



Write to Educate

Scholarship Contest Winner

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Essay Topic: A bright idea that would be a positive change at your high school and in your community

I have had a great experience attending Mason High School and look forward to my graduation this coming June. Mason is a wonderful community full of tradition, history and unity. It is a great place to live and learn. It is a great place to live and learn. As I reflect upon these four years, I am filled with delightful memories of friends, athletic events and activities. Most of these memories and experiences are positive; however, I am reminded of a heavy cloud that lingered on my classmates during our high school years. This cloud is the darkness of cancer.

During these years, six of my classmates have diagnosed with some form of cancer. SIX! This number is too high for young teenagers attending Mason High. These courageous individuals have had to spend a large portion of their high school years battling for their lives. In addition, as one of their classmates, it is our job to provide a strong emotional support system. We have had to spend a lot of time and energy tailoring our help to meet each of their individual needs. These students are no different than me. They are active participants in all that Mason High offers such as volleyball, football, track, bowling and band. They are involved in outside interests such as Olympic weight lifting, active participants in their church, and supporting U of M teams. Unfortunately, they are spending too much time at home or at the hospital battling against acute lymphoblastic leukemia, chondroblastic osteosarcoma, synovial sarcoma, and testicular cancer. Every day we prayed and wished for the best of behalf of these strong individuals. It is with a heavy heart to share that three of these classmates have died. These losses have been felt by all.

As a way to improve my high school, I would like to see a memorial created in honor of these students. This tribute could be a picture display or plaque commemorating each of these three individuals. These pictures could be presented on a wall just outside of our old gymnasium which is a heavily traveled areas seen by many. This current area is a showcase for various athletic and academic awards. Therefore, it is the perfect location to recognize the accomplishments of these individuals.

When I think about high school, I think about a legacy left behind. I think about what positive marks or impressions I can leave behind for others to follow or to continue. I'm told that high school is really a small part of a bigger world waiting for me. One day, high school will be a memory that I simply reminisce about my glory days. Maybe I will have the opportunity to return to my roots as I enroll my own children. The best way I can make a difference for my grieving community is to commemorate my peers that have left this world too soon. This memorial can be shared by all, young and old, that pass through the halls of Mason High. Those alumni that gather for reunions and homecomings will see the beautiful tribute. Parents and community members visiting the school due to conferences, activities or events will take a moment to stop and remember these spirited individuals. Furthermore, new students that enter Mason High for the first time will be drawn to this memorial. I want for these three... our beautiful 14 year old volleyball team manager, our number one 18 year old U of M fan, and our own 16 year old comical "Lieutenant Dan" bowler to forever be remembered for their bravery and optimism. This is my idea of trying to create something positive from my classmates that never gave up. I would love to see their legacy live on forever with us all.

