

Counselor Page: See second attachment

Extracurricular Activities:

- Club Volleyball
- Varsity Volleyball
- Bridges Club
- Key Club
- Science olympiad Club
- Science National Honor Society
- Math National Honor society
- National Honor Society
- Boy Scouts(Eagle Scout in 10th Grade)

Essay:

I had my life plan all mapped out in sixth grade. I would live in Randolph, NJ, and work on the side of a garbage truck. I believed Randolph was the best place on Earth. I was living in a little bubble.

When I entered middle school, the elementary schools in town had merged and I was starting to make new friends. My life was going exactly as planned until the day my dad shared the news: we were moving to Singapore. At the time, I barely knew how to find Singapore on a map, much less envision myself living there.

I was angry and annoyed that I had to leave the community I knew, so I funneled all my negative feelings toward my parents. I let them know how I felt in my Mother's and Father's day cards. A few notable lines were, "You are ruining my life," and the infamous, "If I am ever smiling in Singapore, know I'm not happy inside." I was also uncertain. I didn't know if I could make new friends, unsure if I would fit into a new community.

Entering my new school in Singapore on the first day of 7th grade, I was not optimistic. I had even planned out how I was going to stick it to my parents when I told them they were wrong. To my surprise, in homeroom, I immediately met two friends that I still talk to today. They introduced me to their other friends, and through them, I started playing volleyball for the first time. Volleyball has since become a significant part of my life and I would have never played if I hadn't moved. My connection to the community continued throughout my first year, then the second, and grew from there.

At the end of eighth grade, preparing to enter high school, I questioned how I had let those negative feelings take over and why I couldn't see the potential in this new opportunity. The positive developments in my life since we had moved made me realize that I needed to be more optimistic as I approached new situations, so as I entered high school in Singapore, I saw the world as a place where change leads to opportunity and growth.

I was extremely fortunate to take advantage of great opportunities in and around Singapore. I took trips with Scouts where I learned to scuba dive, gaining a perspective on the awful state of the ocean's coral reefs. I became involved in other service clubs and particularly

Gawad Kalinga, through which I was fortunate enough to travel to the Philippines and build homes for the impoverished. In my trips to the Philippines I further discovered how lucky I was to be born into a family in the middle class. The people I met there were some of the most lighthearted, community driven, and overall happy people I had ever seen. It made me feel even more ashamed for how I acted before the amazing opportunity of moving to Singapore. I completed my Eagle Scout service project in 10th grade, and I traveled all around Southeast Asia, from Australia to Hong Kong. During all these trips I experienced many cultures, traditions, and lifestyles. People so different from myself gave me perspective on my own life and how single minded I could be. Before I began to travel, I had not even considered all the variety of ways people lived around the world. The perspective I gained from traveling is one of the greatest takeaways from the experience of moving to Singapore and I am extremely grateful for it.

Living in Singapore for four years gave me many amazing experiences, but more importantly gave me maturity. Singapore is famous for its harsh laws and safety which allowed me to be more adventurous on my own. My parents gave me a weekly allowance for all my expenses from the train, to food and bubble tea. This was a huge leap from Randolph where you could not go anywhere but a neighbor's house without a car. Since it was so safe, I could go out whenever I wanted to visit friends and go to school. The freedom I was given gave me skills like how to deal with money, thriftiness, and responsibility. I am so thankful I lived in a safe city like Singapore at such a young age which made me grow into the mature young adult I am today.

After my fourth and final year in Singapore, my dad told me we would be moving back to Randolph. I was sad to leave my friends and community in Singapore but knew I had the ability to make the best of any new experience. Coming back to Randolph was much easier as I joined sports like track/volleyball and clubs like Bridges, Key Club, and Science Olympiad. It was also easier to make friends because I was actively searching out friends instead of plotting revenge on my parents.

If I could talk to someone before they moved, I would only have one piece of advice. The only way to enjoy moving is to have the mindset of making the best of it and have a positive attitude. The change in attitude I had after I moved to Singapore and through my move back to Randolph made all of the experiences, happy and sad, so much sweeter.

I could see how my peers in Randolph, like me, had matured during our time apart, but I could also see how I had been gifted with a more global and open-minded view of the world. I see beyond the limits of our small town and I understand how much we can grow from being positive, taking advantage of all the opportunities in front of us, and connecting to different cultures around the world.

My experience in Singapore ultimately made me a better world citizen and showed me how I want my work to make the world a better place. I guess when my parents saw me smiling in Singapore and in our days since, I was, and am, truly happy.