

At the University of Tennessee, I am interested in studying Psychology with the hopes of working in a hands-on environment after my college graduation. My gap year will be spent volunteering and doing service projects so that when I come to Tennessee, I will be a more aware and purposeful student on campus. One of the reasons I was drawn to Tennessee was the emphasis on community and volunteer that is supported by the faculty and continued by the students.

My plan for the first semester is to work part time to fund my travel plans and additionally, I will volunteer and do an internship. Working will give me real world experiences and allow me to support my endeavors rather than rely on my parents. I currently work at my church as a receptionist and will continue that job as I am needed and am able to help the elderly and fellow parishioners. Part time work will allow me to volunteer 10 hours per week at Tranquility in Bedrock, Illinois. Bedrock is a local city which has many low income families that are in need of assistance. My opportunities at Tranquility include volunteering in daycare facilities for children whose mothers are getting an education, giving out food, and mentoring young women. Lastly, I will have a virtual global internship with communities in Cape Town, South Africa. I am committed to helping contribute to these communities in a meaningful way through helping underprivileged students. Helping students means I would be tutoring in English and math and be helping to run after school programs and activities. I am also excited that I will be having weekly workshops with locals to really understand their culture. Both my volunteering and internship experiences will give me the opportunity to help adults and children so I can see which ages I prefer working with and gives me the ability to have a clearer picture of my future aspirations.

Second semester I will be completely shifting my direction as I hopefully will be traveling abroad. I want to get out of my bubble and see the world from a different perspective. Traveling was a big part of my high school experience that I hope to expand on in a new light. I will be doing an Outdoor Leadership School in New Zealand, the leadership aspect of the program pushes me out of my comfort zone and I will learn to become more decisive and independent. In Australia, I will be working with farmers to learn about sustainable living and how humans impact the earth. This is something I have always been interested in but through high school, never had the chance to pursue. This is the perfect time to take the opportunity and learn a unique aspect of farming from across the globe and bring it back with me to U.S. Doing a group program will help me to open myself up to new opportunities, expand on my confidence, and learn new cultures from the many new people I'll meet. I will focus on making this year, a year where I have helped communities both locally and globally while working and at the same time have real world experiences that will help me focus on what might be my major.

Thank you for considering my application for a Gap Year. I am excited about being part of the Tennessee community and a Volunteer in the fall of 2025!