

I have always been mesmerized by the objects that illuminate the sky since I have been a kid. Whenever I look at images of the different planets and their different shapes and colors, I wonder what it would be like to observe them in real life. As I grew up, I was able to learn further about the sun, stars, moon, and the planets. I was left speechless when I first found out that the moon is not so bright, and the stars are just gas balls and what we see is how they looked like millions of years ago. And most of all, when I found out that the sun is another star, I realized that I have no knowledge regarding the world of astronomy whatsoever. So unknowingly, I started to research more and more about the celestial bodies that beautify the space.

Being a Sri Lankan citizen has put me in a great disadvantage in this situation. My country has not yet developed in the field of astronomy. Therefore, I have limited resources to study further in this field. Since being an astronaut has become my passion now, gaining more knowledge directly from experts is very necessary.

For some reason, in my country, it can be very hard to find another student interested in this field. Sometimes, even when I try to talk to my friends about the new findings and missions of NASA, they just dismiss and ignore me, and I think the main reason for this is the lack of knowledge the students here have regarding space. I have always wondered what it would be like to be surrounded by students who share the same kind of interests as mine and who will be willing to discuss with each other whether life exists in Mars. Unfortunately, this has only been a daydream to me. So, I stucked myself to watching sci-fi movies related to space travel, astronomy, and multiverses. After watching such a movie, although I perfectly know that most of the theories that are used in the movie are just hypothetical, I still google and read regarding those theories, hoping to find some truth in them.

During this process of simple googling and researching, I came across this website named ‘theinspireproject.org’ and read an article on the Kathleen Franzen Memorial Space Memorial for Students Scholarship. As soon as I read the article I decided to apply. Although I know I have less chances with respect to other students living around the world, I am willing to take that rare chance. Getting into this Space Academy will be a game changer for me. Mingling with students who share my interests, gaining knowledge from experts, live and work in a similar environment that real astronauts and space scientists work will be a lifetime experience. Receiving tis scholarship will change my life and the lives of my juniors who are passionate about space science just like I am.

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