

As a young child my parents always taught me about the importance of money. For instance my grandmother would give me 3 dollars every Sunday. It was my choice to spend it on anything I wanted or to save it. Now at one point in time, I would spend all three dollars on one visit by the neighborhood ice cream truck. And when I would ask my grandmother for more money, she would turn and tell me no. She said, "Spend and save your money wisely". The next week I asked for a piggy bank. From then when I received my three dollars I would put \$1.50 in the piggy bank and spent the rest on my personal desires. It wasn't until I grew up that I realized I had been learning about financial responsibility at a young age.

One of the biggest advantages my parents gave me was a basic education in finance. By learning how to manage my own money, I will have a higher standard of living, and probably won't have to call home for cash. Thus giving me a greater sense of independence while easing the burden on my parents' checkbook, and having the freedom to choose my path without worrying about student loans, car payments, or credit card debt. But one thing that appealed to me was the idea of bargaining. The idea of zero-down financing and no payments for twelve months seemed to be the ideal deal. But one of the biggest financial dangers for young adults is taking on too many "bargain" deals or gimmicks offered at furniture stores, home improvement retailers and automobile dealerships. Often, we, young people, are deceived by the ease of credit and instant gratification of purchasing without taking the money out of pocket today. Sooner or later, however, we are going to end up paying the cost of the items and possibly much more in interest. Luckily my mother taught me that such schemes will only leave you in debt. She taught me to save and invest in things that will benefit you in the long run.

That is why I chose to open a college fund with a Plus4 Credit Union. With this college fund I was able to save up an adequate amount of money to pay for my college education. But it

wasn't easy. I decided that any funds I received I would place half of the funds in my savings account. And when I said ANY funds I meant ANY; regardless of the amount or source of the funds. So when I would receive birthday or holidays gifts, instead of spending all of the money on materialistic things, I placed 50% aside to pay for college or any financial obligations that would accrue in my life. By managing my account and keeping a personal record of all deposits, I was always aware about the amounts and activities within my account.

Now the other 50% of my funds, I couldn't just spend it all at once. So I sat down and created a budget. I put 10% aside for tithes; 15% for necessary things, such as personal items or food; 5% for entertainment; and the other 10% for anything that might be need for the month or time. Even though the budget seemed impossible to keep up with, it was actually manageable. With the help of my family and Plus4 Credit Union, I was able to gain financial responsibility. And now that I am ready to go to college, I am able to comfortably enter Vanderbilt University without the worries of loans and debt. Thank you Plus4 Credit Union for making my life and future brighter.