

## Lexi Lepler



***Describe how your personal goals, challenges or commitments exemplify or are inspired by Michael Rothberg's legacy.***

I, like Michael, was born and raised in Sharon, MA. I have worked hard to not only succeed academically and socially, but to do so in an ethical way that leaves a positive mark on the community. In Honors and AP classes, I push myself not only to get the A, but to really learn something from every experience. In school my favorite subjects are History and Languages. I believe strongly in applying the knowledge that I gain to the world in which I live. In college I hope to major in International Studies with the goal of helping to create innovative solutions to complex world problems. I have served our community by volunteering my time and energy at the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk, our local Chef's Classic Road Race, the Walk For Hunger, Gift Wrapping for Juvenile Diabetes, Halloween for the Hungry, and other worthwhile events. I believe strongly that I am where I am today because of the love and support of my family and friends. I know that I will continue to have strong and important relationships with these people, and I will pass on the compassion that I have received to the people around me. Michael Rothberg is an inspiration to me because he was multi-dimensional. On top of a successful career, he created a life for himself based on ethics, family,

generosity, and compassion. In my life I hope that I can achieve this type of complete success.

***How have acts of terrorism around the world affected your life and your outlook on the future?***

It is not an exaggeration to say that 9/11 changed everything. Although I was only in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at the time, I will remember that moment for the rest of my life. There was a feeling among everyone for a long time afterward of “we are not safe,” and to an extent that feeling still remains today. It was a loss of innocence for me to see my parents and others who I look up to so immensely shaken by the attacks of 9/11. It was one of the defining experiences in my life. It made me realize that life is fragile and every second must be treasured. It opened my eyes to the hatred that exists in our world in a way that I had been sheltered from up until that point. It has also made me reflect on what it means to be an American in our increasingly global society. 9/11 has made me question not only, “Why do they hate us?” but also, “What can I do to make sure that something like this does not happen again?” 9/11 was not one isolated act of terrorism. Acts fueled by hatred are not new to this world. I want to major in International Studies because I believe that in we are not alone in our current world. The effects of one country’s actions reach far beyond its own borders. Communication and understanding must be fostered between nations and across cultures in order to end the cycle of hatred.