

Unexpected Greatness: 103 Shades of Knowledge

PS/MS 498X

*The Van Nest Academy for
Environmental Health Sciences &
Technology*

Bronx, NY

Spring 2017-2018

Teachers & Writers Collaborative

Principal: Carol Ann Gilligan

Assistant Principals: Ann Reynolds, Megan Gundogdu,
Melanie Marino,

Classroom Teachers: Anne McConville, Lauren Molisani,
Arianna Lofrese, Sandra Acevedo, and Natalie Stewart

Writer-in-Residence: Jay Howard

TEACHERS
& WRITERS
COLLABORATIVE



Table of Contents

A-Z List of Colleges and Universities.....	3
College Questions.....	4
Artist Letter to Students.....	6
Why College? Answers through the Death of a Friend.....	7
The First Day of School (Poems and Reflections)	8

Class College Essays & Selected Imagining My Career Poems

701

Collaborative College Haikus.....	13
Imagining My Career Community Poem.....	13
I Think I "Sense" College Poems.....	14
Individual Essays & Selected Poems.....	16

702

Collaborative College Haikus.....	35
Imagining My Career Community Poem.....	35
I Think I "Sense" College Poems.....	36
Individual Essays & Selected Poems.....	38

703

Collaborative College Haikus.....	58
Imagining My Career Community Poem.....	58
I Think I "Sense" College Poems.....	59
Individual Essays & Selected Poems.....	61

704

Imagining My Career Community Poem.....	82
Individual Essays & Selected Poems.....	84

Student Reflections.....	92
---------------------------------	-----------

TEACHERS
& WRITERS
COLLABORATIVE

A- Arizona, Albany, Alabama, Alfred University, Albany State
B- Brooklyn College, Binghamton University, Brown, Boston College, Bronx Community College
C- UConn, Colombia, City Tech
D- Dickinson College, Duke, Delaware,
E- Eastern Michigan, Eastern Carolina, Einstein School of Medicine
F- Fordham
G- Georgia University, Georgetown, Guttman College, Georgia Tech,
H- Hunter College, Harvard University,
I-Ithaca College, Illinois University, Indiana University, Iowa State, Iona College
J- Julliard, John Jay College, John Hopkins
K Kean University, Kentucky, Kansas University
L- Lehman College, Louisville
M- Manhattan College, Mercy College, Michigan State, UMass, Miami College
N- NYU, New Paltz, North Carolina, Notre Dame
O- Ohio State, Oklahoma, Queens College,
P- UPenn, Princeton, Pace University, Purdue,
Q- Queens College, Quinnipiac
R- Rice University, Rhode Island, Rockland, Rutgers, Richmond
S- Syracuse, Stanford, Spelman, Stony Brook, St. Johns,
T- Trinity College, Tennessee, Texas
U- University of Miami, University of Southern Cal (USC), UCLA, Union College
V- Vanderbilt, Virginia Tech, Villanova
W- Westchester, Washington University, Wales, Wisconsin
X- Xavier
Y- Yale, York
Z- Zane College

50 College Questions From 498x

Middle School vs College

1. What is the difference between middle school and college?
2. Is it harder to do school on Campus or at home?
3. Do you have to wear uniforms?
4. Can you be absent? What is the policy?

Classes on Campus

5. How many people are in one class?
6. What happens when you don't hand in your HW?
7. What is the difference between a teacher and a professor?
8. How many classes are in college?
9. On average how many classes are there per week?
10. How long are the classes?
11. What is the maximum amount of classes you can take?

Life on Campus

12. How much does it cost to stay on campus?
13. Can you choose your own room?
14. Are you allowed to have a girl & boy in the same dorm?
15. Bad internet in dorm rooms or any restrictions in college?
16. What is the school food like?
17. Does the food taste like actual food?
18. How many hours of downtime a day do you have?

Admissions Process (and Scholarships)

19. How hard is it to get into a Division I School?
20. How much money do you get from an athletic scholarship?
21. Do you have to pay to live on campus if you got a full scholarship?
22. Who invented college?
23. What is the average cost of college?
24. Does college give money for personal issues?
25. Is college administration the same for different colleges?
26. How do you get into a good college?
27. What is the number one college in NY?
28. For each college do you have to take a different test?
29. How long do you have to pick a college? (Deadlines)
30. Are there any other ways to get a scholarship then sports?
31. How does financial aid work?

Athletics

32. What type of NCAA division will help you become pro?
33. What's the difference between division I, II, and III schools?
34. How many basketball games are there?
35. What is the best college for sports?

Other

36. How does it feel to be in college?
37. Because we are in a special class how does that affect college?
38. If you didn't go into a classroom for a while is it true you can get kicked out?
39. Can you go out to buy your own food?
40. Are there students with autism or other disabilities?
41. Is there rapping in college?
42. Is there any band in college?
43. Classes? The best thing about it?
44. Any payment while in college?
45. What is a large school percentage of population? Smallest?
46. Does age matter when living off campus?
47. What college has the best percentage of graduating?
48. What jobs don't need college?
49. How many years do you have to be in college?
50. How many students do colleges accept?

Artist Letter to Students

I am from the Bronx. I grew up about 15 mins away from Van Nest Academy in the Pelham Parkway. When I was in 7th grade, college to me was only a dream. I didn't know how realistic of an option it was at that time, but I held that thought dear to my heart as I uncovered my true passion of writing and poetry.

No matter how much I love writing, I still know it's not an easy craft. But like with anything it's about practice. Find what you love. Then practice. Then practice some more. Life is all about our passions, our dreams, our ambitions and the dedication it takes to persevere. It's about the behind the scenes work we hardly get to see. It's about unlocking your imagination.

College is just that. Practice for life. Practice for dealing with situations, developing relationships, establishing goals and routines, becoming professional. But most of college is about opportunity. The opportunity to discover yourself and stretch your imagination.

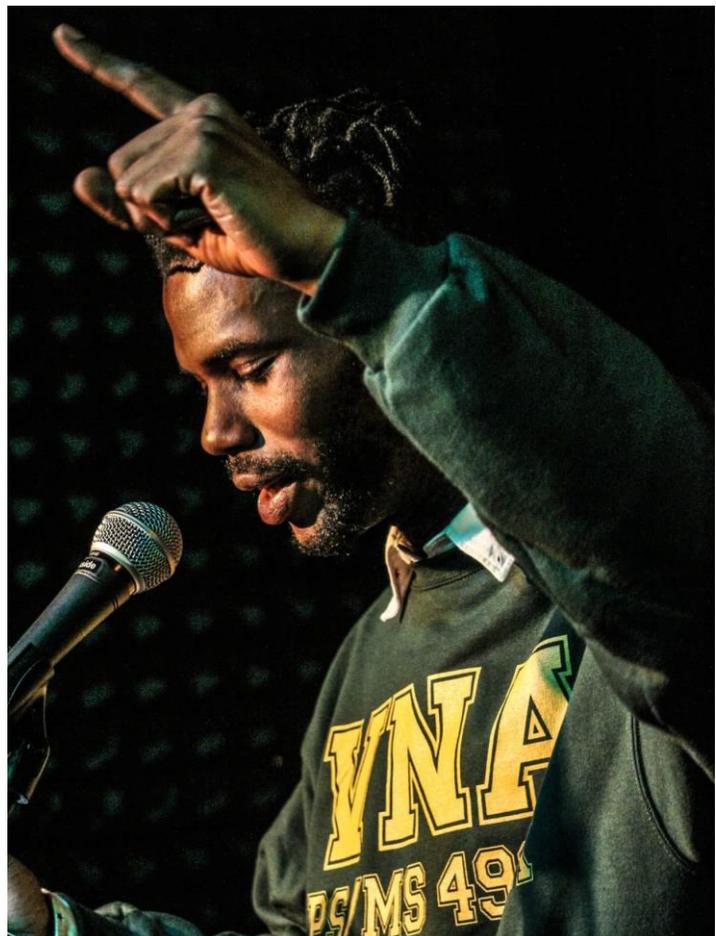
In our sessions, we did exactly that. We challenged our own perspective of when to think about college. We wrote about college. We imagined our futures through career poems. We responded to our own passions to create essays that show the sheer talent, ambition and drive of what makes each and every single one of you talented.

You are already amazing but have the potential to let the world know it as well. Take advantage of your own talents by maximizing your efforts. Master your crafts and continue to think about college.

With Love,

T&W Writer and Poet

Jay Howard



Why College: Answers Through the Death of a Friend

Written by Jay Howard

A shot of cold news from Buffalo: April Showers, Death May Flower. The news never mentioned this kind of rain. It wasn't on the forecast. Not here, not now, not ever. Graduation was only a few hours before. This was a huge sense of accomplishment, for a kid whose rare sense of humor rivaled the knowledge he collected. I always admired the way he balanced books and the hood with such style. In fact, his wit was just as equally impressive as his shoe game. He always kept it real, authentic like his throwback jersey game. I looked up to him, but that metaphor became all too real, when he lost his life too soon. The day after graduation.

All the different scenarios that ran through my mind of ways to complete the sentence, *"The Day After I Graduate, I Will..."* No one ever thinks they would die. Usually, it's a time for celebration. Sort of the "I just won a Superbowl, I'm going to Disney World" type of feeling. College is a place where your dreams become reality, not taken from you. How could you Jack Son's Life? Let Nature Run its Corpse. I struggled with that question. How could you achieve something and lose it in a bang. What happens to a dream deferred? He loved to challenge. Who knew this would be one of the biggest challenges. The loss of a friend, is Langston Hughes.

I tried to weather the storm. Sunk into a place of depression as I agonized over my own college experience. When I lost my friend, it was finals week after my first semester back from taking a year off while contemplating if I would ever return. There wasn't a study guide on dealing with the loss of a friend, no proper course of action. It felt pointless. I now wondered if it was even worth it. I was in college, still examining the improbable question: **Why College?**

I always knew the answer. It was the same reason we both left our block for college: to find success around the corner, instead of standing on the corner. Life was a storm, and we prepped for thunder under this umbrella called education. But this time the answer felt different because when lightning strikes, what happens to a dream deferred? Can they remain vivid and alive? Does the rainbow signify hope from the promise of past dreams deferred?

For me that moment became a ladder instead of a chute. His loss was a springboard for my motivation to finish with my education. I learned a lot that semester, but mostly to believe in yourself, your own values and to stand by them. Have something to live for, or rather die for. I wanted to graduate. That moment became the foundation for my belief in myself and the cornerstone for my future in positive youth development.

The First Day of School Poems & Reflections

Kindergarten

Running through the halls,
Singing the ABC song, jumping
with excitement for a new start.
Meeting new friends, having fun!
- Gabriella Gonzalez, (703)

6th Grade

The time has come to go to
a new school, it is the
beginning of 6th grade, but the
end of elementary school. As
I stand in this new environment
surrounded by new faces
it truly is the start of a new year.
- Karina Rodriguez, (701)

First Day of 2nd grade

I was nervous
I was scared
I was confused
I didn't know what to do
I didn't know if to sit
Or to speak
I didn't know where to be
I wanted to run and cry
Go away and never go back
I wanted to go home
not "home"
but home
- Wendy Vasquez (701)

First Day of College

If I was in college on the first day,
I would go to rapping class like a boss #LikeABoss.
And I would go to basketball class to break some ankles
#AnkleBreakerForLife. I would feel triggered cuz
I'm too lazy to get up from the bed.
In fact I could rap about being lazy
- Dre (704)

First Day of School

First day of school
Is very
Rough
So, so
Tough
Daily school
Activities
Year round
- Kristian Holiba (702)

All I Wanted

Kindergarten was scary. New people, new teachers and work. Kindergarten was not fun. For recess, I didn't even run. People went outside to play. I would try to stay away. All teachers did was speak and speak, all I wanted was to lay back and relax. All I wanted was to leave. Go home and sleep.
- Anaya Mcfarlane

Middle School

A new and unfamiliar place
New school, new classes
New faces

Surrounded by mouths that never cease
Full of mourning children and joyful ones,
No tranquility or peace

A new, cold plastic seat
Rusty, chipping tables
Kids racing to the best ones; whom to beat?
- Sharon Bernard (703)

My First Day

My first day of college
I wake up with excitement
I see boxes filled to the top with books
I look out the window to see my fellow classmates on campus
Some rush to class,
Others relax with their coffee and friends
- Juliette DiFuccia

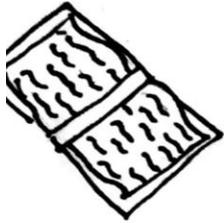
The First Day of 4th Grade

The first day of 4th grade.
How many friends have I made?
I haven't made one all day.
I feel as no one likes me but I'm okay.
The rest of my time in VNA
has ended that first day.

I have people that say they're my friends
I feel as if the lies never end
I don't think people know I have feelings too.
The words that hurt you can hurt me too.
The first day of 4th grade
How many friends have I made?
Of course none, which is sad to say
- By a Fellow Classmate



Powerful
Creative



Unexpected
Greatness

103 SHADES
OF

KNOWLEDGE

CAYA



701

Alina Baptiste
Paula Belliard
Diego Borbon
Nicholas Capodanno
Xinaya Carrero
Christopher Concepcion
Christopher Galdamez
Matthew Garcia
Mervin Gbadabizo
Jansson Gonzalez
Andrea Martinez
Michelle Montiel
Lucia Morel-Fernandez
Crystal Noyola-Torres
Natee Okrah
Mario Piarulli
Julliana Popoter
Samantha Quiroz
Darren Rivera
Justin Rodriguez
Karina Rodriguez
Lenin Rodriguez
Sean Sabess
Jacelyn Salas
Latchmie Seeamber
Daniel Simo
Chicago Smith
Matthew Torres
Wendy Vasquez

**Collaborative College Haikus
(701)**

*It can be stressful
The learning experience
That's beneficial*

*I follow my dreams
College is my future life
I will be great soon*

*Do we need college?
Yes to gain all our knowledge
Yes we need college*

*We want to be great
We are determined to have fun
College is for us*

Imagining My Career Community Poem

Lawyer

I would see the accused in custody
I would hear judgmental murmurs from the jurors
I would feel the confidence
of my evidence to win this case
I would taste victory
I would smell the bitter coffee

I Think I "Sense" College Poems
(701)

*I feel my hand holding my pen
I taste knowledge by reading my books
I smell the ink from my pen
I see the paper I'm writing on
I hear my teacher talking about the topic*

*I hear the professor talking
I smell the hot breath of my friend
I taste the milk from the cafeteria
I feel the textbooks paper
I see the door sign on the bathroom*

*I can see the professor with paper on top of desk
I can taste the Starbucks on the side of the desk
I can hear teachers teaching
I can feel my pencil against the notebook
I can smell the lunch hall food*

*I can feel the texture of the pen
I can see the students talking to one another
I can smell the new paper smell of textbook
I hear laptop clicking when writing an essay
I taste ice coffee in the morning.*

*The coffee I will drink in the morning
The hardcover of the textbook
The voices of my classmates
Students rushing to get to class
Our pencils trying to write down notes*

Unexpected Greatness :

103 Shades
of Knowledge



701



Alina Baptiste

When I was 11 years old, I realized what I wanted to do in my future. It all started when I took my first good pictures on my phone. One time when I went to the beach, I took a beautiful picture of the ocean, I was so proud of myself and felt accomplished. After taking that picture, I felt a feeling that this is what I should do in the future.

While I was on vacation in Florida, I would take so many pictures of things. I would visit beaches and take pictures, and visit an aquarium and take many pictures of the animals such as turtles, fish, sharks, jellyfish, and more. I also went to LEGOLAND and SeaWorld and took nice photos of all the cool things there. Each picture would make me smile with happiness because they looked so nice, even my family complimented my photos. These moments in Florida sparked my interest in photography.

Whenever I get the chance, I would take many pictures of my two-year-old Rottweiler, Samoa. I would take about many pictures of her at once and then select the best ones after. Most of the pictures I took of her I feel really confident in. I feel accomplished every time I take a nice picture of her. Moments like these also make me really want to do photography in the future.

I've always wanted a Polaroid, so when I recently got one on Christmas, I was very excited to take pictures and I felt complete. I took even more pictures of my dog and my friends on school trip. I also took many pictures of things in nature such as animals and plants. I really enjoy taking pictures with my Polaroid because it's extremely fun and I think this is the path of my journey in the future.

All of these events are very significant to me because they have all helped me figure out what I want to do in my future, photography. When I was in Florida and took pictures, it sparked my interest in photography. Then, when I took pictures of my dog, I started feeling confident and accomplished in my pictures, and when I got my first polaroid for Christmas and took pictures of my friends and nature, it made me realize I fully wanted to do photography.

I would see the beauty of all the different places
of the world to take pictures of
I would hear the calm peaceful ocean
I would feel excited to travel
and take pictures of different things
I would taste the happiness from
the bride and groom when they see their pictures
I would smell the fresh apples
from the tree I'm taking a picture of

Paula Belliard

An Aha Moment

Have you ever had an aha moment, where everything just clicked and everything made sense? When I was about 5 years old, I think, I was sick with an ear infection. I had a book on facts about your ears, and about different infections you can get. Surprisingly, this was my journey to when I realized I want to be a teacher.

When I was in the younger grades I really enjoyed school, as well as my sister who is only a year younger than me. My sister and I were always very close, and whatever I liked, she liked. When I was sick, I put all of my stuffed animals in front of me (as well as my sister so I can have some sort of interaction) and I read the book. I remember when I got up to the part of the infection I had. I said, and I quote, "When I was little I had this ear infection." as if it was 20 years later, talking to my younger students. This turned into a continuous thing, where I would explain my homework to my grandma (because she picked me up from school, and helped me with my homework) so she could help me. Then when I was done I taught it to my sister so she can be prepared for her first year of kindergarten the following year. I actually still do this because one of the walls in her room is a wipe board wall, and I even write on that. We play school and I teach her what I am currently learning in math (because I don't have the time nor energy to teach any other subject and math is easy). Or I might help her with homework.

Towards elementary school I started to realize that I like to teach and help my classmates with stuff they are having trouble with. Some of my friends also wanted to be teachers, so we would sometimes plan that I would be the main teacher and they would be the assistant teachers. My best friends and I always said that after middle school, we will go to the same high school, same college, we would be roommates, and we would have the same job. This was until she told me that after middle school, she would be moving to Virginia for high school and college.

In middle school, my best friend and I still tried to make the most of the time we have until she moved. So in after school, we would pretend like we were teachers and do our homework together with our friends. We would even sometimes do art, or gym. In 6th grade, our math teacher let us go up to the board, and explain our work, as if we were teaching it. I loved doing this because I think that it helps the students who don't understand, help them see a visual. Also it's really fun for the students. It made me experience what it is actually like to teach a class.

You might think that 5 years old is too old to realize or think about your career, but I think that the earlier that you start, the easier the outcome is. That is also a reason why this program is a privilege to experience college. Most people only start looking into college in senior year of high school. This program forces us to learn early, but it is only a benefit for us.

Diego Borbon

The Beginning

I thought to myself, "Am I going to lose?" Seeing the glass chess board in front, how the pieces were arranged, and the silence made me think that I still have a chance at winning. I move a piece calling out, "Checkmate" beating my dad for the first time in chess.

It was in a sunny day in Dominican Republic, I was inside my room because outside there too much sun, I had my metal frame windows close because it was already bright inside my room, sweat was pouring down my face that I had to get up from my bed to turn on the fan, I turn on the TV while I was at it as well. I went to lay on my bed once more. A few minutes later I hear someone coming down my hallway, then my dad burst in my room, "Son, wanna play some chess with me?" he said as he was sitting down in my bed, "But I don't know how to play chess." I said back as I was turning the TV off. "Don't worry, I'll teach you how to play then." Then he dragged me off my bed and down the hallway to the dining room. He left the room for

a minute and came back with something that I never saw in my house. "Dad, where did you find that?" I said, in confusion "This was in your mom's closet" he said while placing it on the table, he took out everything that was inside the box and that's when I realize when everything was made of glass.

My dad started to teach me how to play chess then when he thought that I was ready to play a real game with him, "Are you ready to play a real game now? I'm warning you I won't go easy on you." he said, then I nod back. It was an intense game because since my dad taught me, he knows my strategies. We were at it for about ten minutes still playing the game until I called out, "Checkmate," making the last move.

Nicholas Capodanno

Since I was a kid, math has been one of my favorite subjects to work on. I liked math because .when I was a kid I was really good at doing math problems. To this day, I'm still doing great in math classes and I get good grades in math. This essay will show my journey toward my goal to being an accountant.

When I was a kid, I used to do math equations really fast. I did them faster than any other kid in my class. My parents and teachers were also impressed with how fast I can solve math problems. I was especially good when solving money problems with math.

I'm good at math because I know how to solve math problems in my head quickly. I learn how to do them in my head quickly by taking notes in class. My teacher even asks me to show my work when in class while taking a quiz or test.

The reason I wanted to be an accountant is because I was better than a majority of kids in my grade in terms of tests and quizzes. If I do become an accountant when I grow up, I will continue to practice doing money problems and improve my techniques.

In conclusion these events are significant to me because it will help me in my future when I become an accountant.

Xinaya Carrero

Friendships and Priorities

Have you ever experienced a challenge? Was there someone there to help you? Were you alone? Friendships are one of the most stressful problems a kid could face. Being in school you want everyone to be your friend and your name to be known. But that doesn't always happen the way you want it to. For example a few years back in the beginning of school I saw a girl and thought she was really cool but now as I look back I see that I was trying too hard and she seemed like she didn't want to be friends.

As you get older you realize you don't want everyone to be your friend, but it's still a priority however. I was really close to a girl and had a disagreement with her over the pettiest reason. And I was so afraid that she would stop being my friend that I apologized right away even though it wasn't my fault. I did it anyways. We made up but I wasn't really happy. If you think of it you may see that it wasn't that serious but at the age of eight you have no devices and don't live by any of your friends so you look forward to school.

