

Social and emotional wellness is the staple of what makes a person ready to function adequately in society, but it also requires maturity in multiple areas of one's life. One must be able to make responsible decisions, control and understand one's emotions, empathize with others, and maintain healthy relationships.

Making responsible decisions comes down to a lot of time management and self motivation for me, which is crucial when you have a full schedule and a dedication to academic excellence. I spend countless hours every week completing projects and studying a wide variety of subjects. Combined with extra-curricular activities, this is a concoction for disaster without a strong work ethic. Thankfully, over the years I have grown to understand when to work and when to play. Listening to novels for English class while completing other mindless tasks, like laundry or drawing, has really helped me stay on top of deadlines in my busier seasons. As captain of both the high school DDF and rifle teams, I have a lot going on in my life, while also being an active member in National Honor Society and volunteering across my hometown. Overlapping activities are no stranger of mine, and trying to squeeze in a personal day can sometimes feel impossible, but recognizing when it is necessary for my overall well being isn't. Without setting the time aside to recharge, one can easily burn out, causing more issues down the road. Being able to listen to my body and take into account my deadlines and other responsibilities allows me to make informed and responsible decisions.

Many adolescents struggle with regulating and understanding the floods of emotions they feel throughout the day, as changing hormones affect their moods like never before. As an actor, I began to understand these new emotions faster because of the needed control and emotional range of acting. By participating in performances, I was asked to demonstrate a wide array of different emotions, all of which I had to first understand. Noticing how I acted, looked, and

reasoned when I was frustrated helped me apply those same actions to characters feeling similarly, it also forced me to be highly observant of how I was feeling throughout the day. My passion for the theatrical arts helps me recognise and control my emotions because of all the practice and time the activity devotes, and demands, to emotional regulation and recognition.

Theater is itself a practice of empathy, putting yourself in others' shoes and living their lives, all the while trying to understand where they are coming from and why they feel the way they do. I have played many, vastly different roles, from rebellious school girls to kings, murders and geeks, intellectuals and orphans. Every character is uniquely its own, with their own history, fears, beliefs, desires, and secrets. Actors are forced to see the world through someone else's eyes, a practice I employ everyday in my own life. When a classmate is bent out of shape over a bad grade, or anxious about a test, in a way I don't relate to, I remember that they have different academic pressures from home, and maybe put way more or less time and energy preparing for that assignment. Theater has encouraged me to use empathy in every aspect of my life.

Everyday we are building and strengthening relationships in our life. From my experience, there are two necessary ingredients for making strong, healthy relationships: communication and expectation clarity. You need to be able to have honest and fruitful conversations for any bond to form or problem to be solved. Miscommunication and misinterpretations can lead to a myriad of issues if not cleared up and both parties adequately understand each other. By expectation clarity I literally mean that each party needs to share their own and understand the other's expectations for any event, plan, or relationship. Agreeing on what to expect and what the goal of any activity will be ensures that one party is not expecting more to come from any one thing than the other, and helps to ensure both parties are on the same page and can work together to meet the combined expectations.

Organization and empathy are two of the many skills I have gained through my short lifetime of experience. Building and maintaining healthy relationships is crucial for success and happiness. Overall without these skills, I would not be the person I am today. Thank you for the opportunity to apply for this scholarship and for considering my application.