

Shelby Ruiz

Hey there, my name is Shelby Ruiz. I had the pleasure of working with Lauren as one of her Personal Care Assistants for almost two years. Two years in college or really at any stage in one's life is an immense time for change and growth. Exponential growth are the words I would use to describe my time spent working for Lauren. Initially discovering Lauren's job posting through my own university, Mississippi College, I jumped at the opportunity to finally have a job in a healthcare related field. I honestly think Lauren has assisted me in growing socially, spiritually, academically and personally more than either of us would have imagined at our first meeting. Lauren, despite her confinements to a chair, is one of the busiest people I've ever met. Rarely leaving time for her own personal needs, Lauren seeks to serve and give a voice to those affected by disabilities. Throughout our time together I was introduced to a whole world of people I most likely would never have encountered on my own. I watched her grow a disability non-profit from the ground up and every step of the way inspire people to recognize their dreams. Working with Lauren was one of the greatest joys of my college career and has furthered my own dreams and goals for my life. I am currently in a Neuroscience PhD program researching circuit and protein alterations that occur in Parkinson's disease. I plan on using my training to one day manage my own lab focused on cerebral palsy and other Neuro developmental disorders. Everyone's story may not be like my own, nor may everyone have an interest in healthcare. Nevertheless, whatever season you find yourself in sometimes a "temporary/part-time" job can be the perfect place to grow and find your passion in life. I'll be forever grateful to all the laughs, beneficial criticism, advice and influence Lauren has had on my life thus far.