

A Mother's Sacrifice, A Hero Without a Cape

If I had to choose my mother in every universe, I would. Without hesitation.

Service is often seen as grand acts of charity, but real service—the kind that transforms lives—is often unseen. It is the quiet sacrifices, the relentless perseverance, and the selfless dedication to others. My mother, the greatest example of service I have ever known, embodies this truth.

For eight years, we lived in a single room in my grandparents' garage. My mother worked tirelessly, stretching every dollar, sacrificing her own comforts so my brother and I never felt deprived. She took on extra jobs, let her own clothes become tattered, and worked past exhaustion—all to give us a future she never had. Her service was not recognized with awards, but it was felt in every meal on the table, every bill paid, every sacrifice made without hesitation.

I saw true service in the way she never let hardship define her. When my father left, she refused to crumble. Instead, she stood taller, worked harder, and loved deeper. Some days, she worked so much that I only caught glimpses of her—her scent lingering in the room, a note on the kitchen counter, a text reminding me to stay focused. But despite her absence, she was always present in the ways that mattered most. She never missed an award ceremony, never let me go without, and never stopped believing in me.

Her sacrifices have shaped me into who I am today. As a first-generation college student, I carry her lessons with me. Service, I have learned, is not just about helping others—it is about resilience, about showing up even when no one is watching. It is about loving so deeply that you give without expecting anything in return.

At Sam Houston State University, I have embraced this definition of service. Whether mentoring first-year students, organizing outreach events, or advocating for underrepresented communities, I serve because my mother taught me that a life's value is measured by what we give to others. Every leadership role I take on, every scholarship I apply for, every student I help—it is all because of her.

Sam Houston, whose legacy this great university honors, dedicated his life to shaping Texas—just as my mother has devoted hers to shaping the lives of her children. She is the living embodiment of SHSU's motto: *"The measure of a Life is its Service."*

Her sacrifices may never be widely recognized, but they have built a legacy. And if I had to choose her as my mother in every lifetime, in every universe, I would. Again and again.