

Officer Derek Owens' College Scholarship Fund Application Carisa Bohnak

Spiderman, upon seeing the young girl falling from the two-story building, shoots his rope, swings down, catches the girl safely in his arms, and delivers her to her parents in front of a cheering crowd. Growing up, I witnessed several television episodes where superheroes such as Spiderman, Batman, and Superman played the hero saving the day. Although I am now older and have realized that no human being can possibly swing from buildings with web, there are heroes all around us. Heroes are people that others can depend on in a time of need to protect the community from harm or danger. Officer Derek Owens lived the life of a true hero, laying down his life to protect the citizens of Cleveland and offering his life in sacrifice, so that I, and many others, have the opportunity to live our lives and achieve our full potential.

Officer Derek Owens was shot on Friday, February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and died shortly after midnight the next day. Derek Owens left behind two young children and a wife. It is impossible to begin to explain the lives, including mine that Officer Derek Owens affected. If Derek Owens chose not to go to work each day, many of the people of Cleveland, including many of my classmates and friends, might have been at risk of having something tragic happen to them or someone they knew. Officer Owens gave them the opportunity to live a safe life where they could go to school and get an education to get ahead in life. Robert Sferra, my religion teacher at St. Peter Chanel, once told my class and me, "in life it's not about YOU, is about what YOU can do for others." I can not think of anyone who captures the true meaning of this quote more than Derek Owens.

The affect of Derek Owens' life and sacrifice on my life is inexplicable. It both shows me how a true hero acts and inspires me to be a hero in my own way. Although I may not have to lay my life down for others, I can still use my gifts and talents for the betterment of all. Being a genuine person who shows kindness and compassion to others and is willing to extend a hand of selfless service and unwavering support is heroic. Officer Derek Owens serves as a source of inspiration for every person to witness the fragility of life and how we must live each day to the fullest being a person that others can look on with awe.

In conclusion, although he could not swing from a building using mere web, Officer Derek Owens was a true hero. He was someone who understood the meaning of self sacrifice for the good of all. Although Officer Derek Owens no longer patrols the streets, his memory will live in his family's, the people of Cleveland, and the St. Peter Chanel Community's heart forever.