But that shouldn't always be the reason you go to school. Education will help you through this journey life and people will help you along the way. But you have to be true to yourself and know what your priorities are. There was a time when I felt really lonely and really sad and this one girl who I had barely talked to in the school year was there for me and liked me for me. We will talk on and on laugh until I realized I wasn't sad anymore. It's good to know that I was able to find a friend that could really talk to you. I have plenty of friends I could joke around with but never really talked to.

Overall just know that there are people out there who truly care about you and love you for you not some character you create. It doesn't matter how many "friends" you have it matters if they care about you the same way you care about them. Just remember "quality over quantity".

Christopher Concepcion

The Art Life of Me

For all my 13 years I've lived, I always loved to draw. Drawing is something that goes on for long time in my life, from drawing on walls with crayons to 3D art pieces.

When I was 7 years old, I always had watched Power Rangers 24/7 and I would always draw them when I had the chance on my own time. Later in my life I started watching Dragon Ball Z all the time. Soon I met Joshua and we both like everything just from toys to anime. Anime is really popular and weird but I always draw Power Rangers cartoons and more. By the time I had watched a lot of tutorials to help me and my drawings get better at what I love to do the most. My favorite characters I love to draw are Goku from Dragon Ball Z, Sonic the Hedgehog and Mario the plumber. When I was 10, all I would draw was Sonic and watching skits, cartoons, sprites, and plush channels on YouTube. In 5th grade, I met a cool person that had a passion about Dragon Ball and we hung out a lot during lunch period just talking about who is the best character and who defeats who.

What I need to do for my drawing is to improve my details on each of my drawing instead of drawing a plain blank background and my character is just standing in place doing nothing. I want to express how I draw and show others how I do. I also want to be better at shading so my drawings look more realistic and better. I also want to draw human-like drawing because a lot of people draw human-like so I want to learn to.

Christopher Galdamez

In my life I have had made many accomplishments but none have stood out to me like the first time I was in a real band concert. That moment was an accomplishment that required the most effort so far.

So what did I do to accomplish this? Well I had to practice every day when I got home. Even now I still practice to become even better. The effort I put into this upcoming moment was amazing. I think if I did not practice I still would've done great but not as good as I wanted.

Anyway after countless days of practice rehearsing and more practice it was time. I got on stage with my peers and played my instrument. I was very, very nervous. I was afraid of missing a note or squeaking at the worst time. When my teacher cued the band, I put my fear

aside I took a breath and played and each note came out perfectly. I have had some great moments in life—some took a lot of effort and others were easier to achieve—but when I worked hard to get to this moment it was the greatest accomplishment.

So far this has been one of my proudest moments which took a lot of hard work to achieve but with enough work and dedication I was able to rise to the occasion and the outcome was me feeling overjoyed.

I would see a collection of tools in the back of my truck
I would hear squeaking and the sound of little feet running
I would feel the soft inside of my gloves
I would taste ham and cheese from my last lunch
I will smell rat poison in the rotting corpse of a dead critter

Matthew Garcia

Ever since I learned that most of my dad's family was part of the military I wanted to be part of the military. When I was younger I learned that my aunt was deployed in Afghanistan to fight in the aftermath of 9/11.

I was forever changed by that story. It made me think of a career in the military, I could enlist as an officer. It made me realize how much I could contribute to the country. So I began to research and I realized how many doors this career could open up for me an example is they would pay for my college tuition and it would allow me to travel to different countries and states for work which would be a great opportunity for me to explore the world.

Another reason for me to enlist is to make a difference in the world. An example of making a difference in the world is to help people who were hit by a huge hurricane like the people in Puerto Rico and Mexico. Another example is to help or aid in wars or battles to keep my family safe. Lastly, in case I am injured in combat and unable to work, I could be paid by the government and be able to help my family out anytime of the day from taking kids to school or helping build a gazebo in the backyard.

Mervin Gbadabizo

I remember when I was in pre-k and I wanted to be an astronaut. At the time I was really young my parents were really supportive about me being an astronaut because they believed that I can be whatever I want.

It was the 2nd week of school and we had to go in front of the class and do an "about me" presentation. It was my turn and I brought up an astronaut figure that my mom got me for my birthday, I brought it up started to talk "Hi my name is Mervin, and when I grow up I wanna be a..." then the class stopped paying attention to me and started talking. I tried to just sit back down on the carpet and go about my day but the teacher told me to go back up and continue.

The same day I went back home and told my mother about how I wanted to tell the class about me and my dream and people either laughed or just didn't pay attention. And I tried to forget my dream and give up but I couldn't because my mom kept bringing up the dream.

A few years later that experience is still with me and now I know that no matter what my dream is my dream and my life is my life and no one can take me down.

Jansson Gonzalez

College is important because I can help people get a good job and because I like basketball. In order to get to the NBA I'm going to have to go to college and practice. College is important because you can meet friends that are going to help you in your life or go get a job. Also because it can help you chase your dreams.

Andrea Martinez

Have you ever experienced someone you love get hurt? Or do you have a passion about something. Well I have and it wasn't that long ago.

My mom and I loved to cook together. Sometimes we took turns when we cook but of course she watched me for supervision. And sometimes I watched her. We also love to shop for the items that we need. Sometimes when we cook I think of it as bonding time for the two of us and also cooking kind of distracts both of us for things. One of our favorite things or probably the only thing we make is soft tacos. When I cooked or she did, she always told me to be careful when I cook because I do not want to burn myself.

Within that week when my mom was cooking and my brother and I were in our room watching TV. At that same time, we had heard a loud sound such as a "BOOM" sound from the kitchen. I thought that something had fallen. But when I got up and went to the kitchen it was something much bigger than expected. When I saw the kitchen it was all burned—the walls were covered in ash and were black as well, and the stove was covered in ash as well. But then I saw something else, it was my mom she was on the floor. She had something on her arm, she had burned herself. My older brother was there and was the first one to help my mom up and took her to the shower and put her arm under the water. My mom said it didn't hurt but I knew it did. As soon as he wet her arm, he drove her to the hospital and my younger brother and I had to wait for them.

The next day I saw my mom for the first time since the incident. I saw her arm that was covered in badges. And she couldn't even move her arm. My brother and I helped her eat, clean, and sometimes cook but my older brother watched me. When my mom got better it left a big scar on her arm. It kind of took my mom a long time to start to cook again but she knew she had to be careful.

Michelle Montiel

Everybody has a talent, interest, background, or identity. Some of the things I like to do are playing the flute, drawing, math and other things but my favorite things to do is cook and challenge myself in doing other dishes that look hard for me but still have a supervision of an adult.

Even though I'm not that good at cooking I always ask my mom or watch TV/YouTube to see how to make the dish to get better and better. I first started by making simple things such as eggs and other basic Mexican food. I went through adding too much salt, not being cooked well, things not being well measured to make the food, to adding enough salt, and well cooked.

Mexican food is very hard to cook because they need to have the exact measurement or else the food that you are making is not going to come out like you were expecting. The more I cook in front of an adult the better I get at doing it, because I have someone that knows about kitchen and tells me what I'm supposed to do. One of the Mexican traditional plates that I have to keep on practicing to get better at it is mole, even though it looks like a normal soup the taste! How spicy, the amount of chicken there has to be on it, and the flavor of it, "Mmm, delicious."

In conclusion, all of us have a talent, interest, background, and identity like me with my mini talent of cooking. Also, it's really good to learn different things and do what they love.

Lucia Morel-Fernandez

Everyone has a talent, interest or something they like to do. I like to do a lot of things like cooking, dancing, singing, and a lot of different things, but my favorite thing to do above all of these things is play my instrument which is the flute. Do you play any instruments? In this essay, I'm going to talk about what I like to do.

I've played only one instrument and I really like it. The instrument I play is the flute, it looks like a simple instrument, but actually it's kind of hard to play. When I was 7 or 8 years old I played a flute that's easier to play and it was also smaller.

After playing the smaller flute for a year every time there was a holiday, everybody in the flute classes used to go to a really big stage with a lot of people and we used to play all the songs that we have learned. That used to be really fun.

Now I play a better and larger flute and I really like it. Also, I have won a medal in second place because my school has a band program and the majority of the times we go to different stages to play in front of a lot of people. Now it's one of the funniest things I do.

In conclusion, I think that the things we love to do are the most important things in life, because of that small class that I was in and now I got to learn a better instrument and perform in front of a lot of people.

Crystal Noyola-Torres

When I was younger my mom used to grab my hand as I held a pencil and she would guide me to make simple shapes to the best of her ability on paper. I would always get a spark of joy whenever I drew something all by myself.

I soon became more independent as time went on but I didn't draw as often as before, when I went to elementary school I met a girl named Gabriella. She was fantastic at art and she was much better than me. I was jealous and that's what pushed me to improve my art. To be honest at first I didn't really like her but she was just so nice to me. I just couldn't stay angry at her but my jealousy didn't go away. We became friends and she encouraged me to do better and I did the same to her. We drew together all the time at lunch and we had lots of friendly competitions. We gave each other tips and advice on drawing so we both could benefit off of one another. I'm glad I met her because I probably wouldn't be as enthusiastic and eager about drawing without her.

Now I am in middle school, Gabby and I are still in contact and we continue to have competitions to this day.

Natee Okrah

Have you ever experienced a challenge you had to face independently? Everyone has their own different challenges they have to face in life. Specifically I had a challenge with my grades and learning how to ride a bike. These experiences have showed me as a person that in life there are going to be challenges I have to overcome independently. It also showed me that I could learn from these challenges to help me.

Riding a bike was one of the hardest challenges I have experienced. I had to learn by just watching my brother and teach myself. I fell numerous times and gave up. When I give up I think of new ways I could teach myself and learn.

In previous grades, math was a difficult subject for me until I got the hang of it. For example when I was in the 5th grade all I used to say was I hate math and I will never understand it. Personally when I don't like something I don't tend to try and I get frustrated. However, I gave it a chance and tried but it proved I was right that math was difficult. A way I got better at math and what helped me is because my mother once told me that if you have a mindset that you will always hate math you can't actually give it a chance. At times when I was wrong I didn't want to listen to anybody or what they had to say even when they tried to explain. At a certain point I had to create a mindset where I have to be wrong sometimes and I am not always going to be correct.

These experiences have taught me that in life there are challenges that I am going to have to overcome independently and they might take some time. It also showed me that there are also challenges where I might need help from others. In conclusion, some experiences like these will motivate you to keep trying in life.

Mario Piarulli

In the world, there are many accomplishments and activities that can complete you as a person. Just like a lot of people, sports complete me as a person. Overtime I have seen a major growth in my physical activities.

It all started in the 2nd grade when I first played basketball. I realized that basketball was my passion and I would want to do it for the rest of my life. Even though that season was very fun, I still sat the bench and learned a lot from my teammates. Also, while learning from my teammates, I also worked very hard in practice. It was very hard for me to play and compete with the older kids because I was very small and not very fast. However, that changed overtime.

When I moved up in age, I started to understand the game more. In the 3rd and 4th grade, I first played on an organized basketball team. It was the best experience of my life at that point. After working hard in practice and working hard in games to win, we made it to the playoffs. Therefore, this lead me to play my first playoff game in my life. We went on to the championship, though we lost to probably one of the bests teams I have ever seen. However, I still had one of the best seasons of my life to this day.

As time passed and the more I worked, the more I understood that I am a great athlete. After 3rd and 4th grade I soon went on to play in middle school at van nest academy and stated playing with my favorite person at the school Mr. Milik. Soon I went on to play in my first middle school basketball game and I knew I was going to have to work harder because the competition was getting harder as I got older. Therefore, I got through the season and played in the summer and went onto the present season that has recently ended on March 12, 2018.

In closing, what I am trying to put in perspective is that my dream goal and job is be able to play college basketball at a D1 school and make it to the NBA, however if that doesn't work out I would want to still be a pro and play overseas.

I would see all the fans cheering for my team
I would hear my teammates giving me advice on what I should do
I would feel the energy of the fans inside the arena
I will take victories or defeat based on the score
I will smell the sweat running down my body

Julliana Popoter

Photography Development

About three years ago, I always had to take photos for my family when we were out on vacation. But although I wasn't really that good at it I really enjoyed it. Since then I knew the interest I had for photography. So that next Christmas I got my first camera, a Polaroid. Later with my interest growing stronger, I knew this is something I would love to do.

After a few months of wishing and hoping for a new camera (in particular a Polaroid), I got a light blue Polaroid on December 25 the year of 2015. I was told with that camera to take many pictures when we are out on vacations as a family. So I did that exactly that when we drove to Long Island. Many pictures of the beaches, trees, and of the landmarks were taken. Having this camera definitely increased my abilities of photography as well as my likings.

My whole life I earned three different cameras for different purposes. Such as taking pictures of myself, my setting, and pictures for families. These cameras include a Polaroid on Christmas, 2015. Another camera I use very often is my iPhone 7 plus back camera in 2016. On this phone lots of pictures were taken every time my family and I visited Central Park. For two years I've been using my favorite-of-all-time camera, the Canon EOS. Due to this professional pictures were able to be taken of all sorts of things.

Throughout the course of four years, my love for photography grew stronger and stronger. Hopefully in the future, my goal of becoming a well-known photographer will come true because of these events.

Samantha Quiroz

First Day of Kindergarten

On my first day of Kindergarten,
I wore a green collared shirt and a skirt with black shoes.
I wasn't use to being in a school with older people.
I cried a waterfall going up the stairs with my class while leaving our parents
After a while, I got used to the school and people.
I made friends.

Darren Rivera

Hobbies Throughout Life

You ever game so much that it gets addicting? Well I have, and I am training to become a professional gamer. Come listen to my story on virtual game experience. It all started when my brother got his Xbox 360.

Black Ops 2 was the first game I have ever played. After I got bored of Black Ops 2, I went on to a bunch of other such as Minecraft and Advanced Warfare. My brother taught me how to play video games and then it became so easy and memorable. I got better and better as time progressed and I got better than my brother who was a master at video games.

I got a PlayStation 4 and that's what all of my friends had. When I got the PlayStation 4 I had to make an account and add all my friends. When I added my friends we starting playing Little Big Planet 3. We were playing "Attack of the Whale" while eating snacks at 3 in the morning. My mom told me to get off and go to sleep but I was talking to them through my phone.

The last console I got was an Xbox one with gold. The Xbox in my opinion isn't as good as PS4 but it's still good. Still some of my friends have Xbox one so I got it too. So I added my friends and I didn't have any games except Fortnite, but didn't have any skins so I got called a noob. My Xbox one was given to me as a gift on Christmas.

In conclusion, the last 2 consoles that I had were a PlayStation 4 and an Xbox one. That is why I want to be a professional gamer. This will be my experience of a lifetime for me.

Justin Rodriguez

Dance 2 Julliard

When I was younger, my mother would always use to bring me to our family reunions, like family birthday parties, BBQs, etc.... Whenever we went, there would always be loud music on. I would see people dancing, having fun, laughing, and drinking. They would put there famous mix of Bachata and I would smile. I was offered to dance one day so I did and I loved it. Ever since then I started looking for new music to sing and dance to and I still dance with my family, at least when I'm not embarrassed to.

Even though I loved singing and dancing when I was younger I never thought of being a famous singer or dancer. I would think of being a gymnast, or a creator, even a fashion

designer, but never a dancer. Along the way I started going more into acting and modeling, I even was supported by an agency called Nine9, during my time there I realized I loved dancing more than anything, when we'd practice modeling poses and walks on runways, I'd think more of having fun on stage and adding "groove" to it. I'd always mess up because of it and realized I rather dance. So that's what I did, I left the agency to start practicing my dance moves. I messed up, got bruises, but I loved it.

During the middle of 5th grade, I've started hanging with some new friends, and we heard of a dance program that will be open next year in 6th grade. It will be a part of an after school program called dfoy, so I signed up again. I didn't join the program until the middle of the year because I thought the program was only for girls. I danced and laughed and had so much fun, but at one point our teacher left and I disconnected with dance without actually being disconnected. I always played music while I showered, and I started to dance and sing. I always heard music whenever I did my chores because my mother blasted the music throughout the neighborhood. I didn't realize I danced all that time until the end of 6th grade. That's when I knew I wanted to be a dancer with some side careers ever since.

My goal hasn't changed ever since last year, I'm in 7th grade now. I dance and I love singing. I know I want to go to Julliard and have my major in dance and my minor in singing. I could grow more from there and possibly blossom into music videos and YouTube in general. I love dance with all my heart, I just hope to find another good teacher to teach me more dances and choreography. I stopped looking for colleges and now I'm looking for a specialized high school in performing arts. I've gotten a bit bullied by some kids in my neighborhood for wanting to dance because it's "not cool" but that didn't stop me. My sister supports me so much but still has doubt in me. Nothing will stop me from reaching my goal. I'm still young and bold, I have a long time that feels so close. Only time will tell if I reach my goal.

In conclusion, this is why I dance. I love the feel of the music whenever it vibrates off the ground to hit my feet, and the sound of it makes me feel like I'm eating candy. Overall, dancing makes me feel complete and special so that's why I dance.

Karina Rodriguez

Everyone has their own talents and hobbies. One of my hobbies is drawing and painting. Drawing and painting are both a part of who I am and I couldn't live without doing it.

From the time I was a little girl I would be doing art. Whether it was doing finger painting or drawing hand turkeys when I was only 3 years old. I always showed an interest in art. I remember seeing all my artwork on our kitchen refrigerator and marveling at my work.

Art surrounds me everywhere I go. All around the city there are murals and street art that in my eyes make the world a brighter and happier place. When I go to museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and see the detailed and intricately designed pieces of artwork it motivates me to do beautiful artwork that makes me happy even though they may not be as good as those masterpieces. Artists like Leonardo de Vinci and Frida Kahlo created their artwork with feeling and meaning which for me is the best part of painting and drawing.

I've definitely grown as an artist since I was a little girl who didn't know what the first thing about art was. Earlier this year I went to an art class on Wednesdays and I have art on Monday's in school with my class. Participating in these things have allowed me to expand my horizons and explore new and unknown forms of art.

Looking back I can't imagine myself without having this hobby. Although I love doing it I'm not interested in pursuing art as a profession. Art, specifically drawing and painting, will always be a part of me and I will continue doing it for as long as I can.

Lenin Rodriguez

Have you ever felt bad because of a setback? Well I have. Basically I have a mental disability that slows my learning and thought process. The morale of the story is to never give up and be proud of who you are.

One day I was coming home from school and my mother told me I had a mental disability and I had to take medications every night. She said it was a shock I didn't feel like that though I felt maybe it was true because of all the thoughts I had. But I still felt very bad, I couldn't eat sleep drink anything, I felt dumb and left out.

I felt like a changed person overnight at first I was having a good day and then I felt very sad. My parents tried to cheer me up but sadly it didn't work. The next day, I went to school I felt terrible because nobody knew and I thought no one would accept me. I continued to feel this way. But one day someone reminded me to never give up and always believe in me. This was the best thing to ever happen to me.

After that I felt happy and true to myself. No one knows this about me still which I think is a good thing for me. I almost forget about it and I'm learning so much and I have many people around me that care about me. Overall nothing will hold me back from college so I'll work five times as hard every day just to be in college. Hopefully I get accepted into the college. Thanks for taking the time to read this. Hopefully I get into this because deep in my heart I know I'm normal.

I would see the leather curved pitch coming at 95 miles per hour
I would hear the crowd roar with excitement
I would feel the confidence of winning this game
I would taste a bittersweet win or loss
I would smell the tough smell of the crowd's reaction

Sean Sabess

The Notes I Took to Music

I always wondered why was music created and whoever came up with the idea I want to know what was there opinion on this new creation called music. Music can mean different things to different people for example, music can mean to share emotions on someone or and action. There are different genres of music like hip hop, rock, R&B, and many more. These genres were created because different people use their voice in a different way like for singing or rapping. Music overall can be an entertainment for everyone who listens to it.

When I started listening to music I started in the genre of hip hop because most of the big music celebrities came from either hip hop or R&B. I liked hip hop because the beats were always lit and interesting to listening to. Most music producers usually start with not so much attention like DJ Khaled, no one ever use to listen to him when he first started but after making

better beats and meeting better people to do music with he became better because he grinded to be where he is today.

After a couple of years of listening to music I decided to listen to old school music because adults around me say old school is the best music to listen to. After a couple of days of listening to old school rap it was interesting because not many people rap like that today. People like Biggie Smalls was not that fast at saying stuff in his songs as Eminem would. Tupac was a big inspiration to a lot of people because he changed the way people would rap and how people would listen to these artist and rappers. But then I started digging into different rappers like Nas. The reason I like Nas is because he has good punchlines and wordplays on the life he's living in Queens. He expressed what people were going through and the violence at that time and since he expressed this, a lot people liked the way he expressed it and realized how rap can mean more than just someone saying words. Another reason I liked his music because the beats made it was calm and was different from other rappers. One of my favorite songs from Nas is "Whose World is This" because the beat sounded better than most rappers I would listen to. So I tried to make a beat that would relate to that song and when I did I realized the things I can do with a laptop and one simple program.

Every beat is special. This is because every rapper is different and the beats can show the way they rap. For example a fast beat can mean that the rapper is going to say words fast like Eminem. Beats can make a rappers song more entertaining and frequent to listen to. Beats are the key to a song, without a beat the song is not song people will like to listen too.

Today I am still practicing on different beats. And I always watch at least one video on different strategies to make different sounds that will go with beats. In conclusion I will stay following my dream of becoming a music producer for the biggest celebrities in the world.

I would see plugins/inputs and
different structures of tools on a screen
I would hear beats and sounds coming together
I would feel keys, plugs
I would taste the sound of my music
I would smell the booth/studio

Jacelyn Salas

Summer is over

Schools here

I start 7th grade

The year is here

I want to go to college because I can think of myself in the future and I can do things to help myself to go to college. I can be successful in life with nobody crushing my dreams so I can do what I want to. And it is important to go for you to have a better understanding in life.

Latchmie Seeamber

My Goal of Being a Doctor

Everyone has a passion for something and that passion can take up a lot of time. My passion is to be a doctor. I want to help people when they are in need. My mom and dad inspired me to become a doctor.

