



Write to Educate

Scholarship Contest Winner

Elizabeth Rushford
Maple Valley High School

Essay Topic: Describe how you have demonstrated leadership ability in and out of school and how do you plan to grow as a leader in the future.

To have good leadership skills is a necessary part of growing up and entering into the 'adult' world. It is not something that happens overnight or even in a year; it takes time and maturity. In these past four years of high school I have genuinely grown as a leader. I have had many different experiences that helped me gain some of the essential skills of leadership.

Most of my leadership experience has come from school. I take part in multiple organizations and clubs that volunteer their time within the local community for various events. As a sophomore I was inducted into our high school's National Honor Society (NHS) chapter and at the end of my junior year I was elected secretary. NHS has taught me the importance of being a reliable, hard worker. Other groups that have helped me step up are PALs and DECA. PALs stands for Peer Assistance Leadership. This group was made to help students in the school who are bullied, suffering from depression or anxiety, or just feeling down. We learned how to handle conflicts and lead peer mediations to help our counselor reduce the amount of fights over the school year. In DECA I competed at the regional level and had the responsibility of running a coffee shop in the morning before school started.

The arts department at Maple Valley has given me more leadership skills than any other area of my life. I am the trumpet section leader in our high school's marching band, concert band, and jazz band. That means that I am in charge of setting up sectionals outside of school time and during the summer months. This past summer the section leaders had their own camp where we learned the skills to help our section become better. At two other camps we helped the new freshman and junior high students learn their music and marching drill for the fall. I am a tutor to the kids in my section; they come to me needing help and I do all that I can to make sure they succeed.

At the beginning of my senior year I helped to start a new club. It had been several years since our little schools has had this club and some of us student and teachers thought it would be neat to start it back up. In September my new art teacher asked me if I wanted to help her set up an art club, and now I help her run it. I take part in organizing projects and running our class art shows. Generally, my role in Art Club is to assist her in teaching the younger students how to apply certain techniques to their work, and then collaborate on what to do for the next meeting. This group has really helped me step out of my comfort zone. I have taken on a huge amount of responsibility and do more public speaking than I thought I would ever have to do in high school.

Outside of school groups and responsibilities, I do not have a lot of time. I get to work almost every Sunday with the young children at my church teaching them how to do fun crafts. Before I entered high school band I would spend an entire week in the summer playing games with these children and helping them learn. Being surrounded by children helped teacher me how important it was to be patient and compassionate towards others no matter what your age or rank is.

In the future I plan to own my own automotive repair shop. I would be able to help newly graduated students gain some experience in their field so that they can work for larger companies or even start their own businesses. I would also like to go back to my high school and surrounding area high schools to start a program for girls who are interested in mechanics or other male-dominated jobs.

