



On October 7<sup>th</sup> 2011 my friends and I were driving from New York City to Vermont for a camping trip in celebration of my recent job offer at a prestigious law firm. We were just outside of Manhattan when a simple driving mistake by the driver of our car resulted in a major accident. Although I was conscious after the crash, I didn't realize the extent of my paralysis until after my surgery.

With a C5 cervical fracture and my C4 and C6 vertebrae fused together, I'm now a quadriplegic. After a month in the intensive care unit fighting off pneumonia, struggling with paralyzed vocal chords, and a damaged cranial artery, I finally moved to a rehabilitation clinic. A comprehensive therapy program has helped me recover some movement in

my arms and shoulders, but the extent of my injury means I'll always need constant care.

But, this doesn't change my goals. In fourth grade I decided to be a diplomat; it was an easy decision, having balanced my Polish-American identity after arriving from Lublin, Poland at age 6. Since then, I have graduated with honors from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown and written a masters thesis at NYU with European historian Tony Judt. Two years ago I started the law program at Columbia University; I want to master the international system as it's seen from a legal transactional perspective. Just before my accident I interviewed successfully with several global law firms, at one of which I still hope to work.

It won't be easy – years of higher education mean astronomical student loans, now only matched by even higher medical bills. Because the car accident was deemed “no fault,” I can't count on a settlement to cover expenses. Home modifications, adaptive equipment, a specialized wheelchair and car, as well as full time care giving, are not covered by private insurance. But, if I want to take my career goals seriously with the level of injury I have now, I'm in dire need of all these things. Next fall, I want to return to New York to resume my studies at Columbia. I'm extremely grateful for the kindness that friends and family have already shown me, but overwhelmed by the help I still need to get me back on track.

As I grow stronger in rehab, I'm reliant on the hope that with your investment, I will be able to live a version of the life for which I have worked. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and for any financial help you may provide. I'm determined to honor your contribution with continued hard work towards the highest level of achievement.

Sincerely,  
Alexandra Blaszcuk

**Checks for “THE ALEX BLASZCZUK TRUST” can be sent to  
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