

Christina Romano- 2021 Scholarship winner: essay

As a public health major, I have many potential career paths ahead of me: I could find work in epidemiology, interact directly with individuals to improve their health behaviors, or develop relevant public policy, to name a few options. Though the future may hold uncertainty, my overarching career goal which I am deeply passionate about is to help people in need in whatever way possible. At this point in my public health career, I am most interested in both providing care to people in my community as well as working to address global health issues, and I hope to be able to pursue both of these options in the future. However, in working in global health, I would undoubtedly have the invaluable opportunity to use my knowledge of the French language and culture in a professional environment. For instance, I would be grateful to have the opportunity to eventually work for the World Health Organization, which is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, a French-speaking city. There, I could both pursue a career in global health *and* use the French language which I have a great knowledge of and passion for in order to achieve my career goals.

As mentioned, I have not yet decided on which public health career path I would like to pursue, though I do have some ideas. Thankfully, I am only in my third year of university and I therefore have some time to explore my options. With that being said, I intend to use my knowledge of French in my career exploration as well as in my personal development in the near future. More specifically, I plan to apply for either a Fulbright grant or for a Peace Corps volunteering position after I graduate in May of next year, as mentioned. These positions will provide me with opportunities to get experience in working with the public, particularly in terms of their health. For instance, in the Peace Corps, there is the opportunity to work in communities as a health educator, which is particularly interesting to me. In either case, I intend to apply for positions in French-speaking countries in which I can employ my understanding of the language in order to assist the people living there. Either of these options would afford me the chance to use my knowledge of the French language in order to directly help people in need as well as to prepare myself for any potential career related to this work which I may choose to pursue.

Additionally, given that these positions are typically offered in countries other than France, I am looking forward to potentially speaking French in a new environment. I am eager to apply my knowledge of French to another context outside of the classroom, all the while pursuing my own personal development and career goals.

All in all, I do not worry about my which career I will ultimately choose, nor am I concerned that I will not be able to use my knowledge of the French language in the future. I am confident that I have many potential choices ahead of me, all of which will allow me to combine three of my biggest passions: That of public health, of helping people in need, and of the French language. I greatly look forward to integrating the knowledge of both public health and French which I have acquired through my education and applying it to a real-world context. No matter where my future may take me, I long to use my gifts, talents, and passions to best address peoples' health-related needs. I have faith that this will include speaking French with them.