

## NUCCA Essay 2020: What does NUCCA mean to you?

Two-thousand eight was the year that changed everything. Prior to the year 2008, my life consisted of determination, focus, and drive for athletics. My name ended up on the roster of every sport and activity I could possibly fit into my schedule. In addition to school teams, club teams, and olympic development programs, I took on agility training in between advance placement classes and leadership clubs to challenge myself to be the best athlete I could be. The time was bound to come. In 2008, there was an excruciating moment, one I would never wish on anyone, yet the moment that began paving my passion for chiropractic care.

During an ordinary moment, a devastating soccer injury changed the course of my life. As the crowd cringed from the sidelines, my body contorted in ways I had never felt before. My body warped as if my vertebrae were absent. The not-so-ordinary moment has affected and still affects which sports I play, how I get into a car, the way I step up onto a curb, and most importantly, how I think about my body, health, and well-being. The human body is an astonishing piece of living, breathing art and the capacity for resilience never ceases to amaze me. Chiropractic care has been an essential tool to my health and a critical component in my wellness journey.

Throughout my health journey I have encountered numerous chiropractors and other healthcare professionals; however, there are three chiropractors in particular that have assisted me in improving my alignment. Not just the alignment of my spine, but rather the alignment of my life. Chiropractic care produces a chain reaction. When my spine is in correct alignment, the pain decreases, my mind has clarity, and my senses are more aware—numbness is no longer welcome.

When I came to chiropractic school I thought I was choosing a career in chiropractic, little did I know I was choosing more than that, I was choosing a way of life. My personal experiences have lead me to a deep passion for understanding our bodies and being a steward and life-long learner of them.

Since matriculating at Palmer College of Chiropractic, I have been exposed to a plethora of philosophies and techniques. While my previous injuries and curiosity helped guide me to Palmer College, the foreword was coming to a close and it was time to turn the pages to begin writing the first chapter. No question chiropractic works; however, being under doctors who practiced Diversified, Palmer Package, and Gonstead systems I could feel there was more. When I experienced another flare up in my health while being a student, I knew the way people talked about chiropractic that there was more that had yet to be revealed.

Through a series of fortunate events that only God could have coordinated, I landed in Dr. Tonia's office a few blocks away from where I had spent my whole first year searching for the best care—the irony of being minutes away the whole time is laughable.

As I began NUCCA care with Dr. Tonia deeply yearning for something different that could change the course of my health, I began to realize the “upper cervical outcasts” at school was quickly a group I wanted to be a part of. The power of one gentle force, into one specific bone, at one precisely calculated vector had the ability to influence change in my physical body which immediately affected my mind and in turn, my life.

I asked more questions about what NUCCA is and how it worked after seeing results in my own body and that only triggered me to hit the gas pedal into acceleration. I know I want to strive towards mastery in upper cervical chiropractic care and I am trying to get my grasp on the foundational principals of NUCCA care. After taking the NUCCA elective offered at school, I have a desire to dive deep into the philosophy, analysis, and care of NUCCA as I continue my journey towards passing along the gift given to me and playing a role in enriching the lives of many others.

I simply cannot put into words a response for “what does NUCCA mean to me”, but I sincerely hope you can feel through the page the passion, the humility, and the life NUCCA has allowed me to have and to give.

With gratitude for your time and commitment to changing lives,

Olivia Griffith