

Essay A Describe your personal goals, challenges or commitments and how you can draw on what you've learned about Michael Rothberg's legacy to inspire your own.

It was my first day of volunteering in the Patient Care Unit at Norwood Hospital. Towards the end of my shift, as I was walking through the hospital wing, I heard a soft moan. Anticipating that a patient was in need, I walked towards the room and saw a frail elderly lady in bed.

I frantically circled through the hallway, looking for medical staff that could assist her. Learning that the earliest a doctor could get to her was in about half an hour, I felt compelled to attend to her even though I was not yet fully prepared to handle the situation. I pulled on a pair of fresh gloves and hurried into her room.

The lady looked distressed, with tears in her eyes. Her pain was so real.

Understanding that she was in pain from being in the same position, I helped her turn and also assisted her in eating dinner. After making sure she was comfortable, I gently laid a warm blanket over her. Seeing her smile, I felt so relieved.

Volunteering at local hospitals has influenced my career choice and helped me learn that empathy is truly the first 'medicine'. I realize that the dearth of doctors and efficient medical treatments has been the primary issue impacting people globally – especially those affected by epidemics such as H1N1 and Ebola or natural calamities. I feel the urge to fill this gap.

From my readings on Michael Rothberg, I understand that he exemplified many of the traits that I admire and aim to emulate. Michael's efforts towards supporting organizations such as the Dana Farber Cancer Institute's Jimmy Fund demonstrate his persistent devotion to making a positive difference in other's lives in any way he could. His generosity and dedication to helping others is motivating, especially his readiness to spend time and energy for a cause in which he strongly believed. Inspired by Michael's selfless service, I am convinced that I don't need to be a powerful person, politician or social worker to make a positive difference. In fact, I need nothing more than a willing heart and a strong commitment.

Essay B What would you recommend to our government to prevent terrorism in our country or anywhere in the world?

As a child, I wondered, what makes a rainbow so beautiful? As a student, I thought about what makes America the strongest nation in the world? I realize that in both contexts, the answer lies in the diversity of its constituents.

Growing up and attending school in Sharon, a neighborhood filled with people from diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and economic backgrounds, has helped me appreciate the range of human difference.

During my visit to India, I was amazed by the approach of the salesperson in an apparel store. He was engaging sensitively with clients, speaking in their own languages and helping them make purchases relative to their individual and cultural needs. In my case, I decided to learn Spanish in addition to honing my fluency in Hindi and Telugu, so as to be able to connect and better relate with a greater sector of the population.

At summer camp, Tara, a new Spanish-speaking student, was shy and hesitant to participate and interact freely. Seizing an opportunity to personally interact with her during lunch, I connected with her, relating my own experiences to her situation. Her face lit up when I described some of my favorite foods, which she also happened to enjoy, and she began feeling more comfortable talking to me and other classmates.

This past summer, while I was waiting for my subway train in Boston, I overheard an elderly Spanish couple struggling to buy train tickets. Initially, I was hesitant to intrude into their conversation, but I could not restrain myself from assisting them when I understood that they were facing difficulty. *¿Hola, puedo ayudarles?* My simple greeting brought smiles to their faces and they felt comfortable when I assisted them while speaking in their own language. I felt so gratified to be of help.

Through my experiences, I came to realize that culture and language are significant to every person with whom we interact. So, if I were able, I would incorporate Language and Culture Education into all school curricula, across the country. Relating with others by understanding and appreciating cultural differences, rather than ignoring them, would help us learn to effectively connect with people around us. While our environment may shape us to be

Lasya Sreepada
69 Hampton Road, Sharon, MA
(781) 784-1794

part of different cultures, speak various languages, and follow different religions, we are all united by the fabric of humanity. This, I believe, will make hurting others impossible.