for other people, not someone like me.

When I found out about this program, college stopped being just a dream and became a real possibility. It gave me hope during a time when I desperately needed it. College became a safer, happier place for me than high school ever was. It became somewhere I could grow, breathe, and finally feel like I belonged. I have gained memories I will carry with me for the rest of my life and made friendships that truly mean everything to me.

This program didn't just help me pay for tuition—it gave me stability, purpose, and a future. Without it, I don't know how I would afford school, and honestly, I don't think I would have believed college was an option at all. Because of this opportunity, I am not only building a better future for myself, but also honoring my mom's sacrifices and creating something brighter for both of us.