When I was 5, my mom and dad bought me a fake doctors kit. I used to pretend to perform surgeries on my brother, and give him shots. I used to pretend to test his heart rate, and hear his heartbeat. Three years later my mom actually let me test my brother heart rate or real, and it was an amazing experience. It was so cool to hear his heartbeat, it was fast and loud.

When I was 10 my dad took me to his job, and there was a lot of chaos. People were going in and out of rooms, and there was people on stretchers with the water bags attached to the stretchers. When I left the hospital I learned a lot about what doctors do. I was still curious about the tools they used and what they did so I went home and researched it. When I researched it, I learned more about the different types of tools they used and the different types of doctors there are in the world and what each doctor do to help people. I'm glad I went to my dad's job because, I got to learn all about doctors.

A year later, my mom took me to her job and it was different from my dad's job. It wasn't that hectic as my dad's job was. My mom had a patient and she had to feed her and put her to bath and brush her teeth. My mom had to direct her to the bathroom because, she couldn't walk that much. My mom took very good care of her. In my mom job it was peaceful, and not a lot of screaming. People were on stretchers but very few, people were walking around to get things for the patients they took care of. Then something happened to the patient and doctors came rushing in and the quietness became chaos really quick. That day I saw what my mom does in her job, sometimes it can be hectic and sometimes it can be peaceful. A learned the basic procedures that the doctor did on the patient and now I use them.

My experiences of the hospital encouraged me to be a doctor and help people that need help. These events mean a lot to me because, they remind me of my childhood and it gives me the courage to try harder in life and study harder. I want to follow in my mom's footsteps but be more than a nursing assistant, I want to become a doctor and the only way to do that I have to work harder in life and try to accomplish this goal of mine.

Daniel Simo

When I was 4 years old my father got me my first ever game console and introduced me to a new side of my life I will never forget. My father was always a gamer. I would sit down on the couch and watch him play BATTLEFIELD game or METAL GEAR SOLID but I was always amazed of everything he was doing and what was happening. And that's why thank him for introducing me to videogames.

When we took it out of the box I was amazed. I know it was just a box but still amazing. As we plugged it in and everything turned on I was amazed. Being at a young age I was in love with cars. So my dad did the smart thing and got me GRAN TURISMO and my little brain blew up. One second I was just playing with toy cars on a small hardwood floor and now I'm in a corvette racing around in a track in Germany against some of the world's best drivers. I was on that game for hours and I couldn't even comprehend on how amazing it was. And because of my father he opened the gateway to video game heaven.

Now I play on my PS4 with many of my friends. My father got it for me for Christmas. I was so happy I cried but anyway back to what I was saying. Video games have had a great impact on my life, I have met some of my best friends their like my friend Andrea who lives in Chicago and my friend Jaylen who lives in Alabama and my friend Isaac who lives in California. I have met all these amazing people because of my dad and video games. And I have friends from school who I play with like Darren Alina Diego and so on.

But I played with family to I played games like Minecraft with my sister and Call of Duty with my dad. But now my sister and I don't play but my dad and I never stopped. We have a special place in our hearts for Ubisoft specifically Ghost Recon Wildlands. Every weekend we would log in join a match and complete missions together and we had so much fun. We had our tough times but we had so much fun together.

I think I will never stop gaming. And I will never forget the friends I have made because of how much they have impacted my life. I love each and every one of my friends and my father for buying me all of my consoles. Gaming has impacted my life in such an amazing way and it has made me so happy from playing my first game to play. I'm not 100% sure what I want to do but whatever it is gaming will have one of the biggest impact on it.

I would see what I have to examine and take samples off
I would hear the sound of police sirens in the background
I would fill the plastic gloves go on my hands
I would taste water that I drink when I'm tired
I would smell of the old plastic tarp

Chicago Smith

I have loved football for 4 years and I would love to grow up and join the NFL and play with some of the best players in the NFL like Odell. I love to play with friends in school. In this text, I will talk about how I grew up and loved football and became great at football.

At first I was in third grade and I had a cousin that played for a football team and I loved to compete against him many other sports. When I saw him play football it showed me that I can play football. At first I wasn't really good at football. I couldn't throw the ball. I also couldn't catch the ball and I wasn't really fast. People would call me trash and I wasn't even close to being one of the best in my school. So now I wanted to get better at football.

The first thing I wanted to get better at was how fast I could run. To fix this I would run almost everywhere. I would run to school in the morning. I would run to the store. My aunt also put me in a track team. In a year I became faster. Then I wanted to get better at throwing so I would go to the park to play football with other kids. I would play quarterback to learn how to throw the ball the right way. The last thing I wanted to work on was how good I could catch. I

would play with people at school anytime I could. I would play wide receiver to get better at catch the ball when being in a group of people.

After I did all these things I started to work out to try to get stronger. When I got stronger I started to play with other kids that were in higher grades in my school. I then kept working on my football skills. I then notice that the best position that I should play is wide receiver. I then wanted to join the NFL and become a professional football player because I realized that I became great at football

Now that got better at football I think I'll be ready to start my journey to the NFL and become a professional football player. First I want to get to high school and get on a team. Then I want to get into a DI college to be able to join a team and do great on the team. I then would like to get drafted to a great NFL football team. Last I would like to leave my legacy.

I would see a turf with 100 yard
I would hear the plays to do and the formations
I would feel the football in my hand and my feet in the grass
I would taste, the taste of my mouth guard
I would smell the sweat off the players

Matthew Torres

Hobbies

Ever since I was a kid I've had hobbies. Most of them didn't last to this day but some did like gaming or playing any type of games from board games to video games if it's a game I would never not want to play it. Because of games I get really competitive while gaming or just playing with my friends somewhere. This specific hobby has been with me for a while now and I think it's not going until a while from now.

When I was 4 or 5 I did not have any video games yet so I would always play board games with my family. My favorite board games were a matching game and Candy Land mostly because those were the only games I remember playing. At times when I'm really bored I would play those games with just my little sister or with my family if they were ok with playing. At this time this was not the birth of the love I have for games.

Then when I was in fourth grade or third grade, I noticed games had evolved and there were video games that you could hook up to your TV and play them on the TV with a controller, and not vary long after I was playing my first video game which was "Mario Kart" on the "Wii" I was not very good at first but as I played more and more against my sister this feeling grew onto me and I started being very competitive. This was when I truly started loving games, gaming was growing to be a good strength I had.

Finally I was in fifth grade on a Friday morning of 2016 May 23 it was my birthday and my dad woke me up saying happy birthday and brought me to the living room to show me his gift, the gift that I got from my parents was a "Xbox One" I was so happy I said thank you thank you so much I gave him a big hug gave my mom a big hug and my dad said I could play one game of Forza which was the game that the Xbox came with so I did and ever since those days I still play with the same but more board games the same Wii and more games for it and the same Xbox just with more games, my life was surrounded by games and I like that.

Now you know one of my hobbies that have been with me since I was a kid the only difference is that I have more games like Googly Eyes as a board game Mario Sports Mix for the Wii and play Fortnite Rocket League and Overwatch for my Xbox. I don't think games will ever get boring for me.

Wendy Vasquez

The definition of a goal is the object of a person's ambition or effort. Everyone has their own goals set either short term or long term, and we work hard every day to get a step closer to achieving them. It was one day in 4th grade when I had set a goal for myself that I have worked hard every day since then to achieve. That day in 4th grade our teacher had decided to read us a book about Sonia Sotomayor. The book talked about her life story the challenges she had faced and the obstacles that she had surpassed to reach her goal. I got inspired by her because we had similar backgrounds and she had achieved so much and gone so far, hearing about her made me realize that I could do it too, if I put my mind to it and work hard I could reach my goal just like Sonia Sotomayor had reached hers.

Just hearing about Sonia Sotomayor and her life was enough to inspire 4th grade me to want to work hard and get good grades so I could go to a great college and eventually pursue a career in law same as Sonia. I was so impacted by her and her achievements it made me want to work 2 times harder for everything I wanted. That day had impacted me so much and had influenced me to work hard. That year I had awesome grades and I was determined to become just like Sonia Sotomayor. It has been about 3 years now and I have never stopped working towards what I want... I've never stopped working towards my goal. My grades always stay above 80s and for 4 consecutive years I've gotten all 4s on my state exams.

I always been hard working and ambitious ever since that day. I have learned that you can only reach your goals by working hard and hustling. In 5 years, I will graduate from high school and go to college. My goal is to be able to go to one of the best universities in America, Harvard, and become a great lawyer.

I would see my customer, the defendant or accused

I would hear the evidence

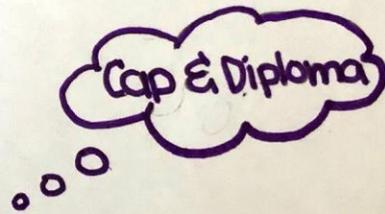
I would feel confident in my customer's innocence

I would taste victory

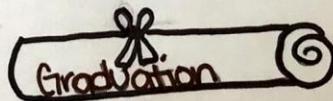
I would smell morning coffee and sweat

"Unexpected
Greatness:

103 Shades of
Knowledge"



Class
of 2019!



702

Camille Abdoola
Anthony Basile
Ayanna Blake-Ocasio
Emani Byers
Marisol Cuevas
Melanie Elias
Nikaila George
Arbnor Gocaj
Julissa Gonzalez
Genesis Gutierrez
Brianna Hernandez
Kristian Holiba
Michael Iglesias
Dylan Lopez
Anaya Mcfarlane
Hamzah Mirza
Alexander Perez
Andrew Pinckney
Munera Rahman
Maria Ramos
Justin Rosado
Daniel Sanders
Leah Santana
Shareaf Simpson
Gerardo Suarez
Nazario Taveras
Sofia Truglio
Jason Udo
Antonio Vazquez

**Collaborative College Haikus
(702)**

*Costly but worth it
Come in poor, graduate rich
School will grant success*

*College challenges
Reaching for the stars while
Being successful*

*Experiences
Create dreams and have some fun
Have fun, achieve goals*

*I try my hardest
I can take on challenges
To succeed in life*

Imagining My Career Community Poem

Soccer Player

If I were to imagine my career through the five senses
I would see the field and the goal
I would hear people cheering and the whistle blowing
I would feel the soccer ball against my shoe
I would taste Gatorade, sweat and my mouthpiece
I would smell the sweet sour scent of the grass

I Think I "Sense" College Poems
(702)

*I would see the campus ground
I would hear the professors talking
I would feel nervous
I would taste coffee that keeps me awake
I would smell the food in the...*

*I smell my new dorm room
I see all my peers studying
I hear people cheer
I taste the cafeteria food
I touch my textbooks while studying*

*I smell the coffee on the table
I see the green carpet floor
I touch my pencil to the paper
I hear music playing
I taste the dryness in my mouth*

*I smell pencils
I taste gum that I chew
I see chalk
I feel paper
I hear the chalk writing*

*I would see students
I would hear people talking
I would smell food
I would taste sweat, food
I would touch paper, books etc....*

*I see grass I feel the towers as I
Go through the grass. I smell
Flowers as I walk through the dorms
There's a bunch, as I sit,
I eat my lunch and taste the candy*



Camille A, Anthony B, Ayanina B, Emami B, Mansol C, Melanie E,
Nikaila G, Arbnor G, Julissa G, Genesis G, Brianna H, Kristian T,
Michael I, Dylan L, Anaya M, Hamzah M, Markus M, Alexander P,
Andrew P, Munera M, Maria M, Justin M, Daniel S, Lean S,
Shareef S, Gerardo S, Nazario T, Sofia T, Jason U, Antonio V

CLASS OF 2018-2019 (CA4A)

Camille Abdoola

My Promise

My grandpa was a great person, he always taught me to try my best. When my grandpa passed away, it was a very sad period in my life, for me and my family. I remember the day like it was yesterday.

One Sad Day

When I came home from school one day, everything seemed fine. My grandma came down to visit us in North Carolina. It was a very sunny day. When I walked into my house my grandma talked to me like always, then she told me to sit down. Then what she told me broke my heart.

How He Inspired Me

My grandma told me that my grandpa passed away, I felt like just running away. I knew that my grandpa was sick, we were supposed to go visit him. I knew that my grandpa was in a better place. Even though I was going to miss him I wanted him to be able to feel better.

Promises Should Be Kept

My grandpa always told me to try my best and to never give up. I always told him I will. Sometimes I feel like giving up, but when I do I always tell myself that I made a promise and I should not break that. He would not want me to give up.

My grandpa will always be remembered in my heart. Even though I will miss him he is in a better place. I will always keep my promise to him and I will try my hardest and best.

Anthony Basile

Every day after school I go home and do homework then from three to nine I'll play games all day I was two my first game was Scarface 2 and I loved the game because when I beat it gave me a sense of accomplishment and I grown up on call of duty 1,2,3 and on the way now I play mainly Overwatch, Fortnite, and Minecraft.

The main thing I love in these games are the fact of winning the game with your team is just such a good feeling like in Fortnite that squad win with the boys will just be so lit and fun it makes you feel like you can do anything in the world and it's also the fact that seeing that victory royal is so good with that controller in your hand and if you don't win then it's the adventure and the fun you and your friends have.

Or even Overwatch's ranking system. The main thing I love about Overwatch is that you get to rank up and play with six stacks. Its fun on a weekend doing placements all night with the boys on Overwatch and just achieving the highest ranks feels good even with placements done you can still play with the boys and achieve Sr. to get to higher ranks you've never been to.

The feel of the controller and the people calling out the teamwork and sometimes the clutch make you feel even better when you win or lose you still feel good one time there was a clutch me and Ryan and five other did we manage to cap payload and even deliver it on overtime without getting off to get that wand other times I've done it many times.

In Conclusion, I like games and that reason is because of the teamwork and all the glory and overwhelming feeling that takes you to a place called w town but it's not the same when you don't play with friends.

Ayanna Blake-Ocasio

My Bicycle Experience

When I was a little girl, my favorite thing to do was ride a bike everywhere around my neighborhood. I made mistakes in the past but I've learned from it. Those were my favorite memories when I either rode my bike with my friends or by myself. Ever since that time, I started riding my bike more.

I was a little girl & I always wanted to accomplish my dream. My dream was to always ride my bike more & travel to some places with it. I remember this one time, I went to Target for a new bike because the other one was too small for me. So I got a much bigger bike & I tried to ride it but I was scared I would fall because there was no training wheels on it. But this has been the best experience I've learned.

I would use training wheels as I've gotten better. When I was little, I used training wheels because I didn't know how to ride a bike. I have gotten better as I would ride it. I've gotten scared if I would fall because I thought the training wheels wouldn't help. But my friend took it off one day because I was getting older and I should know how to ride without it. I was so nervous because I didn't know how to ride it correctly. I rode my bike in the park & I tried and tried until I finally got it and I rode my bike for a minute or two and I knew that I could do it. I have made some mistakes but I have learned from them. I just wanted to make myself and my mom proud.

From then to now, I still ride my bike more often. I don't ride it with training wheels and I don't beg for them anymore. My mom has taught me how to ride a bike since day one. I thank her for that because without her, I wouldn't be able to ride a bike as good as I do now. I don't need any more help because I can finally do this on my own. I stand on my own two feet & I can do this by myself.

In conclusion, this is why I ride my bike and now I've learned from my mistakes. I haven't stopped riding it and when I get older, I hope I can ride it more and be successful. Being a bike rider makes me happy & hopefully I can experience more things in life with riding a bike.

Emani Byers

My Dream Job

I have always wanted to become a Police Officer. I always grew up watching my older brothers and uncles play video games. Even though I am not that good at video games, I still enjoyed watching them play. I am aware that becoming a Police Officer involves a lot of dedication and you go to college for a while. However, I find it worth it due to the fact that this is what my heart desires.

Another reason why I have always wanted to become a police officer because they are good influences and they help a lot of people and I like to help people a lot. I got into this type of job career when I would watch the shows "Law and Order" and "Criminal Minds" and I would always want to be just like them and help people feel safe. The thing that I always liked about these shows is that there always a happy ending to them.

The last reason why I have always wanted to become a Police Officer is because they are brave and are willing to do anything to save and help someone even if they don't know the person. Also, they are willing to risk their lives for somebody they don't even know. I want to do that because this shows people that there not alone and people are here for them whenever they need it.

This essay was about why and how I got into wanting to become a Police Officer. Hopefully this got some people interested into wanting to become a Police Officer. Also this hopefully made people like police officers a little more. Lastly, make them feel much more safe and knowing that people are here for them.

Marisol Cuevas

My Passion to Sing

When I was young, I had a passion for singing. This made me realize that I loved it and wanted to do it all the time. This essay will address how I had a passion to sing and how it affected my life.

Growing up, I never really had anyone my age at home since I'm the youngest, so I never had anyone to "play" with me. One day I got introduced to the singer Katy Perry and she inspired me to sing a lot more at home. I would always listen to her songs & for my birthday my sister even took me to one of her concerts. When I was there seeing her perform, I just wanted to have a voice like her and that's when I noticed that I had a passion to sing. After that, I started to sing more and more to not only her songs but to other songs too. I thank my sister for taking me that day because if it wasn't for that concert, I wouldn't have found my passion to sing.

What I did to express my passion of singing was when I auditioned for a talent show I had at my school in the 4th grade. My close friend, who also loved to sing tried out and we made it into the talent show. She would come over my house and we would sing and practice all the time. Five days before the talent I was very nervous since I have never done anything like that before. I was also scared of everyone watching us. My friend Amina helped me throughout it, I faced my fear and everyone loved the show. People were Complimenting Amina and I which made us both feel very happy.

After that talent show, I realized that I loved to sing and so did my friend. I would always go to my school talent shows to see all the singers perform. Where I'm passion for singing got me is to more practice in singing. My friend and I were also invited to go sing at another school twice. But around the time when I turned 11 I didn't like singing as much anymore so I did it less.

In conclusion, this essay has addressed how I had a passion to sing. Throughout the years I loved to sing but now I gave up on it a bit, but my overall accomplishment is being able to go up on stage and sing with the help of my friend Amina.

Melanie Elias

My Passion to Dance

A realization that sparked a period of growth and a new understanding is when I was a little girl and I started dancing at a place in Castle Hill called Lorenx Latin Dance Studio where we would compete with other dancers and it was a great experience.

I started noticing I had a talent when we would go and compete with other dance teams and we would always bring back a trophy to the studio and I soon started noticing the reason why we are getting a trophy is because we are all putting in the effort to earn it. I was also in the studio Friday-Sunday for hours just practicing the dances over and over so that I can get better at the dances.

I express my talent by going on all the dancing trips that we used to go on with the team. I also expressed my talent by participating in all the concerts that we used to have with other dance teams from all over.

My talent led me to me being able to help teach the dances. I used to dance with advance groups which were dancing teams that were advanced. It also lead me to the dance teachers putting me in the adult classes. On the weekends I was dancing with the adult teams doing a whole bunch of different dances. This also led me to have the opportunity to teach the beginner classes which were the little kids that were just starting dance.

In conclusion, dancing was a realization that sparked a period of growth and a new understanding because I noticed that dancing was something I liked to do and the fact that we used to go around dancing with other teams from all over was a nice experience.

Nikaila George

I have always thought about what I would want to be when I got older. I always said I want to become a doctor, a designer, maybe even a spy. I still haven't really found something that makes such an impact on me that I would want to make it my profession for the future but I have learned some advice that my friends and family have given.

As I grew up my dad has really enjoyed anything based around science like experiments, even aliens, and he always asks me if I want to become a scientist or an astronaut in the future but he still wants me to follow whatever I would want to become when I get older. On the other hand my mom believes I should do whatever I desire to have as a profession in the future. My family says this occasionally how I should follow what I would want to become in the future.

My siblings, specifically my big sister Chantel, believes that when I grow up I should have a profession that I would want to become in the future. But when I was younger I liked drawing a lot and she also believes that I shouldn't let that talent go to waste. My big brother Aldwin always says to me that I should do what I enjoy, things family don't say often but I take it into account, that I shouldn't change or choose a certain way I look at it do and things that I may want as a job/profession is being a cook/chef, artist. Maybe a doctor.

But my family doesn't say this often, but I take it into account how I shouldn't change what I want to become in the future because of someone else, and I think this is one important

saying for most people just about to get a job or go to a high school or college for a specific job, shouldn't change what they truly want to be

In conclusion, this essay was how my family really puts an impact on my life and influence my choices and options on what I would want to become in the future.

I would see people talking sometimes in secret
I sometimes see them confident or some nervous of being caught by me
I would hear nothing, the silence is deafening in every place
besides maybe people talking that don't know I'm there
I would feel adrenaline pumping through my blood
wondering if I'm about to be caught
but also the excitement of the whole process with danger involved
I will taste the quietness with me being afraid
if me swallowing is so loud that someone can hear me
in the process of all this I will smell nothing
maybe my sweat depending on the danger of all this
all normal to me because I'm a...spy/cop

Arbnor Gocaj

My Talent

My talent that I have and that I'm good at is a sport which is basketball. It's something I have interest in, something like to play in my free time, and it is something I have a great time playing. I will be talking about when I started to play basketball and why it seemed interesting to me, why I wanted to play it.

I started to like basketball when I started seeing it on television. As I started to watch it I was watching the NBA, and teams and players for the Knicks like LeBron James, Kevin Durant, etc. As watching it, it seemed interesting to me, and wanting to play it. As I was playing basketball and watching it, I've learned more. As I'm watching more and learning more I've also gotten better at basketball. Then I started to play for a basketball at the park so I can improve more in basketball. And also as I'm playing more basketball I've learned more.

Now getting better at basketball and improving I've started to play for a basketball team because I've liked basketball a lot now and I've been improving and getting much better than before. By improving more and more and getting better I've been playing basketball more and more. I've been at the park more to play basketball. And now just improving on my game more and more and more and getting better and better and better.

Now I'm working on my weaknesses and see what my weaknesses are on the court when I'm playing basketball. And still improving on my shot, handles, and my skills on the court when I'm playing basketball. As I'm improving on the court and playing basketball more, I've also been watching basketball more so I see how NBA players play and see what they do and study there game so I can get my game better as well, just like NBA players.

