

Let's Make Learning Our Adventure

There are many aspects of life that people tend to grow out of: clothes, interests, picky eating- the list goes on and on. In this natural progression of life, however, I choose to focus less on the out, and more on growing-in to new opportunities and the person I am working to become. Who I am now, however, began at one very special place. My Harbor View journey started before I even took my first steps. With chubby cheeks and bright eyes I would prop myself on the couch and watch flag deck every morning, waiting for the day when I could sit with the big kids. At 4 years old, I watched with wonder as my older brother walked to school. The following year, it was my turn. I waddled into Mrs. Carpenter's room like I owned the place and immediately asked a small girl with a bow "Will you be my friend?" Flash forward 14 years and she is now my lacrosse goalie, travel buddy, and best friend. On a more personal note, 1st grade was where I really began to discover my drive and work ethic. The curriculum and teachers at Harbor View create goals for the students; motivation to accomplish something. Whether it be a test, reading book, or activity, I found a drive for not just completion, but excellence. Luckily, this drive was always fueled by the community and opportunities Harbor View provided. By 3rd grade, I was reading over 1,000,000 words in a school year. I was finishing 100 multiplication problems in under a minute. I was writing journals from the perspective of a character in Little House on the Prairie. I was gifted the resources to find my own path towards success, and was unconditionally supported in my endeavors. Students at Harbor View are also rewarded for behavioral and academic improvement and excellence according to John Wooden's Pyramid of Success. For me, Woodens morals became guidelines. I worked to embody character traits like empathy, cooperation, hard work, and most importantly, Personal Best. In an almost poetic conclusion to my 6th grade year, I received the award for "Personal Best." Although it felt amazing to stand up in front of all my friends and family, that award has stuck with me for the entirety of my high school career. It has been a tangible reminder that dreams do not work unless you do. I continue to work hard and push limits because I strive for not just success, but the best possible version of myself.

The biggest problem about writing this essay is the fact there is no one instance or situation that shaped or prepared me for success. It was the constant and unwavering encouragement, respect, and healthy challenge Harbor View provided that allowed me to not just find success, but navigate different methods to grow personally. Harbor View highlighted the importance of community and that to deserve respect, you needed to respect others. Aside from just the multiplication tables (which, don't get me wrong, are a VERY important life tool), I was taught how to converse with everyone, shake hands upon introduction, and learn to love people not despite, but FOR their differences. In 6th grade, I decided that I had gotten so much out of my Harbor View experience, I wanted to leave something behind. My opportunity: ASB President. I meticulously crafted my application and prepared for my interview like this job was my future (In hindsight, it kind of was). After an agonizing week of waiting, I found out that I was chosen to be Harbor View's ASB President. For me, this job was not just a title, I was bestowed a responsibility. It was now my task to make Harbor View the best place it could be. I headed fundraisers like Crazy Hair Day, celebrated birthdays over the loudspeaker, and led my fellow ASB members in discussion every Wednesday at lunch. While looking back, my efforts as president and ability to say the pledge of allegiance seem sub-par to my high school resume and accomplishments, receiving the opportunity remains to be my greatest accomplishment as a student. I was chosen to represent the people in my life that I loved the most, and was given my first real experience with true leadership. What Harbor View did for me, however, goes beyond personal emotional and social growth. Harbor View forced me to work for success and taught me how to levy healthy competition with myself, and my classmates. I was given homework, tests, and rotations that prepared me for the inevitable transition to middle and high

school. Upon entering CDM in 7th grade, naturally, I was nervous. I was entering a whole new world with just a junior guards' backpack, bangs, and a whole lot of curiosity. Unlike many other students, my integration was almost seamless. I was prepared for new teachers, different classmates, and a work load with multiple subjects. I was taught how to manage my time, work hard, and value the quality of my learning. It was almost comical to compare the extent of academic and social success of students from Harbor View compared to other elementary schools. I got to watch the transition from the viewpoint of someone who was almost overly prepared both academically and socially. Learning at Harbor View taught me to question when I was confused, and never hesitate to answer. My teachers and peers in the viking community allowed me to embrace my mistakes, and made me feel comfortable to speak up when I was confused or enlightened. This type of teaching and learning was the spark to my inquisitive nature. If there is a question, I refuse to stop until I find the answer. 15 years later, I have taken and found success in eight AP courses, two varsity sports, Youth and Government, and ASB just because I was taught to question and push my limits.

From all the success I have found in my high school years, it is rewarding to reflect on where it was rooted. I've been able to watch not just myself, but my family grow because of the opportunities Harbor View provided. When I feel stuck or lost, I know that just across that field is the little girl who worked tirelessly to reach her "personal best," who cried when she missed one letter on her first spelling test, and who never let herself get a yellow card. Harbor View has not only been my school, but my home. During a time where my life felt out of my control, I forced myself to a time when I felt secure. The first thing that comes to mind was when I was at HV. Now, as a graduating Senior, I am going to be moving away from the security that looking out my window brings. The funny reminders of breaking my arm on the monkey bars, or intense 4-square tournaments (which I always won:)), or running to the fence and yelling for my mom to show everyone that I lived in the "Big Yellow House" right across the street. I grew up at Harbor View. It is a common misconception that to grow, people have to change; change their personalities, views, or location. I completely disagree. I think that growth is rooted from the experiences and people you surround yourself with. Whether these situations are good or bad, it is a personal decision to adapt or alter perspectives. I have not changed. I am still the little girl with the yellow dress and Ariel lunch box, clutching her mom's hand as she crosses the street. I am still the proud 6th grader who was given a microphone every Friday to tell people to "remove their hats." And finally, I am the CIF winning, art loving, and AP course taking high school senior who still has the same best friend since her first day of Kindergarten... I just grew up. One place has taught me love, perseverance, respect, and how to strive for my personal best in everything I do. And as I finally move toward the future, I will continue to take the leadership, social, and academic skills Harbor View has gifted me to find success as a woman in the STEM field. As we all know, life is unpredictable. It is the ability to take the situations we are given and grow from them that create personal success. As I tackle the next 4 years of my education, I plan to continue to work with poise, grit and determination to make learning my adventure... because once a viking, always a viking.