

# Spotlighting: Angelica Mullin

By David Block

Summer is when many people travel, and for those who can afford airfare, they can simply buy a ticket, and get on a plane, but for paraplegic Angelica Mullin of New Jersey, it's anything but simple. Several days before leaving for Ecuador to take a one-month, highly intensive Spanish course, she pointed out some difficulties facing her:

"I can't travel alone," said Mullin. "Some paraplegics can, but I have secondary problems, so I can't. I was awarded a scholarship, which would have covered my tuition, room and board, but because I could not find suitable accommodations with a family, due to trouble with accessibility, I had to book a room in an apart-hotel for my attendant and me. Neither the academy nor the honor society would agree to any allocation of the money toward my room or board outside of their usual circumstances. The room will cost upwards of one thousand four hundred dollars for the month. I will also have to pay twice the airfare; it makes it hard to manage my personal care with an attendant." She had no choice but to use credit cards to finance this trip.

Mullin viewed this trip as a great opportunity to enhance her level of fluency in Spanish, enabling her to achieve her goal of translating Spanish literature to English.

This fall she will attend Rutgers University, where she plans to earn her Masters Degree in Library and Information Science.

Her trip to Ecuador was not the first time that Mullin faced financial adversity. After becoming paralyzed in a car accident back in 2002 at age 21, she had a difficult time getting her insurance to pay for her shower chair. "It cost two thousand dollars," said Mullin. Worse, her insurance did not finance her special bed, which cost four thousand eight hundred dollars, therefore various individuals helped chip in.

"My bed isn't a luxury," said Mullin. "It relieves me of so much pressure. Before, I slept on a hospital bed, but it was like sleeping on a deck of cards. It was bad for my back." She elaborated that she can use her bed as a way to slide in and out of her shower chair and wheelchair.

"One of the first things I learned when I became disabled was that there were so many things that insurance wouldn't cover. I also had to get to know my body all over again."

Despite these inconveniences, Mullin managed to move on with her life, and to help other people with disabilities.

"Almost three years ago, I founded the Campus Access Alliance at Stockton College and plan to expand our mission and to go national so that students that need accommodation within higher education have a constitution and a forum for change making," said Mullin.

Mullin concluded: "I want to change the worldview on disability and improve accessibility worldwide through travel and by making connections with people directly and indirectly in these places. Disability advocacy is something I also do at home." For anyone interested in helping to assist Angelica in off-setting the costs of her caretakers' expenses to Ecuador, donations can be sent to:

Crest Savings Bank  
500 New Jersey Ave.  
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Attn: The Angel Fund



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