For UTSA Student, Books and Bookshare Are Keys to Future

[Bookshare logo with the tagline: A Benetech Global Literacy Initiative.]

[A student walks on her college campus]

We're at the University of Texas at San Antonio main campus. I love this school. There's a lot of really awesome people here. And I am studying multi-disciplinary studies.

[Student enters library elevator}

I can't live without my books. [Laugh] Textbooks, pleasure books, any kind of books. I feel like I can go places, and do things that I can't go and do in real life.

My name Amber Steet. I'm 22 years old, and I have Septo-optic dysplasia, which means that I have some trouble seeing. I just need a little bit help here and there.

[Amber removes a Braille note taker from her backpack]

Downloading books is a lot easier with Bookshare, because everything is in one single file. I always use BRF, it's the Braille file. I can find just about anything on there.

Shadows by J.R. Ward. [Amber reading] His wide eyes shifted over the empty house. They missed an obvious change.

Braille files, Braille books, pretty much anything that I want in Braille I can look for it on Bookshare. I want to help other people like myself who are visually impaired. I want to help them get to where I'm at. I decided that I wanted to go to grad school afterwards and become a teacher of the visually impaired.

[Amber gets lunch in the school cafeteria]

The most common mistakes I run across with parents and teachers of the visually impaired is that they are afraid to let their students or their children do for themselves. Just because I'm visually impaired, and just because my friends are visually impaired it doesn't mean that we can't do.

[Amber uses her Braille note taker]

Downloading books, I learned to do it myself very quickly. It's really quite a phenomenal resource. You're allowed to go on there and download whatever you want. CEU books, you know, Continuing Ed Units, whatever I might find on there that I decide I want to learn about or read about. It's all yours. There are worlds open to you through Bookshare.