

# WRITE TO EDUCATE

## Scholarship Contest Winner

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**Essay Topic: How has the place you have grown up molded you into the person you are today and impacted your life?**

Nature vs Nurture. How much does the environment a person is placed into have an effect on their character versus how they were born? I have contemplated this question many times when it comes to myself and how much I have allowed myself to be changed by the people around me. From a young age I have always had a strong sense of self. I have known who I am and what I need to do to accomplish my goals of becoming smarter and stronger. I have had little care for the judgements from my peers. This has been an asset because it has allowed me to reach heights beyond what I thought was possible but that does not mean I always know my path forward. That doesn't mean I have not changed. As much as I, and every other human on the planet, resists change, it is impossible to grow without changing. Becoming older means expanding one's view of the world from a simplified version to a messy one. A world full of complexity and inconsistency which each and every one of us must navigate and find our own path through the shroud known as our future. The community that I have grown up with are my paddles allowing me to navigate the treacherous river, giving me advice and a wider world view of things I never thought existed.

My morality is the first thing that was shaped by my community. Every person has the basics of morality sewn into them from birth but when it comes to more complicated situations my community has changed my view. My younger self was much more cut and dry where I would label something as wrong no matter what, with no exception. My community has taught me to view these situations with more context to make more informed decisions. For example, a kid beats another kid because he was being bullied by him. My old self would say the kid who got into the fight should be punished because he laid his hands on another person and should have taken other outlets to resolve the problem. The way I see it now is that even though his decision was wrong to hurt the other kid, no one was able to stop the bully from bullying him and the system itself has failed the kid by allowing the bullying to happen. I have no wish for anyone to get hurt, but I see that situation as much more nuanced than I once did. These ideas have been shaped by my own experiences and by the people around me who have been put into tough situations. I have learned from the diverse community around me that the choices people make are rarely simple ones.

My political views have also been shaped by my community. I am growing up in a community that largely has different political views from my own. Having different people to communicate with that have grown up in ways different from my own, has allowed me to find where I stand on certain issues. Within my community I have been able to find people that I respect, and I take note of the things they believe and challenge their ideas versus my own. Even if in the end our ideas of how the world should be run may differ, I have been able to find common ground with tons of people and I have been able to refine my views into a more wellrounded, multi-faceted, diverse view of the world. My community is full of people from all different races and cultures, and by combining perspectives from all those different people, we can find a way to have a more united world with the basic necessity of finding common ground and understanding which can unite us all. Where I have grown up has shaped the way I think and how I act. Even though I have always had a strong sense of self, there are parts of my personality that have been changed and molded by my experiences, and my community has influenced the way that I view different situations. Without my community I would not be as accepting and open-minded as I am today.

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