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OFFICE OF PROGRAM INTEGRITY | LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY REVIEW PROGRAM

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To be honest I came across this conference and scholarship as I was conducting a search for another topic. As a newcomer to NAME and LEA's I do not have the expertise to write a lengthy or professionally sounding narrative. I do hope to convey my hopes and feelings about a topic that I have only been involved in for a relatively short time.

This is my second year with the LEA Program. I have spent a great deal of my career on the legislative side of these issues listening to people explain why they should get a piece of the budget pie or why their piece should be bigger. I never gave it a second thought. Never went beyond the fiscal aspects of what I was listening to. When I moved over to the human services side I came to see a truly different side of things. I was in a new world of special education, Medicaid and provider services. I was exposed to people, terms and issues that were, until recently, foreign to me.

Now that I have a year behind me I see this area of special education as important and vital to the students and their parents. My duties consist of visiting LEA's and reviewing Medicaid claims. I don't meet the parents or the students. But from these simple reviews of claims and services I have come to see the need these students have for the programs and services and the need their parents have when they see their children learn and develop.

Many times I find myself thinking about this as I go through the documents and the claims submitted. I now think about the parents, students and providers who cobble together a process for instilling growth and character into these students of various ages.

Being new to all this I don't know if I'm explaining what I feel as well as I should. I have found an area of human services that fascinates and challenges me and I'm thankful for that. I want to develop a better understanding and familiarity in this field to help and assist those who have dedicated their time, effort and careers to special education.

I am applying for this scholarship in the hope that this NAME conference will afford me the opportunity to become exposed to the people and programs that make this a truly special field. And hope that this will be the first of many conferences to come.

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