

Savoring the soft breeze rippling through my hair, swinging my legs, and grinning unapologetically, I sat on my usual perch at the very top of the Rothberg spider web at Height's playground one warm spring Saturday in fifth grade and felt like the luckiest girl in the world. In many ways, I was. I was born healthy, in economic stability and surrounded by loving family and the promise of a full life. But as I mature, I realize not everyone shares my luck. Visiting homeless shelters and saddened by fate's cruel ability to rob kids of a level playing field before they've taken their first steps, I knew I had to act. In 2016 22% of the homeless US population was less than 18 years old. With my interest in math, I hope to become a statistician and discover, analyze, and publicize quantifiable facts like this one to inform the country and provide the impetus for changes which will better the lives of poor children. Numbers have power. I felt so struck by Rothberg's story because as easy as it might have been for him to settle down with his career's success, his empathy committed him to allying with the undeserving victims of the world's hardships. He chose to wage war against MS and cancer as energetically as if he or someone he loved would die if he failed. Inspired by his selfless path, I know that if we as humans choose only to fight when we ourselves are struggling, we will not make it. We need each other.

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