

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?

Many things in life are taken for granted. During my childhood, I was very active in the Hmong Lansing community. The community would occasionally hold multiple annual events for gatherings. I would meet many new people there and hear their stories, advice, or opinions on life. The younger me at the time didn't know what to take from these experiences and failed to appreciate these moments. As I matured, I understood what these opportunities meant when I grew around the community. It was the experience of learning from others. The learning experiences growing up in the Hmong Lansing community have molded me to become a person of ambitions, someone who gives back, and the love of cooking for others.

In the Hmong community, the place has molded me into a person of ambitions. I am a first-generation Asian American coming from Hmong immigrants. My parents came to America for a better opportunity. Within my community, most do not have a college education. People from the Hmong community had to adjust to the culture, language, and way of life in America. Born in America, I adjusted to the culture there easily compared to my community. I felt the need to carry their dreams of being successful. I wanted to take the opportunity that wasn't given to my community and achieve greater heights. I want to strive for success within the Hmong community.

I have grown into a person who gives back to their community. I can always remember the events that brought the community together all over Michigan. It was a yearly cultural event called the Lansing Hmong New Year. It was an event of celebration, bonding, and opportunity to connect with others. I wanted to help continue this ongoing tradition. I started doing community service to involve myself. Even though it may not have been much, I felt a sense of accomplishment in giving back to the community. Seeing the joy of others is what truly motivates me to give back to my community.

The place I had grown up in created a love for cooking. I vividly remember the times when my parents would have a barbecue for various occasions for the community. I would always ask my dad to teach me how to grill. It was until one particular day that pestering led my dad to teach me how to grill. It was my brother's graduation event. Graduation from high school was important in the Hmong community; it was the time for people to gather for the success of one's education. My dad guided me in the process of grilling until he thought I was ready by myself. I took my first step in grilling, and it was a success. People in the community for my brother's graduation thought my cooking was delicious. I was filled with joy and pride. I liked having that feeling and having others enjoy what I make. Learning that skill gave me a passion for cooking for others.

Throughout my life in the Hmong Lansing community, it has taught me many valuable lessons in life. Whether it was basic knowledge or insights, these life lessons were appreciated. Without the love, guidance, and support from the community, I wouldn't have grown into the person I am now. The Hmong Lansing community holds a special place in my heart.

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