

### What Being Tall Means to Me

As long as I can remember, I have been taller than almost all of my classmates. I was taller than most of the boys and always the tallest girl in my class. In third grade I became more self-conscious of my height and knew that I stood out amongst my peers. The first thing people would point out was my height, and classmates would make comments about my figure. My height made me stand out in school photos, and it became an insecurity of mine. I felt like people only saw me for my height, but I am more than that. Through the years, I have experienced the positive and negative parts of being tall, but as I've gotten older, I've really started to appreciate the benefits of being tall.

I have been six feet tall since my sophomore year of high school and have found ways to use this gift in areas like sports and music. I have had the opportunity to participate in various sports, and having long legs became an asset for me. In middle school, I was part of the track team and was selected to participate in the long jump and hurdles. In my first year of high school, I played on our tennis team, where my long arms and legs again became an asset. I could travel the court more quickly and had a reach advantage when serving. In my junior year, I tried out for the cheerleading squad, where my height allowed me to help do lifts and flips with my teammates. These sports were a great place to use my height to my advantage, but where my gift really had a chance to shine was in wrestling.

In the summer between my freshman and sophomore year, I joined my school's wrestling club. This helped spark my love for the sport, and in my sophomore year I became part of the very first girls' wrestling team at our high school. As I learned the new sport, I had a chance to put my height and length to use in ways that other wrestlers shorter than me couldn't. Wrestling has become a huge part of my identity and helped me build strength, confidence, and leadership skills. I have worked to grow my abilities and encourage other girls to join. Over the summer I had the opportunity to be a mentor to young athletes at youth wrestling camps. During the season, I have led new teammates by teaching them moves, along with coaching and cheering for them mat-side during competitions. This year my coach selected me to be one of our team captains, which has allowed me to be an example for my teammates both on and off the mats. Aside from sports, my height has helped me with music. I began playing string bass in fifth grade for my school's orchestra. My height helps me play this large instrument, reaching all the notes and playing pieces like "Pavane" from Peter Warlock's Capriol Suite. During high school, I was selected to be in the advanced group, chamber orchestra. My group has competed at state solo and ensemble, earning advancement awards and the Exemplary Performance medal.

I am excited for my future and how I can continue to use my height to excel at everything I do. I have decided to join a college that has a women's wrestling program, and I hope to continue to learn and represent my school and fellow tall people in this sport. Although I am not yet sure how being tall will help me as I pursue a career in engineering, I know I will stand out in the crowd wherever this path takes

me. I hope this will allow me the opportunity to be seen for all the other exceptional qualities and possibilities I possess.