

## **Abigail Norton, 2020 Emergency Medical Technician Completer Student Address**

I definitely didn't expect my senior year to be cut short by a global pandemic. In fact, no one expected this, because nothing deserves to end this way. CATEC, a school defined by its tactile learning, has been hit the hardest with the county's attempt at distance learning. I have textbooks to continue studying biology and government from home, but a CPR dummy and a stretcher for each student didn't make it into the budget this year. The disparity between my house and the CATEC building is more than just geographical. I have been separated from my community, and even part of my family. However, these difficult times remind me of why I attended CATEC in the first place. I burned out on academics my sophomore year from taking too many advanced classes, so I needed a change of pace. I spent my junior year in the Building Trades program. I completed this class with a strong understanding of carpentry, and a newfound appreciation for architecture. More importantly, I developed a strong work ethic that I couldn't have found without the unconditional support from my instructor and all of the CATEC staff. The shared drive of the CATEC community to reach our potential is why I took the EMT program as a senior. My EMT class supported each other for the first seven months of the year with the goal to earn the certification in May. We've had a minor setback, but we have the same passion and dedication that we had in August. We've made plans for the summer to finish strong, but even without a certification, I know CATEC has been the best thing to ever happen to me. As I attend VCU next year for biology, I will carry my work ethic and desire to serve others just as CATEC has encouraged me for the last two years. So despite our distance from learning, the CATEC community is very much so alive. We're just a little quieter.