

Essay A)

Living a meaningful life requires much more than material success. Michael Rothberg, a charismatic, intelligent, and loving human being who put others' needs before his own, was truly exemplary of this tenet. Acting purely out of genuine concern, Michael was probably not aware of the legacy he was creating while he generously contributed to the causes he believed in. Thus, today, his legacy is immensely admirable. It is such dedication that inspires me to always work for the causes I believe in, and like Michael, not for rewards or admiration. I hope that I, too, will contribute positively to the world.

Service to the community will always be an integral part of my life. One summer, I had planned on going to rural western India to work on a service project at a school, which was created after a devastating earthquake orphaned hundreds of children. Even my family lost its house in that earthquake, and I felt a responsibility to help those who were less fortunate. Since I could not physically go there, I created the "Change for Change" program to provide for the children's needs by collaborating with the school's director. Overcoming challenges such as language barriers, different time zones, and their developing infrastructure was frustrating, but I know not to let them hinder me. Through movie nights and fundraisers in my community, I raise money to support their education and activities. Next year, I plan to visit the school to teach English and music and to see for myself how I can help further. I want to make my efforts more meaningful as "Change for Change" evolves into a larger program, hopefully, to include a free health clinic in the future.

As a member of the National Honor Society as well as the Interfaith Action Youth Leadership Program, I have had the opportunity to organize many gratifying community service projects. I have learned that to perform service is to build stronger bonds between people, bringing them together over shared values and allowing them to respectfully understand their few differences while celebrating their many similarities. These opportunities will provide a strong foundation as I continue my commitment to interfaith and community service work in college and beyond.

My own experiences have allowed me to grow and explore community service in many ways. From Michael's legacy, I have learned that selfless and genuine dedication to activities that benefit others is what gives a person true character. Thus, my commitment to education, dedication to helping others in need, and dream of making the world a better place are goals that I will never renounce.

Essay B)

“Men often hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they can not communicate; they can not communicate because they are separated”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

As I first read this question, my brain swarmed with elaborate and impractical ideas of what I would do to stop terrorism. But then I thought, why can there not be a realistic solution to this very real concern? Why can't we, as citizens of the world, collaborate to stop terrorism and protect our rights as human beings? I believe we can.

I strongly believe that the root cause of terrorism is ignorance, and I would make education compulsory for everyone. Educating people, especially women and children, in the ways of others would allow them create understandings rather than misunderstandings. Communities that harbor revengeful attitudes cultivate similar feelings in younger generations, and if children are spared from such preconceptions, their unbiased minds will be open to accepting thoughts. By encouraging women to study, societies would gain more potential to succeed in the world. I would also ensure that college students spend at least half of their education in a foreign country to gain global perspectives on the world. Liberal education gives people the freedom to think for themselves without being manipulated, and this would eventually eradicate terrorism.

From my experiences with my interfaith group, I have learned to communicate effectively about others' beliefs without putting them down and without giving up my own. These types of dialogues help people learn about others' perspectives and not just tolerate but accept them. People do not have to agree on everything, they simply have to accept the existence of differing beliefs. With unlimited powers, I would create interfaith centers around the world and make it mandatory for individuals to spend at least three hours each week to participate in communication skill-building activities and to increase contact with people of differing beliefs. In areas where direct contact with people of another belief system is not possible, I would use technology, such as Skype, to allow people to see each other and talk. Although people are from such different environments, they would connect on universal and cultural themes and debunk each other's stereotypes. By learning to communicate effectively, people would understand the opposing perspectives of others by viewing them through their lens while connecting with them over

Divya Bhatia
22 Forge Road
Sharon, MA
781-784-0367

similarities. As stated in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s statement above, communicating with people of various cultures allows people to be accepting individuals who ask questions out of genuine interest. And by asking the right questions, we can overcome the shadow of ignorance.

Through dialogue and education, we are armed with the ammunition of non-violent techniques to create a peaceful global community. This is exactly how I would use unlimited powers to fight terrorism. Of course, it is easier said than done, but my trust rests in the universal belief that good always wins over evil.