

What Being Tall Means to Me

I've gotten all of the classic tall comments, from "You're so tall for your age!" when I was younger and "So do you play basketball or volleyball?", to being taller than my fifth grade teacher and having short dresses fit like shirts. Despite these, I love being tall! I am able to reach the highest shelf and find friends in a crowd. While my height will always be a fundamental part of my everyday life, it is not what defines me. I hope instead to be defined by my leadership, ambition, dedication, integrity, and kindness.

As an 11-year-old, I began a summer camp for kids in my backyard. I recruited a few friends to help, made a registration form and flyers and emailed parents, planned crafts and purchased supplies, and finally set up the backyard and printed out daily schedules. Even from a young age, I had the ambition to make my ideas come to life. Since then, I have found students to teach piano and swim lessons (independently, of course), and sold cupcakes and hand-painted banners.

In addition to beginning profitable businesses, I have looked for ways that I can serve those around me. Over the last few years, I took over running my family's annual food drive. My younger siblings and I go door-to-door in our neighborhood to invite our neighbors to donate before delivering the items to a local food pantry. Running the food drive has not only improved my leadership and communication skills, but also helped me to have a greater appreciation for what I have and in addition to helping those in my community to have access to food. As someone who loves food, I feel strongly about helping others have the same privileges as me. On several Easter and Christmas holidays, I have served dinner at a homeless shelter in downtown Nashville.

Further, I want to be recognized as a good teammate and friend. As I've held various leadership roles in my church, I have been urged to get to know people I wouldn't typically meet and help others to feel loved and included. As a teammate, I strive to set a good example and encourage others. I ran cross country and track all four years of high school. As a freshman brand new to the area, older runners on my team were extremely friendly and encouraging to me. They inspired me to be a leader on my team, whether through being a pace-setter in track workouts, chatting with new runners, or cheering encouragement on the sidelines. My coaches and teammates have noticed these efforts, with one coach commenting, "It wasn't the same without you," after I came back from a break, and a runner saying, "if you hadn't been there cheering every lap of my race, I'm pretty sure I would have stopped".

Going into high school, I was cautious with my class selection, choosing to take only a few advanced classes. I quickly learned that those lacked challenge and weren't the type of learning environment I wished to be in, so going forward, I selected all honors and AP classes. Without realizing it, I signed up for 6 AP classes my senior year, with my additional elective being journalism, in which I became the yearbook editor-in-chief.

While I believe that these experiences are more important than my height, being tall has given me opportunities to grow my confidence and become comfortable in my own shoes. I will be proud of my "Go-Go Gadget" arms and long stride length in addition to the other qualities that define me.