



Andrew Waits

# INSPIRE

**SHE COULD BE SHARLENE**, growing up in Venezuela, exploring nature, watching animals, collecting shells, bugs, rocks, and plants. She didn't know any scientists who looked like her, but her mother and grandmother taught her that hard work and perseverance can get you far.

She could be Desiree, who always thought college was about following a set schedule and ticking off requirements, until she joined the Micronesian Islands club, came to the Burke to talk about objects, and saw a path to using her education to bring cultural strength and knowledge to her community.

She could be Itzue, searching the Mexican jungle in the dead of night, lifting a leaf and realizing she was looking at a species that hadn't been seen for more than 50 years.

She could be Prim, who dedicated her career to medical research but never gave up her childhood dream of digging in the dirt. Now she's spending her retirement revealing a *T. rex*, one tooth at a time.

She could be a curator of mammals, a cultural researcher, a conservation biologist, a fossil preparator.

She could be any of us, at the moment of inspiration.

She can be anything she wants to be.