

Madison Caesar, Class of 2017

Lindsay High School

My parents have taught me from an early age to take risks and explore many different things to find my passions. They also encourage me to put 100% into everything I do and if I am not willing to do that, don't take it on. They tell me to always "be my best me". As a result, my strongest quality is my work ethic and my belief that I can learn or do anything I put my mind to. I have taken risks in leadership, becoming both a class president in Junior High School and High School. Athletically, I will have earned 16 varsity letters in my 4 year career including several team MVPs, multiple 1st Team All league honors and team/individual championships. Academically I strive to learn because I am curious and driven to explore many different areas of interest that has resulted in me achieving a #1 Class ranking to date. My parents have also taught me that I was put on this earth to make a difference. I see myself with a purpose to help those around me to also achieve to their full potential. I am most happy when I am able to share my time and strengths, whether that is coaching junior feeder teams for our H.S., leading tutor programs for at risk elementary students or teaching english language learners to read. Community Service has been a big part of who I am for the past 8 years, leading fundraisers, participating in our District Education Reform Efforts, School Improvement Team, Blood Drives, and volunteering for many community functions to name just a few.

I don't mention the above to brag about what I have done, but to provide evidence that I am who I say I am. I started my early school years with a learning disability and was on a 504 Plan. I was a skinny kid who was not very strong and I was willing to let others take the lead

while I followed. I often am told "things come easy for you" and I am quick to tell those people that is simply not true. I tell them that I work very hard for everything I do. I have learned that through a growth mindset I can learn or do anything. My brain and my body is not stuck where it is today. My philosophy is that I will be smarter and stronger tomorrow if I simply envision my goal and put in the hard work to get there.

One of the best experiences of my life has been my last 5 years at Lindsay Unified School District. My parents are teachers and moved our Family from a middle class white community to a high poverty, 97% minority community as part of their work in education reform. I remember them explaining to me that I would be a minority and what that might be like, that many of my peers lived in poverty and that I would have an opportunity to be part of a big effort to help lift up an entire community. They also told me it would be very different from what I was used to but that it would prove to be a an experience that would make me a better person than what I could have at our old school. At first I was angry that they moved me from my friends and community that I was so comfortable and doing so well to a place that was so different. As I look back, they were so right. I have learned a lot about how our society is really segregated into haves and have nots. I have learned that people of different colors and cultures are really very similar. I have also seen how opportunity is not truly equal in our Country. The interesting thing is at one time I would have noticed the differences in people. Today, I just see people who are like me. These friends have hopes and dreams and are excited to build a bright future for themselves and the people they love.

I hope to put the qualities and experiences I've shared to work in my future. What makes me most satisfied is to lead, help others improve their life and achieve to my human potential at everything I put my mind to. I'm not totally sure what that will look like now but I plan to attend College and study Engineering because I really like problem solving and that is what Engineers do. I will explore many different academic areas to find my true passions and look forward to participating in some sort of international or foreign exchange to continue learning about different cultures and people from around the world. Why should I be awarded a scholarship? I think the best answer I can give is that I can be trusted to make the most of that support without wasting a dime. Also, I will continue to pay it forward by helping others who need a hand. I truly understand there are many people who need a hand just like me and I promise to do my part in return.