

**Erna Numanovic**  
**Lyndon State College Upward Bound**  
**1999-2003**



My name is Erna Numanovic. I am from Bosnia and I am eleven. Those were the only three sentences I knew when I arrived to the United States of America. My family moved to the states in 1996. They wanted to give us the opportunity to go to college. With the help of Upward Bound I was able to do that and more. Here is my story. I discovered Upward Bound my freshman year of high school. Upward Bound was a six week summer program. It was created for low-income families whose kids would be the first generation to go to college. I

fit the criteria perfectly. I spent 3 summers with Upward Bound. This program was and still is like no other. The program consisted of 50 plus high school students who all had one goal and that is to be the first in their family to graduate from college. Upward Bound made that dream come alive.

The first week of camp is a trip away from home. I have been given the opportunity to go to Washington D.C. and White River rafting. Many of our families are hard working and do not have the money and or the time to do this with us children. Upward Bound made it possible. They provided the stay, the food, took us to visit museums, for college tours, to meet with counselors, with admissions and plus more. They opened up our minds and showed us that there is more to the outside world. That there are opportunities and people that will help us get into college and that will help us succeed along the way. The college tours did just that. With Upward Bound I visited many colleges through out the three years. I saw what was out there and what options were available to me. My mind was filled with ideas and options. Because of those college tours I was able to narrow down my school selection and pick the school that was right for me and one that fulfilled my personal wants and needs. To be in high school and to have this knowledge by the time you are ready to graduate is amazing.

Upward Bound did much more than college tours. Each summer I spent five weeks at Lyndon State College. During that time I was given the opportunity to take various classes that would help me get into college. One of those organized classes was SAT prep. They provided the tools and resources needed to get ready for the college process. In addition to the class Upward Bound provided waivers for the SATs, college applications, FAFSA and much more. With the help of Upward Bound I received a \$40,000 scholarship. They told me which scholarships to apply for and I did just that. This program was my guide. They paved my way to a successful future. My mom and dad could not have provided the resources that this program has given me. They simply did not know the process. Don't get me wrong my parents would give me a world if they could but when someone doesn't know how to go about something it simply becomes hard and not manageable. This is why I am so thankful for programs such as this one. Everyone deserves an option and a way out and Upward Bound did just that for my family and I.

Upward Bound is like no other. During the five week on campus stay I had the opportunity to volunteer and give back to the community. This only enhanced my college application. There is a sense of community and family at Upward Bound. This family is there to help you succeed and watch you grow. I returned to work for Upward Bound for two summers. I wanted to give back. I wanted to show those students that the future is right in front of them. All that they have to do is take the opportunities that this program gives them. This means that they need to apply for scholarships, fill out the FAFSA, take the SAT's, get those recommendations in on time, do the essays, get good grades, volunteer and much more. I got the opportunity to work with 50 some wonderful high school students. All who were bright and needed guidance. It felt so good to have the opportunity to give back to the program that gave me so much.

During high school I received monthly newsletters from Upward Bound. I got excited to read them because they let us know how each one of us is doing throughout the school year. They also outline upcoming college tours, volunteer opportunities, scholarship deadlines, application deadlines etc. As I said before this is like a family who has so much in common and it feels so good to know that each one us is and or has been given a future to shine. Thank you Upward Bound for all that you have done for my family and I. You are simply just wonderful.