These were all the things of my talent and what I did when I started to play basketball and improved on my game on the court and watching more basketball and also learning more about basketball as I'm also improving and getting my game better when I'm playing.

Julissa Gonzalez

You can do so much with just a pencil and a piece of paper. What you decide to do with it is up to you. Art has always been something I love. It allowed me to express myself in creative way. I was always drawing, painting, sewing, sculpting and coloring. It helped me distract from the world around me.

I have always loved anything related to the concept of art. I would see my dad painting and start painting on my arms. So many different colors to choose, so many things you can make. I remember one time when I took a whole bunch of acrylic paint and started painting a whole bunch of patterns and doodles on my arm. This allowed me to have fun and expressed what I was feeling weather I was sad or happy or mad.

I always felt that I needed a way to express the way I was feeling. When I was only 9 years old I was introduced to many different art material. I felt that I could use art to distract myself from any of my problems and escape the outside world. Art is anything you want it to be and to me art was everything, the weird little doodles I made, the tiny pieces of clothing I made for my dolls, the bright makeup on my face, the watermarble canvases I made, everything that I made.

Art is anything I want to do, something I love to do, art makes me happy, it makes me happy having paint stains on my wall, having, and my hands dyed blue for a while. Getting my clothes dirty with paint on charcoal. Putting makeup on my canvases as if it was special paint. Art is something I do for myself. Not for anybody else. Art is something I want with myself forever.

Genesis Gutierrez

My Dance and Singing Dream Goal

My talent is about dance and singing. Dancing is about moving your body and feeling free inside. Singing is about using your voice and music speaking to you. I always watched videos of teenagers dancing and those videos have inspired me to dance and that's why I love it so much. I hope when I grow older I can still achieve this goal because I really like it.

In 6th grade I loved to dance and listen to music with my friends in after school at the gym. Dancing to music is really fun and you can express yourself in so many different ways. Dancing to music is very meaningful because each music has its own story. Each music is different, there is Spanish, rap, hip hop, slow, love, country and so much more.

In 6th grade at lunch I would sit with my friends and sing or rap with them and we would all take turns or do it at the same time. We was so loud that other classes would hear us and the teachers too. We was always feeling the beat and just getting and showing what we could do. We mostly sang rap songs and hip hop songs because we got more into it.

I love music and dancing to it because it's just my passion. When music comes on I would start to dance but it depends on the type of music. I like hip hop, Spanish, and rap music and that have hard beats to them.

In conclusion, my talent is basically about dance and singing to music that I like. There are so many different ways to show your talent and what you can do or what you really like.

Brianna Hernandez

Bisexual

We all have titles. Straight, gay, pan, trans and I am bi. It all started in 5th grade when I got my first girl crush. I thought I was going crazy until I started exploring this side of me. I felt like I couldn't tell anyone. I was too scared to be called a freak. So all of 5th grade I tried so hard to be the perfect straight girl I could be but that all went downhill from there.

Over the summer, I got my first girlfriend and I was more proud of who I was. So I got the courage to tell my friends in 5th grade. There were friends I lost because they thought I was a freak but at the same time I grew closer to my friends and closer to myself and the friends I grew closer are still some of my best friends.

7th grade rolls around and I don't care what people say about me and my sexuality. But still I couldn't tell my family and as I hid it from them it felt like I was hiding a part of me and I fell into a depression. It was hard to put on that smile and pretend like everything was okay but to a post on snapchat my mother found out I was bi and she was okay with it I'm slowly getting the courage to tell the rest of my family.

I wrote this essay because I want to share a side a me that I don't really show to strangers I want me to proud of who I am and I want people like me to be proud of who they are.

Kristian Holiba

My Interest

Can you remember the first time you had a serious interest? I can! It was in second grade, and at that moment I realized that I love soccer. I love soccer because of the thrill you get when you score a goal and the skill it takes one to control the ball. Ever since that time, my favorite soccer player was Cristiano Ronaldo.

The day I watched a soccer game on TV, I was immediately interested in soccer. After telling my father that I wanted to play soccer he signed my brother and me up for a soccer team. We were decent players compared to our teammates. We also had a pretty good team, we even won one of the tournaments that year.

The second year we had a recommendation from one of the coaches. They suggested that my brother and I join another soccer team. The team was known as Dalfa FC. This team was great, the teammates were very skilled, increasing my competitiveness. I was practicing much more often because I wanted to be better. Then when the month of the tournament came I started practicing even more. The hard work did pay off because we have won the tournament again.

As a result of me turning on the television, I had the option to explore my interests by joining a soccer team and further on joining an even better soccer team. Now I enjoy playing soccer with my teammates.

In conclusion, to discover a passion, you do not want to be ignorant. I discovered something that is appealing to me, by just watching a soccer game on TV.

Michael Iglesias

My Experience on Stage

In 4th grade, there was said to be a play, an urban version of Rumpelstiltskin. I was always interested in acting, at home my Mom would give me subjects to improvise with her, and we'd do it for maybe half an hour until we got bored. Now, I had the opportunity to participate in an actual play, so I tried out.

After school, we were given the characters that they needed for the play and gave us groups of lines the character would say based on who we were interested in trying out for. I chose Rumpelstiltskin, I wanted a major role in the play to really get a feel for it. There was about 4 other people going for the part but I was confident in my ability to perform better than them, the main reason I was signing up for this play was because of a quote she told me by Mark Twain *"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did."* So I just decided, why not?

I asked for the spot and was given the script, we had 2 days before auditions, I practiced at the after school and at home for a while, my mom helped me practice by giving me pointers to help me with the audition and I easily memorized the lines and her tips. When the 2 days passed and it was time to audition there was a long line outside of the auditorium, I didn't think that there was going to be so many people but I was mistaken, I waited in line until my time came. When I walked into the room I was somewhat nervous but excited, when I started to act out the first lines or part I messed up but was given another chance, I don't remember any of the lines and barely the plot but I do remember how fun it was to pretend to be a different person, leave your old life and become a new person.

It was Wednesday and they said on Friday they'd reveal the people who made the part. I thought I did pretty well but even though it was fun I really didn't care that much if I made the part or not. When I got home I told my mom about Friday, I also told her about how I thought I did and she kept me confident that I would get the part. When they day came they said they have hidden the list of the winners and backups somewhere in the cafeteria. The entire after school ran everywhere searching in places that would've been a good spot but they made the list blatant on the wall. Soon there was a crowd looking at a single piece of paper, under "Rumpelstiltskin" it said my name. My friends were congratulating me and I was pretty happy for the most part, but now I was nervous wondering if I could pull it off.

A month later of practicing with just a script and then costumes it was time for the play to begin. The actual story was about how a friend was using "Rumpelstiltskin" to make clothes to get her promoted in a business. The "Rumpelstiltskin" had a rare acne problem that made him very insecure, the business and promotion would lead to the "Rumpelstiltskin" getting enough money for medical help but it wasn't working out. I don't remember it exactly but it was similar to that. When the play begun I received a rush of adrenaline, the days of practice are going to finally pay off, I started noticing my love for acting. When we got on the stage I felt amazing, showing off my talent to the audience. One of the parts, I had to act angry and yell at my "friend" and another I had to pretend like I was tearing up, I liked pretending to be a new person. Just sitting backstage was exhilarating, everyone was carrying out their part and I felt as if I was part of another family, like a member of a team, like a different person. When the play was finished we were called to the front of the stage and we bowed. I had no regrets and I was very pleased with myself, this is what I love to do.

Acting has become a real passion of mine, I have participated in many plays and have loved every second of it. Feeling like you're part of a team, meeting new people, the adrenaline rush, just acting out a story in general. Leaving your world and becoming a new person with new feelings and a different personality just has something about it that makes me feel good. I'm really glad I took part in my first play in 4th grade, though like I've said the play and plot is vague in my mind I remember how it inspired me. Acting is a part of me and I plan to pursue it in the future.

Dylan Lopez

Music and its Inspiration

Music has really had a humongous impact in my life. If I had a very bad day at school or somewhere else, the first thing I would do when I go home is listen to music (after I say hi to my parents.) When I listen to rap or any genre of music it gives me a deeper understanding to this world.

Music makes me open my eyes more to this world. The things that rappers say when I listen to their songs gets me thinking, does this stuff really happen? I would sometimes ask my older cousins and ask them if this stuff, that these rappers say are true. They tell most of this is true which give me a reason to learn more of those artists and maybe relate an experience that they had with me.

Music is interesting to me because it gives me the power to be me once in a while. Music also gives me different emotions. I usually get excited when listening to my favorite songs and artists, I get depressed when a close rapper had a rough childhood or someone close to him/her loses someone they love. Also what I love about music is that if you do something wrong and it's the same scenario in a song you can learn a lesson from the song and get you out of that situation (advice from a song).

Music is very inspiring to me and others that listen to these creative people. There is a deeper understanding then just words these rappers say. These things that these rappers say affect them and the people around them.

Anaya Mcfarlane

I Need It

College is expensive, you also have to be completely dedicated and responsible. College is a lot of work. So why would I go? That was my attitude for a long time. My mind was changed. People have made me realize how important college is. I challenged my belief on something, and that was college.

My ignorance was detrimental to my personal growth so luckily for me there was always someone to inform me about different perspectives. My mother. She made me think twice about subjects even if I did still disagreed with her. When the subject "college" came up, I would always say, "You can be educated without college." Although I have a different opinion now, I do still believe what I said before. However, I do take my mom's side on this subject. I

believe her when she says, “You do not need college to be educated but why would you settle for okay when you could be excellent?”

My dad did not do any better with trying to convince to go to college. He told me all of his experiences. He insisted that all the people he met at college changed his perspectives on subjects. He told me that he learned more from the people he met than from the lessons the professors planed. Again I had a smart response and my claim was, “In life you learn from people no matter what you do in life, college or no college. So why do you insist on me going?”

The next person that attempted to change my mind was my uncle. He was very intelligent and he did not go to college. He was the perfect piece of evidence that supports my claim. However, he could not find a good job and had financial some issues. He was lost, he didn't know what to do with his life. He missed out on a lot and that got to me. He was smart but he was not successful. Instead of helping it actually contradicted my claim. This was not enough. I realized what I really want in life and that is to be a magazine editor and designer and I got this from going to an art program at F.I.T. College.

I changed my mind. I want to go to college. I want try new things. I don't want to miss out in life, I want to be a success. I challenged a belief and turns out I need college after all.

Lawyer Poem

I would see papers so many papers supplies files and clients.
Clients that have lied cheated and then so many things wrong
but I help them so the inside of my wallet is stuffed.
I would hear illegal words but my hearing is selective
and I shut it out with lies and tales.
I would feel guilty but not enough because when I go home
and see my house my car and jewelry I say it's “worth it”.
I will taste a bitterness in my mouth when I speak all the evil
language of a liar that I must speak.
I would smell my bad breath after I've spoken the evil
I must speak all because I'm a lawyer.

Hamzah Mirza

My lesson experience

Have you ever had a time in which you failed, and you realized your mistake and grow? Well, a lot of people had. It is okay because many people went through a time like this. It could have been personal and a struggle, but it was a benefit for them. Once, in 5th grade, I didn't study or work hard in school, and later realized my mistakes, and started to work harder, and later achieved a lot as I continued to work harder.

In 5th Grade, I was so busy playing video games, like Minecraft, and doing YouTube videos, that I really didn't care about school. My grades weren't good. I got much better grades in the past years. In addition to that, my mom was worried a lot. I gave several tests for schools and programs and got rejected. One of them included a preparatory program Prep for Prep. That was also my last year of elementary school, and I felt very bad, because many other students achieved many things and got good grades. Sometimes, I felt very embarrassed

because my other friends were getting good grades. It wasn't that I was getting bad grades, they were ok, but, not as great as how I was getting in those past years. Even though I was enjoying that year in reality, I later felt like there was no point since my grades weren't excellent enough. I didn't very care if I didn't understand something. I also did rush my assignments and homework.

In 6th Grade, that was when I realized and decided to change my life around. I worked very hard. I studied for all test fully. I didn't play a lot of video games, and didn't make a lot of videos. I dedicated myself into school work, payed attention in class a lot, do my homework, hand in my assignments that I didn't rush. If I didn't understand the teacher or someone that I knew. I also searched the topic up on the internet and was able to understand it. I took very good notes in class, and studied them at home whenever I had time after I finished my homework. Sometimes, I stayed up late studying for tests. I did work hard a lot. I kept on being motivated. As I did, I did achieved a lot. It was a lot of burden, but I pushed through it, because I knew that later I am going to feel proud about it.

As I continued with this awesome and hard work, I started to achieve. Most of the time of when I didn't study was during 5th grade but, I did realize a little during the end, and got a science and math award at my 5th grade graduation. Throughout 6th Grade, I got Principal's List and Honor Roll. I felt so proud of myself, and so did my parents. My mom was so happy, and she wasn't worried like she was before. In the end of 6th grade, only one student from each class gets the science award in every grade, and from my class it was me. On the award, it said, "Young Scientist Award". Now, in 7th Grade, I am getting straight Honor Rolls, and I also did apply for Prep for Prep. I passed the test, and for the second level I submitted some documents and got accepted onto the Third/Final Level. I gave an interview and IQ test. I am just waiting for the results. If I don't get accepted, I won't be disappointed because at least I passed the test which didn't happen in 5th Grade. Only 40% of the kids moved on to the second level.

In conclusion, I now feel very proud of myself achieving in school and getting very good grades. In 5th grade, I didn't study or work hard, that I later realized my mistakes, and started to work harder. I did achieve a lot later, as I continued to work harder. There probably have been a time once where someone made a mistake or failed, and later realized there mistakes and grow. It is common in people. It could been personal or a struggle, but it was a benefit for them, Just like it was too me. It helped me learn to always try and work hard. I will never forget this learning experience which affected me in a positive way, and kept me motivated.

Alexander Perez

Every year since I could remember my family would go to this indoor water park in the Pocono's called Great Wolf Lodge. Have you ever been to a water park and wondered how those slides work and how they're suspended in the air, this is what I think when I go to water parks.

Have you ever been so excited to go somewhere that you wait all year and when it finally comes you feel like you are going to explode? I love this waterpark so much because of the way it's built and how fun the rides are. When I was little all I used to like was the rides but as I got older I started noticing how much planning, work, and maintenance goes into these slides. This water park is indoors so even if it's raining or snowing the fun does not stop. My two

favorite slides there are coyote cannon, and hydro plunge. These are my two favorite rides because in coyote cannon it is dark and you hit the first drop and you think that's the big drop and then you hit the big drop and it feels like your stomach is dropping and it feels so good. Then you swirl through the toilet bowl and hit another drop into the pool. The next ride is Hydro Plunge it is a water ride that is fueled by a conveyer belt and it has so many twist turns and drops.

When being in this waterpark I do not only enjoy the rides but I also enjoy observing the rides and how they look and how they work and how they are built. When looking at my favorite water slide Coyote Cannon I wonder how the ride stays suspended in the air without any poles holding it up. I also try to observe it as closely as possible to see where and why the bolts are placed where they are and what if a bolt comes out how do they fix it. This is what I feel and how I think when looking waterslides.

I want to be an engineer/architect so one day I can own and design my own waterpark and bring kids the same joy and wonder I have when going to waterparks. This water park inspires me because it's the idea I want my waterpark to one day be based off of. I am so excited to one day, bring hope and joy to kids with a water park the same way this one does for me I do not even want to do it for the money I just want to do it to fulfill my dream. This is very hard to accomplish but if I try hard enough and follow my dream I believe I can do it. In conclusion when you get older you start to realize the deeper meaning behind things and how they work.

I would see big huge tall guys, a hoop
and backboard, the beautiful hardwood floor
I would hear the ball bouncing, guys getting pounded
by rough play and their reactions.
I would hear the fans cheering
and the ball going through the net
I would feel the ball in my hands a guy
playing post defense on my back
and excitement when I score a point
I would taste the Gatorade in my mouth
I would smell the sweat of the people playing
the popcorn the fans have

Andrew Pinckney

The first day of college is not scary because the people you meet are chill and friendly. Some don't care and others might be mean. In order to take on college, you need to prepare yourself mentally because there will be a lot of work for you throughout your 4 years.

I would see people lining up to order in my food place
I would hear people burping talking about how good the dish is
and the sound of the register opening
I would feel the plates as their loaded in the sink
I would taste my dish on order to make it better
I would smell the scent of my food as it surrounds my restaurant

Munera Rahman

When the years pass, I was getting better and better in ELA. In this narrative I will tell. When I was in 1st grade, I came to this school. I was in a small class and I had IEP. I didn't had a lot of friends and I was shy. One day, when I was in 5th grade, I was moved into a bigger (regular) class. When I came in the room I was very nervous. Later, I was friends with more people. But, I always wasn't good in my English class. On the second and third day of the English state exam and the MOSLs, it was difficult for me every year. In 6th grade, I became a little more confident and made more friends. When I was in 7th grade, I had improved in my English grade. I had also got out of IEP special education.

Maria Ramos

My Reading/Writing Life

I grew up writing a lot in journals and diaries. When I was young, I also loved reading and writing book reviews, especially in 3rd grade. This personal narrative is about my reading and writing life in most of my grades.

In 3rd grade, I wrote a lot of book reviews. I got my first diary/journal in 3rd grade because I loved writing so much. In 4th grade I got lots of books since I also loved reading and I also got more diaries.

In 6th grade, I had many diaries talking about my personal life and my dreams. Near the end of 6th grade in ELA, I read a book called "Locomotion" by Jacqueline Woodson and it inspired me to read and write more. Right now in 7th grade, I write in about 3-4 diaries at the same time about my life.

In the future, I may want to become a book writer, but it may change. My other goal in life is to become a YouTuber because it will be another way to share my feelings. I will not fully know what my career may be right now, but in the future, I will.

In conclusion, throughout my life, I feel like reading and writing has pushed me very far to reach my goals in life.

I would see colors and drawings everywhere
I would hear pencils, pens and other coloring materials
I would taste fruit from a fruit bowl I am drawing
I would smell paint

Justin Rosado

My time:

My lifetime experience with gaming

Did you know video games can help improve reflexes and even help people with mental disabilities? I will be talking about my experience with gaming and how it has been part of my life ever since I was a young child.

Video games have been with me for a long time, for example when I was 5 year old I played games mostly board games and card games for kids. My grandparents got me into as me

and my grandpa played chess every time I got there and still do sometimes today. I also played with toys (which my grandmother and mom got me into. When I was 6 I started playing games on the computer, mostly flash games which I played almost every day.

When I was seven I mainly played Minecraft and a little Roblox. I started playing other games at 8 after I got a PS3 for Christmas. With this also came new gaming opportunities and genres as I played more action games. I also was looking into more games and got more RPG (role playing game).

Later I got a PS4 for Christmas at around 10 years old. I started playing FPS (first person shooter) and RPG which are games I still play today. I also saw mixes of genres for example a FPS FFA (free for all). I also found another genre which is MMO (massive multiplayer online) that has made me meet great friends.

In conclusion games have been a big part of my life ever since I was young.

Daniel Sanders

My story is about how I learned to ride my bike when I was little my dad taught me how to ride my bike and that was a way we bond till this day we still ride that was the only way we still bond and I always like to ride that's why I still do

I used to ride my bike with my family. The first bike I had was a mongoose and we always rode on the weekend that's when I learned to ride and then soon I started to do tricks then when I got to my new school I started to ride with friends a lot I always used to ride on the sidewalk then I started to ride the streets and do tricks then I moved on to a se blocks fire I just got. I'm learning to wheelie on the bike which means I have to keep riding with friends in the street but before I was scared to. But before I rode like that, I had to learn ride with my dad and I fell a few times. Of course it took me like a month. Then I stopped riding for a little while. When I rode next I broke my arm, during the summer, and when I came to ride again I almost forgot how. But then I started to ride with my brother

I had to overcome being scared of riding in the street after breaking my arm. To ride again to this day, I still will ride with my friends and nothing will change my mind.

Leah Santana

I would see anxious people looking for a new home

I would hear closing of a sale

I would feel the welcoming of giving someone their new home

I will taste snacks from the open house

I would smell a new house

Shareaf Simpson

Have you ever been told by your parent that video games are bad for you? Well, ever since my sister let me play her video games console I didn't know that it was going to affect my life in such a major way.

So when I was little about eight years old I would ask my sister if I can play her video game console. Most of the time she would have said not now or this weekend. But the times she did let me play I was determined to beat her. She used to play the game a lot so it was so she would completely demolished me when I played against her. But when I did beat her she made the excuse that everybody makes when they lose to a person, "Oh, I let you win." And when I was younger I used to get mad very easily so since I was so determined to beat her, and I did, I got so mad I didn't want to play with her again.

After that I spoke to my mom if I could get my own video game console and that's when I started to have a liking for Xbox or Microsoft. But my mom didn't think I was responsible enough. She said she will probably get me something that I can play video games on but it won't be a \$300 console yet (Xbox 360). She also said if I can take care of it for a year I will get the Xbox 360 for my 10th birthday. When I heard the word *yet* I got really excited. One day she came home and gave me a Nintendo 3DS. This was the last thing I thought she was going to get me, but if I needed to take care of it until my 10th birthday I will take care of it. I ended up actually taking care of it and I got the Xbox 360. (Later getting the Xbox one because I prove how responsible I am.)

What this showed me was that to get things you will have to prove yourself to get what you want.

Gerardo Suarez

My Interest

Do you remember why or when you start playing a sport or what inspired you to play that sport? It all started when I was around 8 years old when I started watching soccer and starting to like it and enjoy watching it.

So then, one day I went to a party and my uncles were watching a soccer game. Then I decided to watch the game with them. This event is what made me more interested into the sport called soccer. Then I started to tell my dad about my interest in soccer.

When I told my dad about my interest, he then put me into what was my first soccer team. After this I started to train with my dad learning to dribble the ball, control the ball, kick a ball, and learning the rules of the soccer. My dad was basically like my coach, teaching me pretty much everything in the rules of soccer.

From here I started to transfer from one soccer team to another soccer team. Getting better and practicing with my cousins and uncles. Me playing in more soccer teams I started to make more friends and gaining trust from my couches so I can play more time in my games.

