

Nick Luois Amora

June Nelson Memorial Scholarship

20 March 2024

Who or what in my educational experience has influenced my direction in life?

During 8th grade, I surrounded myself with people who did everything that was supposed to be “cool”. One day, I got sent into the principal’s office for disrupting class. My science teacher was over it; I was continually talking during lessons and making rude comments. As I sat in Mr. Wilson’s office, my principal at that time, I was weeping because I didn’t want to face the consequences. Mr. Wilson asked me why I would do such a thing, to which I replied in tears, “Because I feel like that’s what I have to do to be cool, to be like everyone else.” After hearing myself say it out loud, I felt a sense of embarrassment. Handing me tissues to wipe my tears, my principal replied by saying, “I’m sorry you feel that way. You have so much potential; don’t waste your life trying to be like other people. Find better friends!” My principal’s words are engraved in my mind.

Mr. Wilson gave a lecture to my class; he was disappointed how students had to be cruel just to be cool. Curious if anyone knew that the principal was giving a lecture because of my incident, I was nervous. My people-pleasing tendency was still attached to me. I always wanted to be on good terms with the people I gained my self-value from, which were the disruptive students in school. When I was in Mr. Wilson’s office, I was fortunate to have a principal who spoke with compassion, along with discipline.

After reflecting on my character and rectifying my disposition, I truly learned what kindness and peace are all about. My principal's gratitude helped jumpstart me into the journey of self-discovery. I stopped being friends with the disruptive students and started being nice, developing a newfound perspective of teachers and the school staff for all the hard work that's put towards the success of student's education. Something that I truly believe is that kindness always wins. I started surrounding myself with decent people. My friend group is now diverse and filled with people who have different expertise. I have a friend who loves to bake cakes, a friend who is culturally passionate, and a friend who is just like me but a girl version. All of my friends opened my mind towards pursuing different hobbies. A good thing about letting go of people who are bad influence and opening my mind towards other people is that I get the exposure I need to figure out what makes a good friend.

I started taking school seriously; in junior high, I was failing some of my classes, but later on maintained straight A's from 9th grade until now. In high school, the norm is to be in one specific group; you're either an athlete or an academic all-star. One of my greatest accomplishments is pushing the limits of the norm and proving that anyone can be successful in academics, alongside athletics; I primarily wanted to influence students to be well-rounded. To this day, I see others being just as well-rounded, especially boys. Although this shift may not be because of me, I'm proud that my school is changing the norms for the better.

I have a little brother, and it's important to me that as I'm in college, he continues to be a good influence in school and in the community. As my brother watches me leave the house to volunteer, workout, study for school, train for Native Youth Olympics (NYO) and win medals, and spend time with friends and family, I hope that he carries the determination, open-mindedness and passion for a successful life. It's important to me that I positively influence

those, especially those that I love and have hope for. I'm a small entity on this Earth, in this big universe, proving that anything is possible and leading by example.

Although the occurrence in the principal's office is just a distant memory, it changed everything. With the help of my principal, my friends, and my shame for being a terrible person, I was able to turn my life around before my bad choices caused damaging consequences. I'm so thankful that I got influenced by my principal to be a better person before my bad behavior became severe. I strive to continue being a better person and always leaving room for improvement. I can now brag about my educational successes, rather than brag about being disruptive, which is so not cool.