

## The Ariana Isbell Scholarship

### ***Background:***

Every student faces a number of hurdles and challenges along their educational journey. For some, the challenges may be more difficult to overcome. When Ariana Isbell was in elementary school (first grade), she was diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome after her parents noticed that she was constantly blinking her eyes, clearing her throat, tilting her head and shoulders, and humming. These were physical and auditory tics that seemed to increase when she was stressed, and she had little control over them. In fact, if she tried to stop the tics, new and different tics would appear and manifest more frequently. Some of her physical tics were quite painful due to their repetitive nature. Her elementary school teachers were positive that she was simply acting out, even when we discussed Tourette Syndrome with them. They regularly scolded her in front of other students, which led some of her classmates to begin bullying her and teasing. However, Ariana is a strong person, and even at that young age, was able to remain positive. She had also discovered youth theatre during this time period, and while participating, her tics would nearly vanish. Ariana found that in theatre, **everyone** is quirky and she developed lasting friendships within her theatre family. Throughout middle school and high school, Ariana continued to participate in theatre and it was a significant part of her life. The joy it brought her allowed her to refocus the energy into other areas that her physiology had previously channeled into tics. By her senior year, her tics were almost non-existent and it was because of the peace and harmony brought to her through her involvement with theatre. In addition to her involvement in theatre, Ariana was an FVHS AP scholar, was a dual-enrollment college student, and actually graduated from Coastline College as Valedictorian, a week before her high school graduation. She is now attending California State University, Fullerton.

### ***Your Story***

If you have faced challenges in your own educational journey, and theatre has played a big role in allowing you to overcome those challenges, please write an essay (1 page) about this, attach it to this letter with your name on it, and submit it to Mr. Zick by May 25, 2018.