Now that I am in the seventh grade and 13 years old I have learned a lot, not just of soccer but also of how to respect people when playing soccer. And now that I am in the seventh grade I have won championships.

Nazario Taveras

My Dream Job

My goal was to always to become a football player. Have you ever dream about your goal to become a football player?

I was 5 years old I always wanted to be a football player. I started playing football to complete my goal. I practice to play football to try so hard.

I practice and try out for teams so I can play on a team. I moved to different teams until I get better and better. I have an arm so I can throw the football far and they chose me to be the quarterback for the team. I had to run fast as well then they changed my place instead of a quarterback they put me as a linebacker.

In conclusion, my dream is to be a football player and to achieve my dream and to find different ways how to play and to practice so I can get better than other people then maybe I would be a football player when I grow up.

Sofia Truglio

My Passion for Sports

Have you ever tried a sport and realized that you have a passion for it? Most people in my family played a sport and/or won MVP. My uncle and my dad played baseball for all his life, they won games, playoffs, championships, and won high school player of the year. When my parents told me about his sporting success, this made me realize that I have a liking for sports. I tried many sports, such as, ballet, gymnastics, soccer, karate, cheerleading, basketball, and softball. Out of all the sports I have tried, I found that most of my desire goes toward basketball.

It was a bright sunny day, when I went to my grandma's house after school, my cousin was there too. After we were done doing homework, my cousin and I went outside in the backyard of the house and we had nothing to do. Until my cousin found a big, orangish-brownish colored ball. My cousin played basketball so he had some experience with it so he taught me a few things and, in my cousin's opinion, I was good at the things he taught me. Some of those things were, layups, dribble the ball between my legs, and the position of how you are supposed to shot the ball.

As day by day goes by, I am continuously going to my grandma's house to practice basketball with my cousin. The more I had played basketball, the more I discovered my passion and or liking for the sport. I started watching basketball games on national television in understanding the position, skills, etc. it was around Christmas time when I was there I could get a basketball hoop in my own basketball. Luckily I got what I asked for.

I practice basketball when the weather starting to lighten up with my new basketball hoop. My parents has signed me up to join the basketball team, the season starting December 5, 2014. There was a total of 12 people on the team and I was the only girl. Michael chose me to be the team captain. We were winning as each day went on. My team and I made it to playoffs but unfortunately we lost by one point but we still receive trophies for making it so far.

In conclusion, I want to carry my passion and desire for basketball through high school and college this. In my life show me what I have a passion for.

Jason Udo

Soccer Is My Dream

Did you know soccer is one of the most interesting fascinating and beautiful sport? If you play soccer like I do you will feel the adrenaline and the sweat pumping through your blood.

I first started playing soccer when I was 5 years old and I slowly started to realize how hard it really is for example trying to find open pockets of space to shoot or dribble and more. The first ever team I started playing for was Alba FC which was at Lehman High School where we play most of the games. When I was in Alba I scored a lot of goals once I start getting older like maybe 7 or 8 but when I reached 12 that's when the journey started to begin.

Once I was 11 or 12, I played against decent teams like, New York City FC, Liverpool, West ham and other good teams. In total we play for current 3 teams which is Yonkers coyotes, Alba fc and New York soccer club. Out of those 3 teams I notice New York soccer club was more competitive because a lot more players come in and try to beat you in your spot and it's a higher competition by far.

Now in present day I've travelled to North Carolina, England and more great places but in reality if u want to be a professional you have to work and put the time and effort in it by practicing academically and physically with soccer.

I would see the whole field and people cheering
I would hear the communication of my teammates yelling as they scored
I would feel the ball when I kick it to goal
I would taste the Gatorade and water when I tire so
I would smell my sweat

Antonio Vazquez

Death is a very sad experience especially when that person is very close to you. When I was 8 years old I had to experience the death of someone very close to me. This will convey my experience with that.

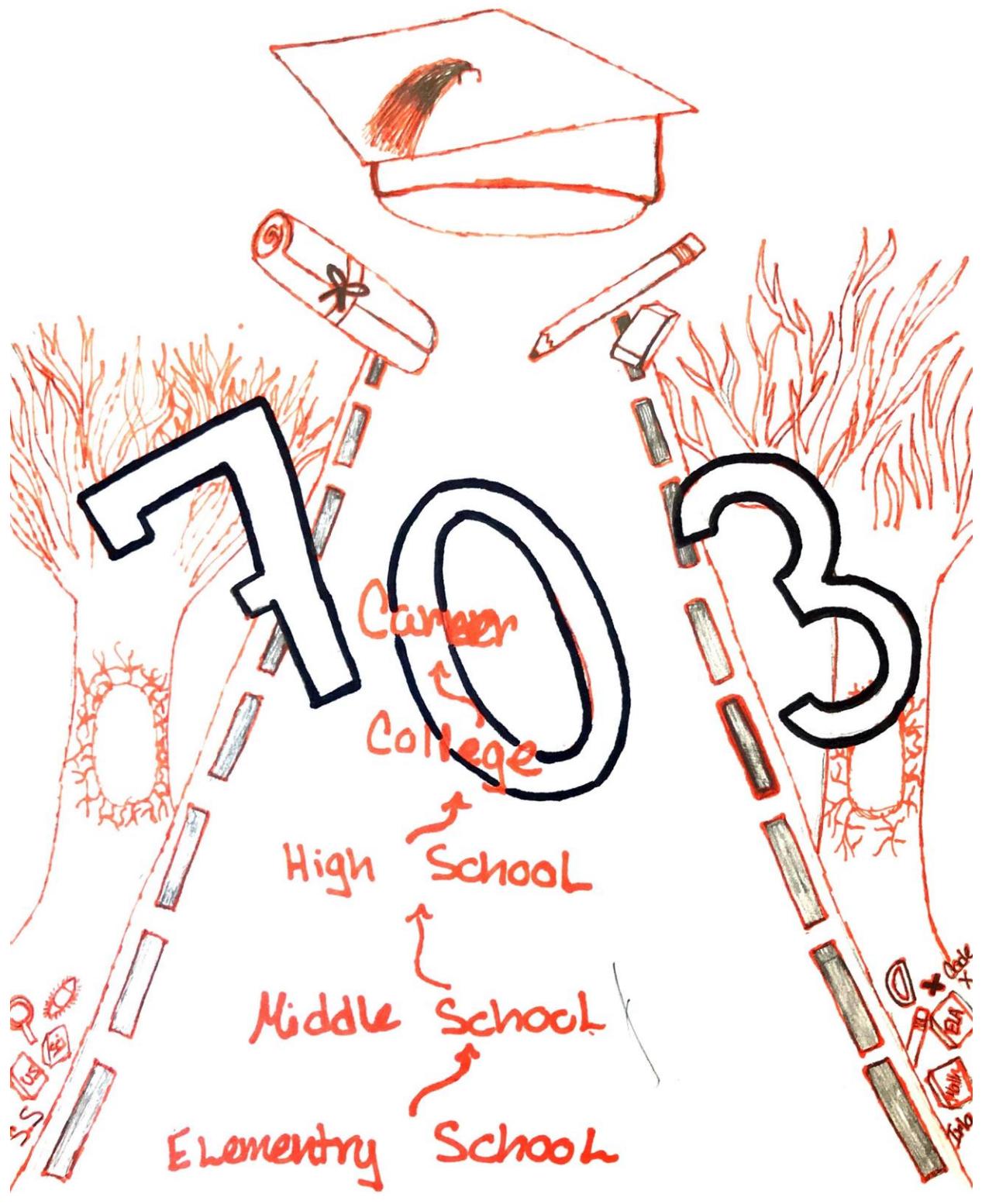
In the year 2014, my grandmother started to feel sick she kept going to the doctor but they found nothing wrong with her. Eventually she was diagnosed with a rarer form of cancer known as bile duct cancer. Bile duct cancer is a rare disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in the bile ducts. It was already stage four. She stopped eating but she was still very active she still cooked and still moved around.

Eventually she started to lose her appetite started to stay in bed for longer periods of time. My grandmother liked cranberries so my mother gave her cranberries but since she was gradually getting worse she would hide the cranberries so my mom would think that she ate

them. Even though my grandma was very sick she was still very happy and tried to do all the things that she used to do.

She got really bad at wouldn't eat or get out of bed. She went to the hospital and stayed for about a month. She was doing chemotherapy but as for many, chemo is a very tough and tiring routine to endure. My grandmother was 72 years old and it was a lot harder for her. She got out of the hospital, and all we could do is pray to God that a miracle would happen. One day in school I was taken out early by my brother and my cousin and they told me what happened. We drove as quickly as we could to her house and saw her.

All of my afterschool activities stopped I stopped doing effort into my homework and went into the grief stage. I grew because it made me stronger. Now on her birthday and anniversary we go to church and pray for her and have a mass for her.



703

Zakaria Althomory
Justin Alvarado
Jasmine Anirudh
Sharon Bernard
Nisha Datt
Juliette Di Fuccia
Brianna Duran
Kimia Eaddy
Brandon Frausto
Gabriela Gonzalez
Bethany Hernandez
Bernie Lazero
Jai Odom
Kevin Perez
Jehona Qallaku
Tyeebur Rahman
Alejandro Reyes
Tamer Rihan
Justin Rivera
Isaac Rodriguez
Jesus Rodriguez
Angeleasa Santana
Jayden Santiago
Robert Texidor
Justin Udo
Mario Uljic
Fiorella Vizuetta
Biyon Wanninayake

**Collaborative College Haikus
(703)**

*College is not cheap
College makes you successful
Unforgettable*

*I just wanna pass
Worry about my future
The future is key*

*College is my dream
College is where you do best
Forever learning*

*A Major to strive
Fulfilling my ambitions
A new beginning*

Imagining My Career Community Poem

Musician

If I were to imagine my career through the five senses
I would see an audience
I would hear hip hop, classic and heavy metal banging against my eardrum
I would feel the vibration of the sound, the microphone as you sing
I would taste metal from the microphone as I firmly grip between each high note
I would smell copper and wood grain from my instrument

I Think I "Sense" College Poems
(703)

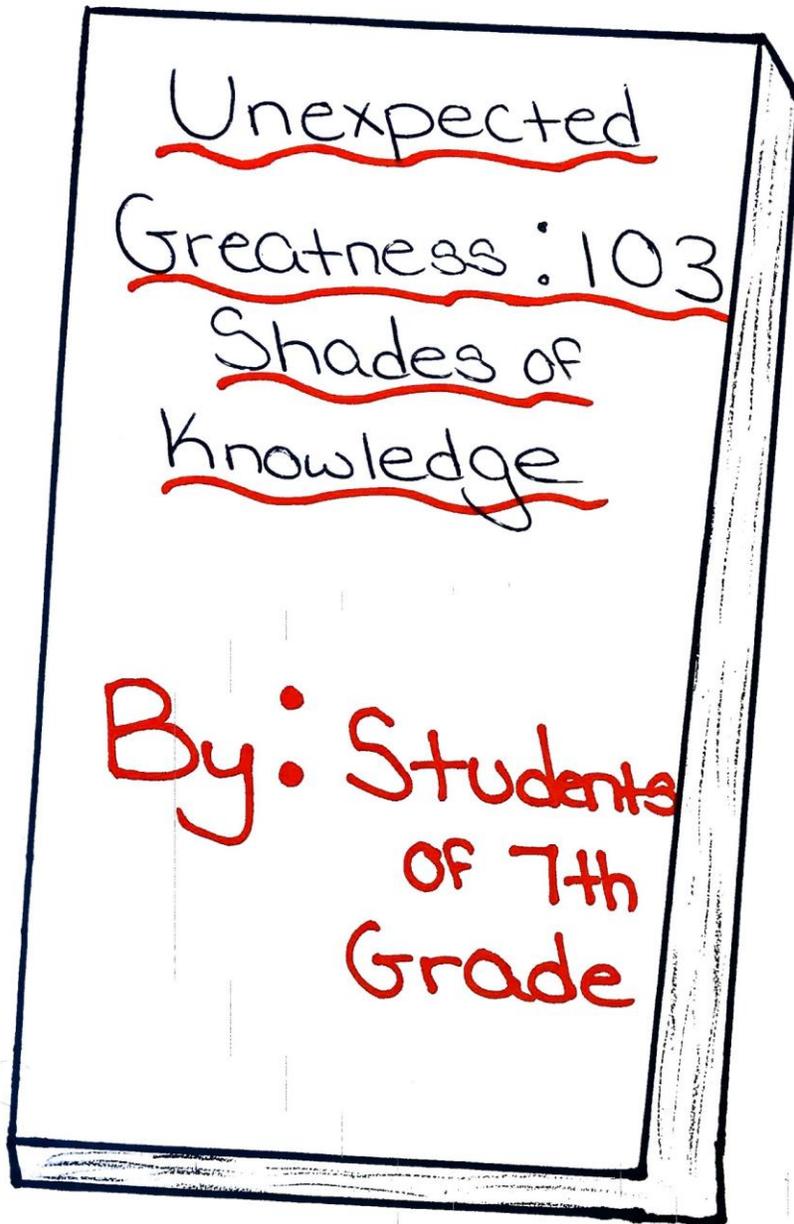
*I see the books
I hear the students chatting
I taste the knowledge
I feel the books in my hands
I smell the chalk written on the board*

*I would see people writing hard
I would smell the fear in my test
I would feel the adrenaline of success running through my veins
I would hear pencils scratching
I would taste the foods in our lunchrooms*

*The victory of graduating
College textbooks, crisp
White sheets of paper.
The professor teaching
On my large campus*

*In college I will see the teacher teaching, people learning
I will hear the sand of pencil scraping the paper
I would smell the cafeteria food even though most of the kids don't like it
I would feel papers and pencils
I would taste the victory if my basketball hitting the net in a basketball game*

*I would see students, professors build
I would hear the lecture, the voice of my professor
I would feel the greatness
I would smell the chemicals in the science lab
I will taste lots of junk food because that is what I'll be eating.*



Zakaria Althomory

Ever since I was 7, I've loved the game of basketball. I have worked hard to make sure I have a chance of making it to the National Basketball Association (NBA). I am not an amazing player, but it is my goal to set my bar high and improve.

I started playing basketball when I was 7 and I started watching NBA games around the age of 8. One day, I just walked into the living and saw my uncle watching a game. I decided to sit down and watch as well. I believe it was the 2013-2014 season. I saw two teams. One of them had white and blue jerseys and the other team had black and red jerseys. My favorite color was blue, so I wanted the white and blue jersey team to win. I was unaware of the team names, so I asked my uncle what they were and he told me the white and blue jerseys are called "Golden State Warriors" and the black and red jerseys are called "Miami Heat". Therefore, ever since that day I have been a Warriors fan.

I got bored of watching the game and actually went out to the backyard to play basketball. I was horrible. I am not saying I am so much better now, but I was horrible then. I would miss almost every shot just like how Kobe went three for twenty-one playing against the New Orleans Hornets on March 31, 2012. Then, I asked and begged my cousin, who was a great player, to come out and help me work on my skills. She told me she will. The first thing she told me was that my shooting form was completely wrong, so I tried to fix it. After she gave me all these tips on how to improve a little, I tried to put them in my head and put my body to work. I still kept on missing my shots, but I still tried. I was the only one outside now. I kept shooting and shooting, but nothing worked. I got really tired and decided to go inside and practice another day I get a chance to. From that day to modern day, I still try my hardest to improve and build up my skills.

A few years have passed by and I have gotten much better than past times. I'm not saying I am an amazing player, but I'm not too bad for my age (12 now). As times pass by, my uncle takes me and my two younger cousins to an official NBA game. It was located in Brooklyn at Barclays Center. It was the Chicago Bulls against the Brooklyn Nets. We missed the first quarter, unfortunately. We had seats in the back, but it was fine because we still saw everything and had a great time. It was a close and good game. The Nets took the win. The score was 105-106. This moment was an amazing experience and I thank my uncle very much.

In final consideration, my only dream is to become an amazing NBA player and become well-known. However, it will not be easy and I am going to have to practice and work hard from this day until I make it to the NBA and accomplish my dream. It is going to be a long and tough journey.

Justin Alvarado

All my life I have been playing basketball although I am not that good I love to play basketball and I will strive to complete my dream of being a coach. Also to lead my team to a championship and to be remembered as a great coach and leader.

I first started playing when I was five I loved to play basketball to me it was the best thing in my life at the time. It was very fun playing with my cousins and my brothers even though I was five that did not mean anything people showed me tough love but I like it that

made me even more better at the sport I played basketball a lot and it was always on my mind I played basketball at my cousins house every weekend I was always trying to get better.

When I was eight I started to get more use to the game and the calls and fouls and violations before I use to travel a lot and double dribble but now I know I can't do those things me and my friend began our rivalry at this time little did know that it was going to last forever I started to learn new moves that I can do around this time I started to want a to be a coach but I wanted to play too I did not know what I wanted to do

I was too shy to try out for teams when I was little but now I'm ready to show my skills I've gotten very better since I started I learned many new moves and plays I have gotten very taller my rivalry with my friend still has not ended the record is 53 to 54 I'm am winning by one. Overall all I want to do is coach and play basketball and become better at the sport and to be remembered as a good person

Jasmine Anirudh

In this essay I will be telling you about how I learned how to play the flute and clarinet and how it was my first year playing and it was fun to rejoin band but I hope you will enjoy this essay.

Joining a new band. In my school they just started a new band program so I decided to join but before you join the band you had to go to this meeting first and fill out this paper letting you choose your top three favorite instruments and then the next day the music teacher had chosen a couple of kids to be in the band group.

My first year playing an instrument. It's the first day of band and we finally got our instrument and learned how to play an instrument and it was exciting to play because it was my first year playing the flute it was really hard to play at first but after a while I got used to it but overall it was really fun learning how to play the flute.

Deciding to join again. It's the second year of band and I decided to rejoin Band because it would be my second year playing an instrument so when I joined I got a different I got a different instrument to play and it was a clarinet and I could get better at playing the clarinet because I played at a different school so I would have gotten better a playing and I did get better so this is why I'm joining band.

In conclusion, this is how I got my talent on playing the clarinet and how I learned how to play the clarinet and how to play the flute and how this was my first year in band and how it all started when I had joined band but overall band was really fun to be in and I hope the people reading this will consider joining band

Sharon Bernard

The Aesthetic Form of Art

Remember when you first made the pencil come in contact with the paper, or when you took something out of the oven you made? That was the spark of something so beautiful, appealing, and interesting to life. This is art. Without art, the earth would just be "eh". Everything around you is art. Buildings, chairs, people, so beautifully create by the worker's hands. This essay will address my personal love for art.

To me art is aesthetic. Art lets you express our inner being. The colors and shapes you use in your masterpiece, expresses your feelings and emotions. The way the brush fits perfectly in your hand, aligning with the steady flow of paint is so calming and relaxing. Each stroke reflects passion and expression. Art is yours alone so no one can criticize it. It has many forms and different versions to it. These 2 tie together not only for me, but for other artists as well. I've always wondered how Jackson Pollock came to be an artist. I always thought about how people see something so interesting and beautiful in splatter art. Even a 2 year old could make a multi-million dollar artwork like Pollock with ease. But that's art.

People see everything in a different perspective, as if it were an optical illusion. Art is something that is new, since everyone sees it in a different way. I hope to be an artist, who finds a way to make something so surreal and interesting that a person who sees it can find a new perspective to my art. No one can criticize it because it is art! Even if you make a mistake, it doesn't matter because it's still art. There's a blank sheet of paper waiting for everyone including myself. It's not you waiting for it, the paper is waiting for you and your ideas to flow, until not a speck of white can be found.

When I tell someone what is my favorite hobby, I say art. Then they would typically ask me why I do. For me, it's really inexplicable. Everybody has something they like to do, no matter who you are or what kind of personality you have. You could like sports such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, football, baseball. Or you would like things such as baking, science, math, music or playing an instrument. But for me, I personally love art. There's something I love about art that is indescribable and words can't be used to distinguish it from anything else.

Another reason why I love art, is it lets me zone out of my problems and lets me be me. Art lets me express my emotions. The strokes of the brush, the colors and shapes I use define how I feel. It's as if I have an empathy link with my art; I know it and it knows me. It lets me zone in my own world, where everything is as if the way I want it. It's the sweetest escape from reality into my world where I find relaxation, comfort and peace. I used to create comic strips about a superhero I made. It let me feel powerful in a sort of fun and imaginative way. Whenever I get bored in class, I doodle and zone out from a boring, monotonous lecture. It lets me become creative; which is what I love the most about art.

I have had experience with art ever since I was a little girl. I've had many experiences with it as far as I can remember. One of my earliest memories was in pre-k. We did so many art activities. During earth day, we did something creative by taking a concoction made of glue and water and paper from a shredder. We plastered it onto a window mesh and dried it out in the sun. The first time I ever cooked something was actually on a pre-k trip. We went to a pizzeria for a trip. The chef gave each of us some dough and showed us how to flatten it. Then we each took turns to put sauce and cheese on it. We put it on the oven with help from adults and when it came out of the oven, I was filled with a sense of pride since I made food for myself for the first time! But art in my life doesn't stop here. It carried on to elementary school. My art teacher was fun and creative. She came up with very unusual art projects that I've never seen before. In fifth grade, we did a product where we were given a drawing that isn't colored in. We had to draw various shapes in there until there were no white spaces left. This was really fun because it was something new I never did before that was creative; and I sincerely enjoyed it. We made optical illusions, collages, sculptures and many more. There was art in my home as well. My mom, my brother and I made homemade pizza from scratch. I wasn't able to do much,

but whatever I did made me feel so happy. The pizza was delicious. I also recall the time making a thanksgiving turkey for the first time. It was really messy and relied on my patience. I would wait in front of the oven until time was up to baste the turkey. When it came out, it was beautiful. It was still sizzling, dripping with fat. It had a beautiful golden color brown. The vegetables looked tender right next to it. When I tried the first piece, it was so succulent and juicy, that I knew I was never going to forget that moment.

