

At six feet six inches tall, I literally stand out whether in a crowded room, patrolling the blueline or walking in the school halls. But that is okay as I long ago realized that being a tall kid was more than a physical trait. Being tall has been a lesson in leadership, adaptability, the occasional bump and most importantly finding my own way while being comfortable with who I am.

I have always been considered tall. I did not understand that I stood out until in my pre teen years hearing people ask my average height parents what they were feeding me or what was in the Schomberg drinking water. An old growth chart at my grandparents’ house shows a distinct gap between markings from when the Covid pandemic kept us apart and after restrictions had lifted. I surpassed both my parents in height during that time. Upon entering high school a year later, I was already past six feet. But, my tallness created certain expectations. Basketball team members were excited to see me. That excitement quickly faded when they realized I had few basketball skills. I found my niche in other arenas. I joined the Ultimate team and was an ideal target for my teammates who could throw the frisbee high out of the reach of defenders knowing I would easily catch the frisbee with my long reach. My height has been a blessing with my hockey career. I have perfected a long reaching poke check which frustrates opposing forwards who find it very difficult to get by me. My dominance on the blueline led to my selection to the U18 AA League All Star team this year and also being named Assistant Captain for both my league and school teams.

I have also used my size to help me become a volunteer leader for the past two seasons in the Schomberg Minor Hockey Association’s Hockey Buddy Program which teaches 4 and 5 year olds how to skate and starts them on their journey in hockey. I recall the looks of awe and maybe even fear when they first looked up at me and one even called me a giant. I learned to get down on their level, made drills engaging and fun. I demonstrated to them that the “giant” was there to help them.

My classes have required similar adaptability. I sit to the sides of the classrooms so I do not block the view of others. I am the go to guy for turning on overhead projectors when the remote is missing. In auto class, I could not stand under a hoisted vehicle so I used a stool to sit and do my work. In my manufacturing

tech class, my group built a go-cart. My peers fit perfectly but when it was my turn, it must have been a hilarious sight to see my arms and legs hanging out over the cart. It taught me a valuable lesson about future projects - design adjustable seats! My tallness and constant growth presented practical challenges such as with my school uniform pants sometimes being too short a month after buying them or forgetting to duck as I entered a doorway and suffering a bumped head.

As I complete my final few courses and approach high school graduation, my transcript reflects my strengths. I have excelled in my tech courses where I can apply my discipline and hard work. I am proud of the perseverance I have demonstrated to succeed in courses which I have found more difficult. In the fall, I will start on the path towards becoming an electrician. I know with my height, I will stand out in most crowds which is why they will see my character, hard work, leadership and service.