

1st Place EEWN Scholarship winner

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Mattituck High School Class of 2009

I have always been involved in helping my community through leadership and service, recently in a new way. In the past, leadership was being elected as a Town Youth Delegate, and helping to run various functions to benefit the local youth. Community service was bundling up from head to toe and walking along the sound with Environmental Club, picking up garbage after the tourist season ended in November. Community service was going to Relay for Life to remember and honor the beloved. Leadership was making food and feeding people at a Long Island soup kitchen, or setting up beds and toiletries for Maureen's Haven. Leadership was giving a Drug and Alcohol Awareness seminar to the junior high kids, so that they may be prepared for the challenges facing them in high school. All of these things kept me running constantly, helping where I could. Yet, this year during winter break, it was as if someone pressed a giant PAUSE button on my life and opened my eyes for the first time.



I went to Honduras on a mission to build a house for a family in need. Yet, all we saw was need. Need was in the eyes of the children, and the slowly trudging feet of the elderly. Need was in the starved horses pulling carts up and down dirt roads. Need was in the people slumped in the doorframes of their mud and stick huts, watching us pass. Need was everywhere. It was unsettling to say the least. Surprisingly, after a week, no place has ever felt more like a second home. They say home is where the heart is, and despite the extreme poverty, sickness, war, and death in Honduras, there was so much love. The children grabbed for your arms, legs, stomach, and hair, and embraced whatever part of you they could. They raced along the bus window, waving their arms and smiling the most beautiful smiles. They radiated love and joy in a place where I never would have known such love and joy to be possible. After one week in Honduras, I learned that the deepest kind of service to others is when you realize that after giving someone your time, caring, and generosity, it is nothing to what you have received in return: endless love.

Upon returning home, I officially became the Godmother of a little girl in Honduras, Brandy. I personally sponsor her education, school supplies, uniform, and whatever else she needs. I also write to her and send her gifts as often as possible. I hope to create a chance for peace on our Earth so that girls like Brandy might have the option to go to high school, or maybe even a university. I intend to use my leadership skills to help people in many areas. I want to see the world by backpack, learning about different cultures, and experiencing the views of others first-hand. How can you judge a people until you see the world through their eyes? I hope to broaden my perspective on the world and gain the knowledge that is necessary to fight for peace amongst nations. I will use my education of languages and international relations to become an ambassador or another diplomatic profession that will allow me to bridge the gaps between people from different countries.

I also plan to spend at least a year working with people who are less fortunate than myself. During my quest to becoming an ambassador, I plan to go to a third world country, like Honduras, for an extended period and help the people who are living there. I want to be part of a long-term project to make a difference in the lives of others. I think we are so blessed to have grown up in the United States that most of us do not even know how lucky we really are. When you see the faces of children in Honduras, you realize.

I want to lead others to understand this realization. I want to lead by example of my own life, using the skills I have attained from a life of education and experience. An ambassador is a diplomat, but also a leader. An ambassador will venture into the conversations that others have not dared to cross, and they will negotiate in the most difficult situations. I have led people in my town and community, and I have ventured out into other areas of the world. I wish to continue leading people towards the recognition that we are all interdependent in this world. It is just a matter of exercising our resources, exploring technology, and outstretching our hands to others. I hope to use my ability to lead and my dreams of peace, to further the betterment of the world for all of humanity.