I also remember the moment when my mom and I made brownies together. We worked together, I put the ingredients in the bowl and she stirred. When the brownies came out the oven, the smell was unbelievable. The whole house was filled with a fudgy aroma. The brownies were soft and fudgy when I bit in to one. Even in middle school I still experience art. I remembered earlier this year, I signed up for an art competition at Preston high school with my friend Jamilet. We had to make a piece showing what we think the holidays were all about. I was clueless at first. I wanted to make something appealing, something interesting apart from Santa Clause and mistletoes. When I arrived home, I saw a box of 1000 puzzles. Then an idea popped up in my head as I stared at the box. At the end, I made a huge heart. The thing about it was it had three huge puzzle pieces. In each one it had a picture drawn by me of the three main holidays celebrated. These memories of art will always be cherished.

In conclusion, art is such a relaxing and beautiful thing. It is beyond ordinary but extraordinary. For me to be separated from art is like heresy. Art is in every one of our blood. No one can say their bad at art. It's up to them to see how they use it just like I did through all my experiences.

Nisha Datt

Being in the Eye of the Storm

I've always wanted to be a meteorologist. But I need what it take to accomplish my dreams.

I always love to dance and just listen to the beat of the music. Also I'd like to listen to different kinds of music. Sometimes I would like to pretend that there is some sort of natural disaster and I would make tiny forecast about the weather outside. And one time I had an experience with a thunderstorm when I almost got struck by lightning.

When I was younger and still even up till now, I was always very interested in the reasons of why different weather occurs. As I grew up, I started looking more into weather forecast and when weather occurs. And as I researched more into the field I started to build up an enjoyment for it.

My very amazing experience with weather and natural disasters was when I was actually part of a thunderstorm that experience has gotten me very fascinated in everything about weather.

In conclusion, me being a dancer, musician, I know that when I grow up I will be the best meteorologist there is because college is going to help me get there.

I would see the clouds in the sky
as the sunset will shine different colors on them

I would hear the rain fall onto the ground
I would feel the wind that blows you away
I would taste the snowflakes that fall from the sky
I would smell the fresh air everyday

Juliette Di Fuccia

Have you ever had a great accomplishment that sparked a new understanding in your life? Math was always a part of my life, my dad had always been good at math. I think he is where I get my love for math from.

I have always loved math, from kindergarten to now. When I was in kindergarten I remember counting shapes and animals. My teacher noticed I was very good in math and so did my parents. That encouraged me to try harder than I already did. When I was home I loved drawing animals and counting them after coloring. Sometimes, I would even count my animal crackers and other food. When I got a little older in first and second grade, I drew houses and buildings, I would draw my family and friends and then count them. Math had always made me feel happy. It was always something about seeing numbers and it made me excited to start something new.

When I was in third grade, I still had been active with math and I found it everywhere. When I had traveled places on vacation I would always take pictures of different things, mainly buildings. I would try to draw them with measurements which came hand in hand with math. My dad and I always used to point out old and new buildings. We had thought they were really cool to look at and draw. Most of the houses were old and vintage, we thought they were really interesting and we always wanted to know the stories behind it. I have always got good grades in math and when I got in the seventies and eighties I would study more and try my best to get to the nineties or higher.

Years have passed now, however math is still a very important part in my life. I still have good grades now. My average in math is a 91%! I have worked hard to get that grade. With my math grade and all my other grades I made it to honor roll. I still study every night. When I don't have any homework and I have a test, I would study. I would use flashcards, and look back at my notes I had took in class. When I have free time I like to watch house building shows. It shows the measurements on the show of certain materials and I find this very interesting.

In conclusion, math has and always will be a part of my life. I might not be the best at it but I will always love it.

Brianna Duran

Running

Do you like to run? I do, it's healthy, useful and great for exercise, but you can even run for fun or just to compete. Running can be casual in some people's lives. In this essay it will address why I like to run, why it's helpful, and why people use it almost every day of their lives.

I like to run because I think it's economic, and because I can just run for fun. For me running can either be competitive or if not it can be just for fun. Sometimes I race my cousins and friends because I love running and most of them can be faster than me and if they are faster than me I can practice to make myself better at it so that in the future, I guess I can or will become something. Running is basically casual in my life because I run to exercise, and to go to different places if I don't go in a car or sometimes just to cross the streets of New York.

I myself believe that running is helpful. I believe this because running is really good for the human body making you faster and stronger, also by us humans lose weight. Weight is something that you really have to put your mind on it so that you can actually lose weight. Running uses a lot of strength and breath control. Breath control is something that is really needed in running because if you are in a competition you don't really want to lose your breath in the middle of a competition and let all the others pass you because of your breathing. Your strength determines the way you run. This is because when you run you don't want to run like a weakling, you want to run like you would put your life on it.

People run for various reasons. I like to run because it is better for me and my body. In reality running is not that hard. I run for no reasons sometimes. I run so that I can get stronger on my lower body. Running doesn't really help your upper body muscles but it does help your lower body muscles. Your lower body muscles become stronger when being worked on for a long period of time. I sometimes run to get to place faster because if I just walked it would take me much longer. I honestly just run for fun most of the time.

In conclusion, I love to run. Running for me isn't that easy sometimes because I have to catch my breath a lot or if not I sometimes run a little bit slower because of asthma. Asthma makes my lungs get air inside faster because it can become something really bad. I can either start coughing or have to stop, catch my breath and then run. Even if I have asthma I like to run and I want to do it for a living.

I would see rocks, and people studying/Identifying rocks

I would hear rocks drop on the floor and when they bang together.

I would feel the rocks on my hand as well as the metal of the rock holder

I would taste sea salt or wherever the Rock is from, as well as sulfur

I would smell iron and the rusty smell of different rocks

Kimia Eaddy

See an old elementary school friend draw during recess. Pictures that if you saw one, you would believe that it would jump off the page to greet you, using so much emotion. I wanted to do something as brilliant as that, for someone to take the time to take a notice and be moved. I wanted to show as much emotion as hers already did on the first impression, hoping that the criticism and urge to quit isn't so strong.

I started out making drawings to be displayed on the refrigerator getting comments like how cute it was getting comments from teachers. Slowly building my confidence. Just drawing for fun not knowing that I would enjoy it so much. Drawing people hoping people would take notice giving good and positive feedback and not negative. Every complement or negative feedback makes the drive and want to make things better to add details to make sure every piece is a little bit of a story.

The difficulties of starting to draw a picture is the pressure of trying to make it perfect which is hard trying not to erase making sure the paper that you are using has no dirty black marks of the pen or marker even when you are finish you still have to be able to have a piece that is publishable.

Brandon Frausto

What I think about college is that I think it can be challenging and fun sometimes. What I also think about college is that teachers talk about it a lot and on how they got into college. So in my opinion in college is that you can choose on what class you want to go to and if you make friends in college you can stay connected with more people so that it can be easier to study or do homework etc. And I think college can be fun.

Gabriela Gonzalez

My Journey to Success

Its 33 to 35 there's 50 seconds on the clock. I'm dribbling down the court for a 2 pointer. A 2 pointer is when a player makes a basket inside the three point line; that's worth 2 points. I shoot my shot, I make it. Now we're winning by 4 points. The scoreboard rings, everyone yells "WE TOOK THE W" with excitement jumping. We took the W once again. This essay will be sharing about my experience in my basketball journey.

It all started in 6th grade, fall time. Coach was starting to create girls and boys basketball teams, everyone was excited to try out, I was a little nervous because some of the players from last year we're trying also making it lower possibility of other making the team because their really good, but I had confidence on the other hand. Later we got the news, I'M ON THE TEAM and that's when I started my success. I had morning practice and after school practices, later on my games started. Once my team started having games it became more competitive each game. I never knew I would be so interested in sports, I was always that one girl in gym covering my head hoping I won't get hit with the ball. Now every time I had gym I always asked to play basketball.

Basketball isn't only about winning games and just shooting your shots. Playing basketball created a huge part in my childhood. Playing basketball includes school and life, it clears your mind off others, keeps you in shape, and makes you think faster. The people that led me off to wanting to play basketball and inspired me was my basketball players Josette and Chloe, they joined the team in 5th grade a year earlier than how players supposed to start. They played for 4 years. They always had confidence and they were hard workers, they never gave up. And that's what brought the light bulb in my head turn on.

I have a passion for basketball because I've played it for years and I loved how fun I had even if my team lost the game. Basketball has taught me to work hard with others as a group to all succeed. Good partnership and confidence to work together to take a win. To take ownership and pride, and maybe a few millions but I won't do that I don't want my love for

sports and athletic players to depend on my paycheck and my career. I rather coach and give back to the next young players that will be on the next basketball court.

Middle school, girls' basketball team creates responsibilities, independence, partnership, and trust among others. I love basketball but not to take advantage and depend on my next paycheck.

Bethany Hernandez

Hobbies tell us a lot about a person. Most people around the world have a hobby that best describes them as a student, each one of those hobbies are unique just like mine. This essay will illustrate how my hobby as helped me as a person.

Our hobbies are the best reflections of our interest. My hobby best describes me as a person, it's like an activity that I like to do on a daily basis, just like me everyone has a hobby. A hobby that I like doing on my free time is writing, writing helps me get some thoughts out and expressing myself through writing. An interest I have is swimming. I love swimming especially in the summer, swimming helps take stress off my body it also provides a body workout for me. My interest and hobby are the things I like to do the most. Both writing and swimming help me in different ways, writing helps me express my thoughts and swimming helps maintain my height and weight and heart and lungs.

My hobby of writing helps me have an open mind and creative mind, writing on a daily basis can highlight my strengths as a writer. My hobby can sometimes provide a break from my daily schedule of going to school, and afterschool from Monday through Friday. Both my hobby and interest say a lot about me but mostly that I have an open mind because I will always have something to write down on paper. What my hobby says about me is that I'm a very thoughtful person.

Other than writing as my hobby, and swimming for an interest my outside life is nothing but school and home. In school, I have learned how to become a better writer, when writing you write with a meaning behind it. When you're writing it doesn't always make sense at first until you have gathered your evidence together to make it work.

In conclusion my hobby has helped me make sure whatever I write makes sense. Hobbies always describes someone's personality. This essay illustrated how my hobby helped me as a person and how well it can describe me.

Bernie Lazero

I want to go to college because I want to go follow my passion as a technician. I'd like to see if college would help me follow that passion and let me work in that dream job.

Jai Odom

My Experience in a New School

It was about September and my mom and dad were split so me and my dad moved to Brooklyn and I had to start a new school so at first I didn't want to start the new school because

I didn't know anyone and I been in the same school for most of my life when I started my new school I was nervous because I didn't know any of the kid there and how they would treat me.

My first day of school was ok I guess people there were pretty nice to me. I made 2 new friends Kashea & Kai. The next day, 4 girls came up to me asking me did I know Kashea and her sister Kai I said yes, then for the next four days I was getting bullied. After that, girls in my school were getting into fights with me so then the girls that were my friends left the school after a while I went to the girls and asked them why with me they had issues with me. After that we settled out the issues with us and we became friends.

About 3 months later I went with them out to the mall and my dad saw me. He told me, that I was going home for good and I was happy. When I went to school the next day the people I thought were my friends were not; they told me to piss off. At first I was upset but then I just went on with my day my dad signed me out of my school and I left when I got back my mom was so happy to see me and when I got back to my school so were my friends! I'm just glad I'm back home with friends and family. *The end*

Kevin Perez

I don't want to go to college right now but I might change my opinion when I'm older. I think college is going to be stressful and boring. So this is what I think about college. I want to get over the feeling of being a student since I don't like school very much, but as I said, my opinion might change due to the dreams I have. One being to become a chef or become a professional soccer player.

I would see the ingredients on a table
I would hear the sizzling of something being cooked
I would feel the ingredients of a recipe to make food
I would taste the finished product of the food
I would smell the food being cooked

Jehona Qallaku

Teaching. It has always been an important part of my life. It's been in my blood since I was born. Teaching influences every decision I make in school, its significant for me to follow my family's footsteps into becoming a teacher. It's an interest that helped me identify myself. This essay explains how much teaching affected me from an early start of my life.

Ever since I was a little kid, I had significant figures in my life that helped me realize my love of teaching. Both of my aunts are and working on becoming a teacher. When I was a little child, I would play with my aunt Tina, we would play teacher and teach my dolls. Which now that I think about it it's kind of weird. This event introduced me into teaching and gave me a taste of how my future would be. My grandfather was a math teacher, which is really weird because I suck at math. When I would be in Albania, my native town he would take me to the supply store and buy me pencils and notebooks. At that time it was cool because we weren't totally invested on our phones.

Then we would get home and teach me a math lesson. And like I said I said I suck at math. When I came into America, when I was three years old, I had just started Pre-K, and I remember the way my face lit up when I saw all the books in the class library and being able to free write about things I wanted back then. That's what got me into this passion of helping others educational wise.

After I started elementary school, I realized I excelled in reading and writing. And from that point I knew I wanted to teach that subject. When I was in third grade, I read three books every day. Then I had an idea, I wanted to start a collection of books. Now I have exactly 207 books. When I was in third grade, other kids would go to the park and play around, but I would end up in the library with a stack of books in front of me.

Middle school was my playing field. I had been working on a spin off novel for a year now. And I was ready to submit into many writing contests. I had many reject letters but the acceptance letters outweigh them. There was one company in London had taken an interest in my writing. And so they contact me because they wanted to use my work. Now my work was on their March newsletter in a really popular London writing company. Also during 7th grade, we had the program The 100 Book Challenge, and I am the highest step reader in 7th grade and I worked hard for it. Reading almost three hours every day, maybe even more on a good day.

Teaching has been a big part of my life. And I hope one day be my life. It's been an interest that I have had since I was a child, and it helps me identify myself

Tyebur Rahman

I think about college is a school of higher education, where you can have better experiences for your dream job. Education is a major topic for government, so it's important. Colleges are places to show your greatness to the community and to let you know something about yourself.

Alejandro Reyes

People have many hobbies and challenges in life. But my interest may differ from others but at the same time it may be very similar to others. Many people play sports but to me none of them influence people like basketball. Basketball brings many people together, whether it comes to making friends or playing for fun.

At first I fell in love with basketball, by watching it, while I was watching I enjoyed it very much. I started to think about it all the time and thought about it all the time and thought about how fun it was. I enjoyed seeing some of the greats all-stars running up and down the court and scoring baskets seeing the shot clock tick down 5 4 3 2 1 Kobe from 3!!!! Watching sick passes from the greats like Chris Paul and Steve Nash. Watching greats like Stephen Curry and Kyrie Irving crossing people.

I started going into basketball courts inspired from streetball players like The Professor and Bone Collector. I kept working on my game until I became decent and started playing the park lots of games and shoot arounds. I played in school with a lot of my friends there was a short kid in my class he taught me how to do a play when I don't get it. I started to pretend shoot around even with no basket because I loved the game of basketball at my house.

When it was all said and done basketball became one of my favorite sports and I thought about how I would love it make it a career. But at the same time it is very hard to make it into the NBA or even a basketball college. But also if I do make it it's a very good high paying job and it gives you experience of a lifetime.

In conclusion, basketball is very important to me and a college should know that about me and my college application would be incomplete without it.

I would see teammates and basketballs and ankle snapping once in a while
I would hear the audience and ball hit the floor up-and-down
I would feel sweaty and tired as the ball dribbles on my fingertips and very pressured
I would taste sweat and Gatorade and other sports drinks.
I would smell the leather of the ball and the paint and wood on the courts and victory at times.

Tamer Rihan

As I was growing up I liked to play basketball. I liked it because it seemed fun. Many things happen for different reasons and here is one of my reasons of playing and understanding the game. This essay will address the great accomplishment I faced in basketball and what I did.

When I played basketball it was really hard to remember all the rules. Also I had to make sure I am playing correctly. At first I always used to miss making a basket. Most of the time I twisted my leg because I always kept going in the wrong direction. More importantly practice always helped me get better. Every week I use to play 2 times a day and each time I do it for 3 hours and it made me get better and better.

After a while I position. I also used remember to push or it will be a foul. But I blocked the person I played so they do not make the shot. Now I am not like before when I used to play now I win games most of the time.

At the end I started to join in different games. I also played started to make in the shots correctly and learning more. Also that I am starting to remember the rules because I always practiced. Now I place my hand in the right with different teams. But if there is one thing I learned in basketball is that we always should work as a team and practice together even. Basketball is a game of skill. Lastly, now I am great.

So in conclusion, this essay addressed the accomplishments I faced in basketball. Also that practicing and trying will make me and you better. Also that I had fun playing with my friends. As I was playing I was running through the gym and made the score when I played with other people. So this wraps up one of my life experience playing basketball and understanding the different concepts in the game.

I would see people working with me to create a business
I would hear people typing or writing, also talking about productivity.
I would feel happy, also I will feel paper and some money
I would taste the smell of the product I created also coffee
I would smell all the money and the product

Justin Rivera

My Life of Football

I really used to like how my dad would play catch with me, but after a little time I felt that there was more to football than just catching. This is when I had a thought about playing football.

I had told my dad about my interest in football and not just catching. He started showing me college and NFL games, he told me that it's fun, but it could also be dangerous. He told me he used to play football in the high school he went to but he was playing as quarterback while I wanted to be a wide receiver, I would also go with my friends and I would watch them play and they would also just throw me the football so see if I was able to have the right idea to be a wide receiver in NFL or just regular college or high school football.

Well after I start playing catch with them they would show me the basics of football and how it would work and the other positions in football besides wide receiver and quarterback. Anyways we would also start playing actual football but we didn't do it with pads or anything we would just tag like tag football.

I started to love football more and more while we would start to watch football more and more and I watched my first super bowl when I had turned 10 I was very happy excited to watch it live for the first time. By that time I did want to get on a team and actually be able to play with a helmet and pads and all that other stuff and then I started to play with my friends with a pad and helmet but now I think back and say I want to be able to play actual football on a team in high school and or in college.

This is how I really began to love and be able to play football with my friends and have my dream to be able to play on a football team in high school and or in college.

Isaac Rodriguez

The sweat, the hard work, the failure and success is what it takes to be a great basketball player. Playing the basketball is something that I enjoy to do every day. Every day I push myself to be better. I know that I need to work hard to enter a basketball team in college and be the best.

Watching the NBA on television has amazing games between two different basketball teams. You get to see all the different techniques and moves to help yourself out, and use them in real life. In the NBA you can see all the different basketball player and see if they are like you, you can see if you use similar moves in basketball games and compare them. It also helps motivate you to be as good as them in the near future, and one day be in the NBA.

As I was heading to Virginia to visit my aunt, I got excited knowing that my friend was there and he plays basketball and I was determined to beat him. I knew he was good in basketball, and i knew I would come to Virginia, so I trained to get better and thought hopefully I'll beat him. When we were at Virginia I was excited, I could not go until the next day. When I went to his house we played a game up to 20 points for a win, he beat me. I was determined to beat him the next time I came to Virginia.

To progress in basketball I decided to take basketball lessons. At the beginning of the lesson it was boring and I thought it was going to be pointless. Over the month of being in the basketball lesson I really progressed in basketball. It helped me in my handles, passing and just helped me scoring. This helped me be more confidence in playing with my friends and hopefully make me good enough to join the basketball team.

In conclusion, this shows why basketball is a sport I love and want to keep playing for years. These reason show why I like and am interested in basketball rather than other sports. Hopefully this love for my sport can help me achieve new paths for me in the future.

Jesus Rodriguez

Ever since I was young, I liked Legos because it give me new ideas every time I build. This also shows that I like engineering.

When I was little I got my first Lego set. It happened when I was 4. I was looking at my first Lego set. At first I didn't know what it was. Then I started to read the instructions that came with it and started to build. When I finished it I felt like I accomplished something. When I got older I saw that there were many, many Lego sets to choose from big sets to small sets. There were sets based on superheroes like Ninjago and other superheroes. Some were even based on movies like ghostbusters. Sooner or later, I had got a bunch of Lego sets.

When I became 12, Lego took it to the next Level. LEGO made Lego worlds which is about finding chest that have new weapons and items you can use and you can discover new characters and vehicles.

In conclusion, this essay shows how much I liked Legos and how this shows that I like to engineer.

Angeleasa Santana

I started dancing when I was 2 years old. I've always had a passion for dancing and personally I think I'm very good at it. When I was younger I danced everywhere. Absolutely nothing stopped me from dancing. This essay will be about the time I performed at a dance recital when I had a broken foot.

At the time I was about 6 or 7 years old and I went to Toys 'R' Us. I was looking at this Dora computer set, it wasn't bolted down and I decided to try and grab it. Once I did that the computer fell on my foot. I had a cast on for about 2-3 weeks. A week after I broke my foot, I had a dance recital. I still wanted to perform in it very badly. My dance teacher told me it was not a good idea to do it because of my foot, but I decided to perform in it anyways. They gave me a chair to sit on while the others were dancing. In the middle of the dance I decided to get up and start dancing too. I felt very proud of myself.

When I returned back to school the day after my recital all of my friends were telling me how good I performed, almost everyone wanted to sign my cast. My parent were very proud of me as well. In fact after my performance they gave me \$100! The lesson I learned from this experience is that anything is possible if you put your mind to it and believe that you can accomplish it and not listen to what others have to say. My dance teacher did not want me to perform in it because she did not want me to make my injury even worse but I did not listen and I performed anyways and I was one of the best dancers.

After this I kept on dancing until I was about 11 years old. First I did tap and ballet when I was 2 years old until I was 6. Then I did gymnastics until I was about 8. After that I moved onto jazz and hip hop. I quit dancing when I was 11 years old because I was not very interested in it anymore. As I got older I changed and I felt like dancing was no longer for me.

In conclusion this essay is about the time I broke my foot but still performed in my dance recital. This essay showed the challenge I faced and the commitment I made towards dancing. It showed that nothing ever stopped me from dancing.

Jayden Santiago

Bats in the Belfry

I have always wondered what it feels like when you die. What channels it? I have been thinking about this ever since my mother died on April 3, 2013. Yet, I have faced worse challenges than this.

Welcome, take a seat while I talk to you about my dysfunctional life. First off, *question*. Do you *know* what it feels like to have ADHD? Actually don't answer that, it's a rhetorical question. I have ADHD which if you didn't already know it stands for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactive disorder. A lot of people don't know how it feels to have ADHD. They say, "Oh, you can control it." Well that's easy for you to say. I have ADHD and it is frustrating. Half of the time I don't even realize I am doing something wrong until someone yells at me. I take medicine but that doesn't stop me from blurting something out. Did I tell you that I'm adopted, No? Oh well I'm adopted and if you don't know what that means then I'm not actually going to tell you. That is why we have the *INTERNET*. Anyway if you think I got adopted when my mother died then uh ho ho, you're so wrong. Don't assume, it's rude. I was sent to a foster home right after birth. Now, don't expect me to tell you why I was sent there because that is another story for a different time. But don't you worry just yet, I was adopted by my aunt or whatever but I still get to see *my sister from another mother* who is also adopted. Also known as my foster sister. (Oh, I am I going to use "also" a lot)

If you knew me you would know that I'm super shy and awkward. What makes it worse is that I have a high pitch voice. Now don't get me wrong, I do use it to test other's patience, I take my Elmo/squeaker reputation very VERY seriously. People judge and I just say "Thanks captain obvious, now maybe if you were to shut up then maybe I'll be quiet if you find my voice so incessant."

Now I am most certainly the odd one out. Everyone either talks about basketball or Fortnite. I mean literally that is the only thing they ever talk about in my school every day. I guess the challenge I face is just trying to fit in. Which is every day. Mind you I have mood swings like every five minutes so you know, I never have anything to talk about so they either say one thing and walk away or I start talking and they walk away and after 5 minutes I finally realize I'm talking to myself. *Whoops*. Yea I'm weird. But that is expected and everybody who knows me well takes initiative on that.

Well that just about wraps up my life issues. But as you know everything has an end (well except for this constant urge to listen to Pumped Up kicks, oh wait—I just had a mood swing, now I want to sit in a corner and contemplate what I'm still doing here.) So if you sat through this and read it all the way through, cool! However if you didn't then let me give you a quick rundown of what happened... umm I just told you all the challenges I face in my daily life.

Anyway, I'm going to let my custom message maker finish this [*Hope you enjoyed reading this essay. Now that we have reached the end please gather your things and GET OUT*]...*What are you still doing here? You want more?* Kidding, kidding. (After looking over this I realized how cringe worthy this whole essay is.)

Robert Texidor

Science is a large part of everybody's life. From advancements in technology to discovering new worlds it affects us all. This essay will illustrate how I came to love science and how it has help me to have a better understanding of the world around me.

One of the first scientific books I read was about herpetology. This was a good book because it was filled with great illustrations of lizard and amphibians. This was also very good because a gave an abundant amount of information given in a simple enough contrivance that someone as little could have understand the basics of such a large field of science. This book caught my interest and made me desire to know more. Then I started looking for something different but I didn't know what so I just stayed stumped than I started to learn more about lizards and I got into their "predecessors" (dinosaurs).

I liked dinosaurs because I liked the fact that there were creatures larger than monuments yet no one on earth has ever seen one. Back than I was determined to become paleontologist. Just the thought that there were bones of creatures like the Mamenchisaurus that could have been up to 65 feet long or the Ankylosaurus who had a large clubbed tail able to kill an enemy with one hit made me excited. After I was satisfied with what I knew about dinosaur I looked for something new. I looked at oceanography I looked at zoology and I even looked at ecology nothing satisfied me like dinosaurs did or like herpetology did. I just couldn't find the right field of science. Then I found astronomy.

I liked this branch of science because it really gave me an enlightened view of the universe. It allowed me to know how the moon contributes to the waves. What a black hole is. I liked how we know so much about the known universe yet we haven't even touched the surface of what space may reveal. Maybe a new and more hospitable planet. Or a planet that holds life itself. The secrets space may hold are endless. To this day I still love astronomy to this day because we are still learning new things about this field of science. We still don't know the answer to the questions where did the universe begin or is string theory true. I want to find the answers to these questions

In conclusion after reading this essay it has successfully shown how I have a great love for science and a passion.

I would see stars, planets, patterns and light
I would hear the shuttle blasting off
I would feel mental, computer keyboard, notepad, goggles and mask.
I would taste pizza, take out water
I would smell sulfur, sweat.

Justin Udo

My love for Soccer

Have you ever wonder how much hard work and dedication that is required in chasing your dreams? Well this essay will illustrate how I came to love with soccer and the challenges and accomplishment I have faced playing as soccer player.

How I started my career? At the age of 6 I started playing for Alba FC we trained at white plains road and they were developing people like me to become a great player. Then at the age 9 when I kept playing soccer and I decided to play as a Goalkeeper. At first when I was playing that position I was not that comfortable but when I kept playing I got better. Then our team kept winning games and we quailed in the NYC but unfortunately we lost to World Class 2-1. At the age of 10 and 11 we were unstoppable we would win so many tournaments we won about 20 trophies but in those 20 trophies we won 8 major trophies.

But at the age of 12 we decided to go onto a harder level of soccer and we went to an academy team so we left Alba FC and played for New York Soccer Club. They good thing about doing this is that it can help me get better it also make me go pro. But the challenging part about this is the competition. But I would go to goalkeeping practice every Thursday better to get better, and I go to regular practice from Monday to Thursday. When I am finished with goalkeeper practice I go to regular practice which would be about 30 min left.

We sometime train at Hackley and Manhattanville College, 2900 Purchase St, Purchase, NY 10577 our home field that they just built. New York Soccer Club is a member of the United States Soccer Development Academy (DA). New York Soccer Club currently holds DA status for boys U-12, U-13, U-14, U-15 and U-16/17.

Mario Uljic

The Court

“Basketball is not a sport, it’s an art form” Kyrie Irving. Fifth grade has ended and I’ve been accepted to VNA which is said to be a very good school (which it is). Before this I really didn’t have a career goal or a passion. I liked basketball but not willing to pursue a career in the sport. But once I got accepted to VNA I never thought that I would have a passion in sports, and change what I want to do in college.

Of course sports was not everything I learned in school, I was pretty good academically. But my short academic life is for a different story. Like any first month as “the new kid” I didn’t have many friends, and to be honest I had no friends for the first week of school. At the time the only people I was friends with were the people who got accepted to VNA from my old school, which was surprisingly a lot. In VNA one of the 1st things I noticed on the 2nd floor was a basketball court. When I saw it I was absolutely amazed. Actually that’s a lie, At that point I did not have a love for basketball. But slowly this 5 ft. skinny 6th grader was going to chase his basketball dream. Eventually I got friends, friends who absolutely loved the sport of basketball and friends who were pretty good at it. Really most of them were good compared to me. Because I was terrible.

After learning my friends liked basketball I gave it a shot. And I loved it, but still absolutely terrible. So I worked hard, my friends taught me some skills I needed to know and I started to get way better. With the love I had for playing basketball I started watching it. But

not because I had excitement watching it, or I wanted to analyze the stats of all of the players, but now I watched to practice all of the moves the NBA players did, and that fascinated me. The players I really looked up to are LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Carmelo Anthony, Kristaps Porzingis, and my soul inspiration and the greatest of all time Michael Jordan. For now my life cycle was eat, go to school, play basketball, watch basketball, and sleep. And this went on for a long time. And then 7th grade came along.

When 7th grade started I knew two primary things. One is that no matter what you do nobody is “cool”, and that everyone is just going through puberty. So whoever is reading this and is not in 7th grade but will be, just do your homework and don’t get in trouble. The second thing I knew is that ball is life. And I mean that with a passion, whenever I went outside I played or thought about basketball, whenever I was with my friends we talked about basketball, Whenever we were in afterschool/DFOY we would always and still will ask, “Are we going to the gym [to play basketball]?” And as a young kid I guess I fit the description of whatever “cool” meant. So now I was ready to work hard to achieve my dream to someday professionally play basketball.

In conclusion, VNA changed my perspective on college drastically by introducing the sport I know and love today. My message to anyone right now chasing their dreams is to work hard. And if you don’t know what that means. Just stay in school and put full dedication to your goal. If you don’t think you’re working hard enough than work harder. For now that’s my basketball life, I’m currently 12 years old, nearly ending 7th grade and chasing my dream. Wish me luck.

Fiorella Vizuetta

How Surfing Influenced Who I Am in Present Day

La Playa del Murcielago, the place where I hold my first memories of surfing and of my beloved family whom I haven’t seen in years. Watching people surf day and night, feeling the grains of sand and the cold salt water touching my feet as I walk towards the ocean. This is how my interest in surfing sprouted to make up the person I am in present day.

Ever since the minute I could swim, I always felt a connection with the ocean, my family loves the sport and always has. Ecuador is the place where I always felt most comfortable... and my waxed board makes me feel like if nothing can stop me. It’s just the feeling of the fresh ocean breeze hitting my face and seeing the mix or orange red mixture of colors in the sky screaming out to everyone that nightfall is on its way. Whenever I get news that my flight is being scheduled to go to Ecuador I jump up with excitement and count the days until my departure.

When my grandfather had my father, he would always bring him to the beach when he had the chance (which in this case was everyday due to the fact they lived so close to it.) Then later when my father had my brothers he would bring both of my brothers to the beach to surf before he would leave to work. Sadly all of this ended and my father had to come live to New York due to his job and had to leave my brothers behind with my grandmother until they were older so they can later come with him. When my mother and father met, they shared many

memories of their country... Ecuador. Years after, they got married and had me, Fiorella Mariee Vizuetta, and taught me all the things that make up the person I am today.

After I was born my father, bought a flight to Manabí. Which is the place that I learned how to surf at age 7. It was hard to learn to keep my balance but I managed to learn in a matter of weeks to surf the waves of La Playa Del Murciélago. My family but mostly my father have been my inspiration for everything I have done with the things that make up who I am today. Surfing has inspired the sense of freedom and courage that I get from the cool salty breeze when I go to the beach and head into the water.

At the end of the day, all of these things that were said in my personal essay make up the person I am in present day and show how little things can affect the person in a positive or in a negative way. In this case, surfing impacted me in a positive way and showed me clearly who I am and my background.

I would see roads and houses
leading up to my destination full of secrets, torment and fear.
I would hear an itching silence
waiting for something to break it
I would feel the heaviness of my feet
leading me to the horrible situation
I would taste the negative vibe
coming out of its place of hiding waiting to be found
I would smell a bittersweet humid air
that makes my breathing hard

Biyon Wanninayake

Many struggles came throughout my life of playing basketball. From being short to not having enough strength, it was hard, but I was persistent and kept on working and I think it's safe to say I'm fairly good at the game.

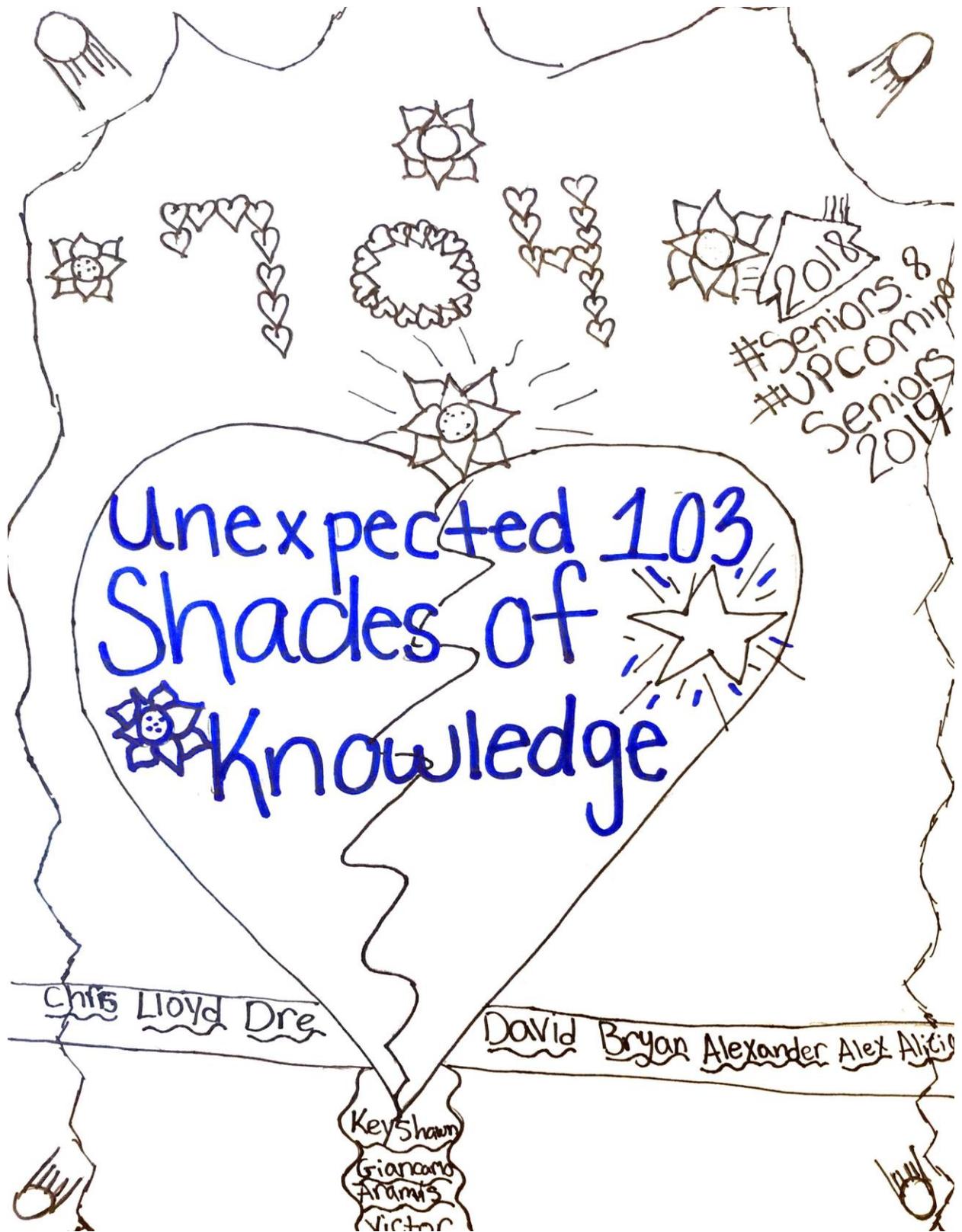
Probably my hardest obstacle I always have to face, even now, is being short. In basketball, height is an advantage; you can see the court better, can finish with ease, grab rebounds easier, and so on. Being short I had to overcome taller guards and centers, but it came with a lot of hard work and thinking. First off, shot blockers. If I go up for a normal layup, most of the time it will get blocked, but after relentless attempts it was a simple solution: create contact with the defender before they go up to block you. That neutralizes the shot blocker so they can't jump and block me, which gives an easy layup. This also puts the defenders in foul trouble, which makes the opposing teams go deeper into their bench.

Another obstacle I struggled with was pressure defense. Not in the half court, but full-court pressure. The main plan for the opposing team was to get a turnover, which is exactly what happened when the ball was given to me. I just could not handle the pressure, but I eventually figured it out: don't force anything, observe the court, then make a decision. Most of the time I would now pass out of the press, because it's pretty much the only choice, but hey, it's better than having a turnover, giving the other team easy buckets.

The last obstacle that will be talked about is my size/strength compared to opponents. Normally, they are stronger than me, and I had to find a way to attack the basket without being

pushed around. The answer was again, contact. If done right, I would make my defender turn hips and be at a slight disadvantage because he was a little out of control, so with a little push (not obvious for an offensive foul), I create separation for a jump shot or a layup.

In conclusion, all the struggles I faced were one and done.



704

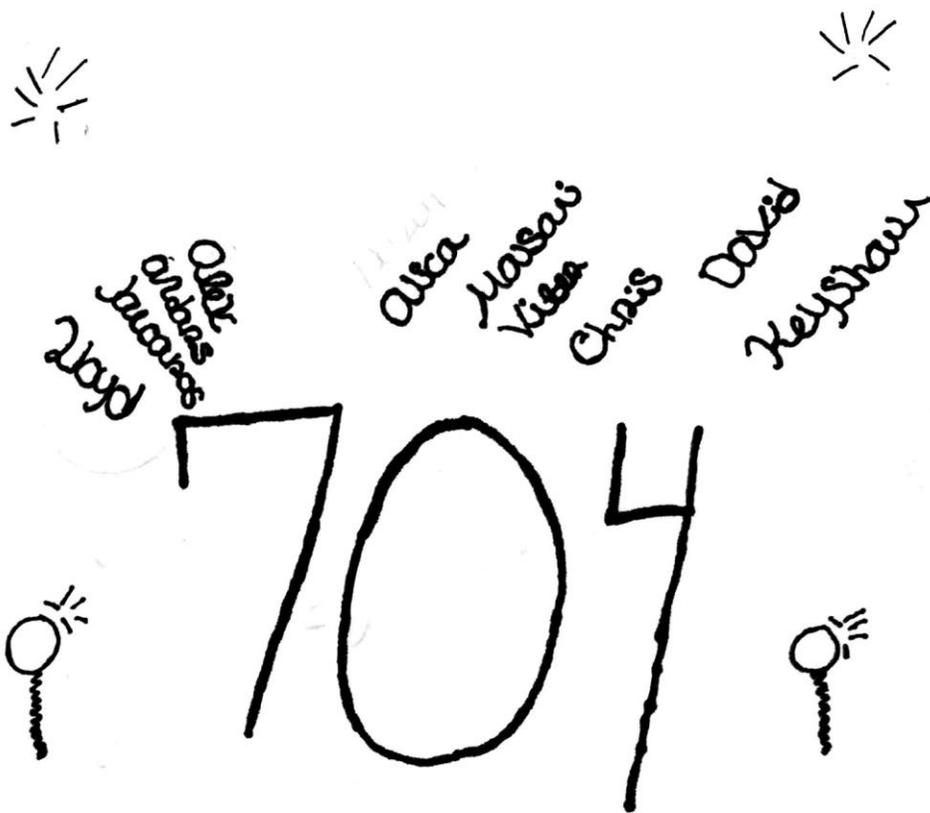
Alicia Araujo
Keyshawn Brewington
Alexander Cabrera
Elhan Carnate
Dre Chapman
Giancarlo Cupo
Lloyd Dunkley
Alexander Escoto
Victor Mejias
David Nealy
Bryan Perez
Aramis Ramos
Christopher Ulzheimer

**Imagining My Career Community Poem
(704)**

Athlete

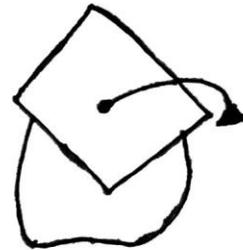
If I were to imagine my career through the five senses
I would see players dribbling, bouncing or passing to shoot
I would hear sneakers squeaking on the court as the crowd roars
I would feel the anger from missing the game winning shot
I would taste the sweat of defenders dripping off as I make my move
I would smell the rotted cheese smell of sweat from my opponent

704 Individual Essays & Selected Poems



College will help you do the fullest thing when you graduate college
you will be able to work.

Class of 2019



Alicia Araujo

Why do I want to be a vet? I wanted to become a vet since 10 years old because I love animals.

I would pretend to give my dog checkups. I would give my dog rabies shots so they don't get sick. If dogs don't get rabies shots, they get sick and can't be around other pets. You should not give dog's chocolate or other table food but you can give dogs eggs sometimes. And you can give them tuna too. If dogs get sick, you should give them pumpkin flavored baby food. My dog loves me but not the vet. You should be gentle with your pets and train them with patience. Don't get mad and scream because they get scared, and you should you should use dog pads. You should feed your dogs so they can be healthy. You should bathe your dogs so they can be clean. Smell good and be fluffy again. Walk your dog's so they can go to the bathroom.

Animals are human too. My mom told me I should become a vet because I'm very good with animals. I make sure my dog gets a lot of exercise. I take her for walks, I play with her, and she rolls around. Every time my dog sees another dog or a person she goes crazy and tries run. It is funny because she is wearing a leash and she is attached to the leash.

I wish someday I could give dogs surgery, because I would want to make dogs feel better and be happy. I would also want give dogs surgery so they can't have babies if they're owners wouldn't want them to have a litter of puppies. I would also want to open my own pet shop and my family and friends can help me in my own dream pet store.

Keyshawn Brewington

My Moment in the Sun

Have you ever been on TV before? Well I have...

When the phone rang, that call changed my whole life. The day I went to dance class, my teachers were like "Guys! We have a big announcement, we're dancing in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade!" I was excited. We got the chance to meet a lot famous celebrities, like Will Smith, one of the Wayans brothers, Isabella, Misty Copeland and more.

Practice makes perfect? Every time we came to dance, we had to practice for 8 hours. Our dance teachers wanted us to push ourselves so we would be truly ready the day of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day's Parade. We would eat our lunch and get back to rehearsal. When we got closer to the performance, we had to practice with our costumes on because we had to do a dress rehearsal.

My heart was racing the day of the performance. We got on the bus and went to Central Park to join the starting point of the parade. Next, we marched until we felt raindrops. We had to hide under a tunnel until it stopped, then we continued to march. Then it came our time to dance. Once we finish dancing we got on the bus and went back to our studio which is called national dance institute. When we got there we ate pizza and we all was talking about the

parade and how we did and our teacher was so happy because we worked our butts out on that dance floor.

It was a great experience to dance in the parade and to be on TV. The bad part, however, was when I got home. I watched parade and there was a commercial playing while we were dancing and the parade people were talking while we was dancing, it's hard to explain. When I finished watching it I told my friends to watch it. They was like, "Wow you're on the Macy's parade." I was like, I know! Then when we finished talking, I hung up the phone. Next I ate dinner and took a shower once I finished I got to bed and went to sleep. The next day I went outside and I saw some lady and her son and they said, "Wasn't you on the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade?" I said, "Yes I was on there." Let me tell you I was so shock someone actually recognized me. My dad said, "See son, keep up the good work."

Dancing has always been my dream career and I always learned to never give up no matter and don't let nothing get in your way. So for all you kids out there that's dancing or whatever career you're doing never back down continue doing what you're doing because you will get somewhere in your life. One time, I thought about quitting dancing and I recognized I did the wrong thing because it is good to make mistakes because you get to learn from your mistakes.

Alexander Cabrera

We all have bad days, well I had the worst day!

At the age of 11, I started to play soccer. My father inspired me to play soccer and I loved it. I started off trash in soccer. I didn't have a problem with it because at that point I just played it for fun.

A year later I started to take soccer more seriously. I set a goal for myself: to become a professional soccer player. I trained every single day and got better and better. A few months later, I decided to join a team. I did alright for the tryout, since I made it to the team. Then I played my first game and I was so nervous, that I didn't want play. During the second half my new coach called me up, she told me to play as striker so I did. I played alright didn't score which I did not really expect, because not many people score in there their debut.

Two months later I had another game I still haven't scored yet but anyway, it was semifinals game I was very nervous because I never got so far with my team. So we played, this time I played midfielder because I have not scored. I had 2 or 3 chances to score a goal but I missed. My teammates called me trash and other mean words. That set a mindset that I am a failure as a person, so for the rest of the game I stayed in a state of demotivated thinking. For example, I thought of me missing hundreds of goals when I had any opportunity. Then my coach substituted me. Then 10 minutes later the game ended, my team lost 2-5, and I got even more angered. Then I got home, and I had this thought, why am I playing soccer if I'm trash? I stopped playing soccer from there. Two months later, I watched soccer videos and I saw that soccer players aren't perfect when they perform, and I noticed the way there good at stuff is by practicing every day. From there I got motivated, and I played soccer again, I practiced every day and got better, and scored much more goals.

Overall, I believe practicing every day, can get you better with anything.

Elhan Carnate

Have you ever noticed someone acting differently in the classroom? Maybe they are not focused, moving around or shaking their hands. They may have a disabilities like ADHD, PTSD, or autism. Student with disabilities are not so different to student with no disabilities.

Some students may not understand students with disabilities because the parents may not have the time to explain about the subject. Some of the students laugh and think it is funny because they may not understand. When I was in 6th grade, we had to go to a fire drill one day. When I went outside of the building I saw the students with disabilities right next to the building making sounds. Some students in my class just laughed because of the sounds they were making. I did not laugh, I felt bad for the students with disabilities because they were unaware of the people laughing at them. I also feel bad for the parents because they sacrifice a lot for the children with disabilities.

I gained a new understanding of children with disabilities after going on the inclusive summit. The inclusive summit was where a kid with disabilities and two other kids with no disabilities go to a place to discuss others with disabilities. We got food and went to a room to discuss kids with certain disabilities. We had an activity where we have to write about a student with disabilities in our school and what are kid with disabilities. They played on a video where a person falling down and there's a group of people and the group of people did not help him. In the other video, the same person fell down and there was one person and the one person helped him up. I learned that you have a less chance of getting help when you are by yourself because you don't want to seem uncool in front of your friends. I also learned that people with disabilities are not so different.

I was included to be a part of the panel for school. I was chosen to talk on the panel because I choose from Ms. Gilligan because I was in the inclusion. On the panel we talked about the thing we learned like bias and it means that someone favors someone over you. Also we told them that kid with disabilities should be respected equally. Also that kid with disabilities are not so different from kid without disabilities. I learned that you should not bias someone because they I have a disabilities. Also that everyone should be respected.

In conclusion you should treat everyone with respect even if they have a disabilities. Also I learned a lot about kid with disabilities.

Dre Chapman

The Best Dancer and Rapper Ever

I love rapping. When I saw Ayo and Teo dancing and rapping I knew I wanted to become a rapper.

When I saw YouTubers rapping I wanted to become one. They were inspiring. When I texted them on YouTube and I asked, "How do you dance like that?" They mentioned it was all about momentum and movement. When I went to other social media apps I saw people rapping and it really encouraged me. I really like rapping.

If I was on stage, I would not be nervous. I would be excited. I would engage the crowd by spitting that fire. If I was famous, I would go on a tour bus. I would go to travel around and

rap. We would have different concerts in New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia. I would love to take my skills to London. If I had money I would buy me everything gold.

I would love to go on to have a rapping career. I would go on the street and rap or anywhere. Mixtapes, Albums, Playlists. In conclusion: I would want to rap all day. In fact, I got a rap song at the end and it's about to melt everything that you own. Fire flame flow Mixtape coming out 3017.

rap music playing This Beat is Called "Dragon"

Uh, so I'm about to spit that is about to be hot of and I got something that is worth a lot of Man I rather get the money that I just got from Tony uh I told bobby where my \$5 at and I tell the man yo where my dollar at anyway but that's beside the point you don't even need to do anything because I just killed you in this joint man y'all better take your seats I just want all your needs so Follow me on twitter if you don't then I will be the killer HAHHAHA I am almost done with this song and I told my boys yo that's cold So you know what I am I am the reverse dancer my rap is done so I guess you can say it's a wrap

Giancarlo Cupo

For me, every time I hear about something new like a large idea in the media or an, already existing, major idea or belief (like religion, or a political view). I can't just believe what someone informs me about. I must, fully, look into it with information from the past "experts" of the idea that is presented to me.

I used to believe everything people told me until I was older (about eight years of age). I started to question things like common history and philosophy at, I think, age eleven. Now at age of thirteen, I even started to question religion. I feel as I grow more things seem strange to me, like questions that don't have answers.

As I got even older I noticed I am more curious about things that most people find boring or unnecessary such as mathematics, physics, literature, space/the universe, and history. I'm also now getting into languages and writing systems. Now, I'm not trying to learn the specific language I just want to learn what sounds each letter makes (to English) so I can write English words. I already accomplished this with Cyrillic letters (Russian Cyrillic). I already wrote an entire sheet using Cyrillic letters and I'm the only one who understands it at this time.

But the main thing I question is humans as a species. How did we get here to this point to where we are a dominant species? So much to the point where the greatest threat to us, is ourselves. And also, most people don't know, (you'd be surprised how many people don't realize that we we're not alone) but before us modern humans, (scientifically called Homo sapiens) there were other species of humans such as Neanderthalensis, Erectus, Denisovans etc. But what, not only me but, well, everyone is that every single one of those species are gone. Not a single one left. How? Why? Why did we survive? Where did the other ones go? No Neanderthals, Erecti and no Denisovans. All gone but still we are here. (And also I don't understand why there were so many in the first place)

Lloyd Dunkley

Do you like to play basketball? Playing professional basketball is my lifelong goal. Basketball is more than just a sport to me, it can open up many opportunities in the future. When most are scared to go to high school, knowing basketball is there makes me feel calm about this transition. Basketball will offer scholarship from high school to college.

Basketball is more than a sport to me—it is therapy. It helps me cool down when I am upset but when shooting, I go wild in a game. I get that adrenaline when I play a well game. Basketball is fun when I watch Kevin Durant he inspires me to play hard and have fun while playing the game. When I am in my mood, I watch basketball or play basketball.

Basketball opens doors to the future. It opens doors to high school teams, college teams and to the NBA. Basketball is a fun sport to play in school and college. After a hard day of school, you can go to a court work on your shot and your dribble moves. For Basketball in college and high school, you go on tournaments and win or lose championship games.

Basketball makes me feel excited and happy for high school. Most people are nervous for such a huge change from middle to high school, but for me that fear is lessened because I know basketball is there. It makes me feel a sense of relief about all aspects of life. Basketball is an inspiration.

In conclusion, basketball is my lifelong goal. Being on an elementary basketball team was the start of my dream. From home games to away, being a center or power forward nothing mattered as long as I was in the game. The minute number 45 walks on to the court, everyone knows he is there. The first time I got into a basketball my blood was pumping we won. I was so happy, my mom and dad was proud of me. When watching ESPN basketball, Kevin Durant, Vincent Carter, Steph Curry, they all inspire me to play basketball. Basketball is a fun sport to play and learn math because basketball takes math skills, practice and hard work.

Alexander Escoto

Basketball Life

I love basketball because it makes me happy. Basketball also can keep me out of the streets. Finally, basketball can open many doors for the future.

At the age of 10, I started playing basketball. My dad also taught me how to shoot. Even though my father taught me how to shoot when I was playing with my friends, I would still shoot a lot of air balls. However, shooting air balls didn't matter because I wasn't getting into trouble on the streets. I will always ask my dad if I could go play basketball and always forget about the streets. I stay out of trouble because if I'm on the court, I can't be in the street.

Basketball makes me happy because it makes me laugh. When I'm playing basketball, I be tricking them by showing them my skills when I'm about to shoot the ball.

Playing basketball will open doors for the future. When I go to high school, I want to play basketball. I would work hard so I can get a basketball scholarship. My ball abilities will get me into the doors of college then from there I will like to be able to get my college degree. My future goal is to play for the Cleveland Cavaliers but with education I will always have a backup.

Basketball is one of my favorite sport since I was a little kid. I will always play with my brothers and my uncles.

I want to go to a real court and show all the people all the skills I got. They will say to their family that they show a kid that know how to play and then I will become famous. Then they will call me and say that I am going to be on a basketball team with the Cavaliers with LeBron James then all my family members will be proud of me. With all the money I get, I will help my mom, my dad and brothers and uncles.

I would like to have a good car and a big house. I would like to help poor people and buy them all the stuff they need like clothes and shoes. I will buy them a house with a pool and a nice big car and I will let them come to my house whenever they need to come.

Victor Mejias

I love soccer. It is my favorite sport.

I was inspired to play soccer by my cousin, he is a very good player. He got elected for varsity soccer team. Not only is he the best cousin but he is an amazing soccer player. I now work very hard to become a better player because of him. I practice two days a week.

Soccer helps both physically and mentally. Soccer requires a lot of athletic abilities and it increases my stamina. Running, dribbling, kicking the ball all help my body to become stronger. Mentally, I can't help but forget about all bad things going on when I am on the field. It helps to clear my mind and helps me to relax.

Soccer also improves my leg resistance, and stamina. Lionel Messi is my favorite soccer player. Messi earned 5 billion dollars or so. He was born in Argentina. He currently plays for FC Barcelona.

I started playing soccer at 10 years old. At that time my favorite soccer team was Manchester City. This summer my cousin is going to the FC Barcelona training camp in Arizona. I hope he gets elected to play for FC Barcelona that will be so cool.

The thing I like most about soccer is scoring goals and celebrating. I also love watching soccer games. My favorite part is when my team scores a goal I flip out I run all over my house, and scream my head off. The soccer ball started as a leather ball.

I will always wake up on weekends at 7am to practice at the park. Soccer has always been a passion to me and my cousin since we were little. Soccer is so amazing and fun.

David Nealy

Love for Music

Do you have something that you can't live without? That could turn a bad mood good, and can actually help you do things better? Well for me, that thing is music. I love music because it makes me feels good and it makes me calm.

How does music change my life? Listing to the beat and getting into the rhythm makes me calmer. It makes me happy to be able to let loose and dance to the beat. The minute a good beat comes on, my friends and I stop playing around held captivated by the blasting sound.

Music makes so many different things more interesting to me. When doing homework, music helps me to focus more. When cooking food, I listen to the beat and it helps me to stay track with the recipe. After a long day, music can calm me and help to put me to sleep. Music can help you get a girl. All you have to do is dress cool and bring your gang. You can be a DJ and

famous and you'll get loads of them! You can use music when rapping. You can also use music when you're working out and snacking out.

Rapping music can make everyone happy too. You can even play in hip pop music if you want. You can put on music in your car so that everyone can hear it too while there in the car. Music is one of the best things to use your time on. There are lots of people that hate music. Let's say that your friends hate music but you enjoy music. You don't have to be copying them. If you like it stick with it. If your friends force you then they are not good friends to count on. If you do love music stick with it.

I can be my own personal DJ because that's what music does. You can have fun with old and new friends with the right kind of music. Music can give you a good life.

Bryan Perez

Being a Scientist

They say to chase our dreams and go to college for a better life and a good job in your future. It might be hard but as you keep going you will get your future dream job.

Studying is kind of hard because I think of what to do in life. I always wanted to be an inventor because it interests me to do things like to make cool stuff and sell them.

I keep continuing and then it was too much things to be an inventor. Later I am determined to study to be a doctor. I want to be a doctor because there are many things to do or save people they do. I also want to work to study in an office and help discover different types of sickness and other of many things.

Then later, I will switch jobs because being a doctor you need to keep studying and I want to be a scientist. Because it was a better choice than a doctor. This is my dream job.

Aramis Ramos

If you gave me a box of Legos I can make what you want. I love building with my hands. Since I was a little boy I was building different things. I was building with blocks and Legos. I would practice building cars, planes and different buildings. I was always in my house doing arts and crafts.

I look up to my dad. He's a construction worker. He shows me what to do. He helps me and I help my dad too. Me and my dad are on more closer because I go and help my dad a lot and we talk about the work and we all hang out and have funny times.

Currently, I am building a Star Wars BB-8 Droid out of a Lego set to enhance my architecture skills. I hope to be a construction worker in the future. I want to start in high school. After high school, I want that to be my career.

Christopher Ulzheimer

Fine One Day, Not the Next

They say a dog is a man's (or boy's) best friend, I learned this to be so true. Mugsy was not only my dog, he was my friend. We did everything together. The day I lost him, I lost a piece of myself. My life will never be the same.

Mugsy and I were inseparable. I remember when they brought him home. He was a medium size dog, a little big for his age. He was a Pitbull. He was light brown and his nose was blackish, blue. He had a white stripe going down his head to his neck. Mugsy was my best friend. When he first came he was nervous and scared. Mugsy and I spent a lot of time playing ball together. I used to take him to the park. He used to chill with me. I used to use him as my pillow because he was soft. A few times I saw him eating a shoe. He would basically eat anything.

It was a blue day, I felt sad. Mugsy was put to sleep two years ago when I was 12. Nobody told me that he was going to be put to sleep. When I got home, I went to go let him out of his cage to play with him outside—he wasn't there. When I asked my mom where he was she gave me the look, and told me what had happened. He was sick with skin cancer. As sad as I was, I knew he was not in pain anymore.

It will not be the same if I get another dog. I have never wanted another dog, he was irreplaceable. When I got home, I looked for him and he wasn't there. I will miss his friendly, playful self. Mugsy passing away changed my life forever.

I learned truly what they mean by a "man's best friend." The times that I Mugsy and I shared together were some of the best days of my life. I know Mugsy is in a better place, where he is chewing on anything he can and is not in any pain.

Student Reflections

Unexpected Greatness...

103 shades of knowledge

701 / 702 / 703

Alina • Paula • Diego • Elhan • Nicholas • Xinaya • christopher C.
Christopher G • Matthew • Mervin • Jansson • Andrea • Michelle • Lucia •
Natec • mariop • Juliana • Carren • Justin R • Karina • Lenin • Jacylen •
latamie • Daniel • Chicago • Matthew T • Wendy • camille • Anthony •
Ayanna • Emari • Marisol • Melanie • Nikaila • Arbor • Julissa •
Genedis • Kristian • Micheal • Dylan • Anaya • Hamzah •
Marcus • Alex • Andrew • samantha • Muthera • Maria •
• Justin • Sean • Daniel S • Leah • Shareef •
• Gerardo • Nazario • Sofia • Jason •
• Antonio • zakariya • Justin A •
Jasmine • Sharon • Jayleen •
• Nisha • Juliette • Brianna •
• Kimia • Brandon •

Gabriela • Jamilet

• Bethany • Bernie

• Jai • Kevin

• Jehona

• Tyeebur

• Alejandro

• Tamer

• Justin R

• Isaac

• Jesus

• Angeleasa

• Jayden

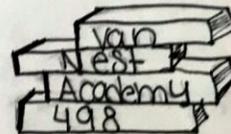
• Robert

• Justin U

• Mariou

• Fiorella

• Biyon



Van Nest Academy 498 Bronx NY

Reflection Visit: *On The Trip our class visited Lehman college. The College was located at 250 Bedford park Blvd W Bronx, NY 10468 (Dre Chapman, 704)

Reflection: On April 20, 2018 our class visited Maritime College. This college is located in the Bronx, New York, United States in historic Fort Schuyler on the Throggs Neck peninsula where the East River meets Long Island Sound. When I first arrived on the campus I felt welcomed it was a very nice campus with a beautiful view of the East River. While on this college visit here there were a lot of things that stood out to me like many of the majors, and the buildings etc... they major in General Marine Business & Commerce with Humanities Concentration, Marine Transportation, International Transportation & Trade (ITT), and Maritime studies. The students at the school seem very friendly and they seemed happy. In Maritime College they offer you many opportunities such as "Waterfront". Waterfront provides opportunities to enrich the college experience. Waterfront also allows students to practice in a lifeboat, preparing for their captain's license on the nation's best equipped training ship, rowing or sailing during team practice, they also get to go in a kayak and mess with the boats on shore.

Maritime College is a place where I can see myself in the future because this school provides many opportunities for their students to get to experience how it's like being on a boat and how life is like when you're out on sea and how you have to do certain things a certain way. When it's time for me to apply to college I'll probably apply to this college because they have many things for you to join and enjoy that helps you gain a nice experience on how it's like living on the sea and you get to gain knowledge on the way the boats are made and what you must bring with you in order to survive living on the sea and to maintain a boat.

-Melanie Elias (702)

Reflection: Our class 703 went on a trip to a college named City College. When I got there I felt that it looked cool and it was really crowded. What I imagined it to look like was very crowded and very tall buildings so I was correct when I saw it. The thing that I didn't like about City College is the un-filtered water because that water is nasty. The students looked happy some looked bored no excitement and also looked depressed. This is a place i see myself in the future if I like these types of colleges. To be honest i would go to the college it's a very nice place but again I don't like their un- filtered water so if they don't change that when I'm there I'm bringing my own water bottle -Kevin Perez (702)

Reflection: On April 10 2018 our class went to SUNYMaritime College which was located in 6 Pennyfield Ave, Bronx, NY 10465.

When going to the campus I was happy because the tour guide could answer any questions we have for him. Also the tour guide gave us a better understanding about what college which is Educational Institution or establishment. We all should learn the different types of colleges which is SUNY, CUNY and Pubic University. What also stood out to me was the College environment and Library. The Library had different types of levels: level one for you can talk and groups, level two for you could be talk but not to loud just a little, and level three for you can't speak and etc.

When the tour started, I liked that the campus had a good few for example the boat sailing the river blowing. I really did not like the uniform. The students at the school looked friendly and serious.

They were all so happy because they were with their friends doing work and doing some activities that they liked. This place is somewhere I see myself going in the future because this place is very organized. Also the food looks good and it taste good and i really liked there library, and this is why I might apply here. -Justin Udo (703)

Reflection: During CA4A my class was lucky enough to go to city college in Manhattan when we got to the campus I felt excited because we got to see how the college life felt first hand my first look at the college was exactly how I imagined it one part of the college that really interested me was the great hall because I never seen a great hall like that before. Also the wall of fame I got to see all the greatest players in city college what I also liked about the school was how diverse it was there were many people from different backgrounds and ethnicities when i got there the kids in the school seem ok they look like they were enjoying their classes. Over all my experience in ca4a was pretty great and enjoyable.
-Jai Odom

Reflection: On April 20 our class visited Maritime College. This college was located at Throggs Neck, even though they said that their campus was considered small I wondered how this is considered small. It was not what I imagined college to look like I thought College would be several buildings connected each one for a different purpose. The labs were really fascinating because it had so many different areas they even had virtual reality simulation. The students on the campus seemed to be very friendly and looked like they were happy. This is a place that I could see myself in the future because it really fits what type of career that I would like to go into. When it is time to apply this is a college and I will look forward to attending. -Antonio Vasquez (702)

Reflection: On March 9, 2018 our class visited City College. The college is located in the Harlem area of Manhattan, New York at 160 Convent Avenue. When I got to the campus, I felt very surprised and the college was fascinating. I did feel excited because I knew many people that go and went to City College. At first look, this was not what I imagined a college to look like. That's because I am so used to schools with only one building. But this college had multiple buildings for different subjects and usage. You choose your classes and what time you take them. The parts of the campus tour and the college that stood out to me was, there were so many buildings. They had a big basketball court. They had decent size classrooms. Some buildings were very big from the inside. The campus was very big. There was a big hall in which students can sleep our rest during their breaks. As the tour started, what I liked about the campus was, you choose your own classes and the time that you want to take them. A student told me there is a class late as 11:00 P.M. They had a big hall for events. They have one of the specialized high schools called High School of Math, Science, and Engineering at City College. Students walked from class to class, and building to building without teachers controlling them. What I disliked about the campus was, most of the buildings are the same shaped as castles. They look old and boring. But some buildings weren't like that. The students at the college seemed very happy. They were very friendly. As we went throughout our tour, the students explained everything. They answered all the questions we and our teachers had. They explained almost everything there was to know about the college. This is a place I can see myself in the future because it offers a lot of courses. When it is time to apply to college, I will apply to this school because it's not very expensive like other colleges. It is not very far from my house.

As a kid, I always loved going to Manhattan, and City College is located in Manhattan. -Hamzah Mirza (702)

Reflection: For “College Access For All” we went on 3 trips to go and visit colleges. The college that was my personal favorite was Lehman College. On April 27 we went to Lehman. I liked how we got see the campus it looked like a very enjoyable place to be. The thing that really stood out was the buildings because they were unique. I also found interesting how they had a background to them. The people at the college looked very concentrated and looked like they were really determined on what they were doing. -Emani Byers (702)

Reflection: In April 20th of 2018 my class, class 703, visited Maritime College. The college is a SUNY (State University of New York) school located in Bronx, New York. The college was near the seashore because it is a school to learn- which I see about the school- about ships. For the college has history and majors based on the engineering of ships. The part of the college that stood out to me is that the college has a ship so the students that are part of the Maritime College license program would spend a semester there. What I like about the campus is that the architecture of the campus blends with the majors and history. I would see myself in here when it is time to apply to a college because I would like to be an engineer as a backup career choice. -Tyeebur Rahman