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Common Application Essay

Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

The transition from childhood to adulthood marks a time in one's life where an individual realizes everything does not revolve around them. Instead, they realize it is a time in which one becomes selfless and an involved member of their community. One learns how to change their anger into courage, greed into compassion, and ignorance into wisdom.

My transition from childhood to adulthood came unexpectedly through my first job as a mentor at Life Pieces To Masterpieces. Life Pieces To Masterpieces is an arts based afterschool program that focuses on developing character and unlocking hidden potential in the young boys of wards 7 and 8 in Washington, DC. We provide opportunities for young boys to change challenges into possibilities. As an African American boy, being employed for the first time at the age of 16 was an amazing accomplishment and opportunity. This transition from childhood to adulthood was unexpected because I did not expect to grow as much as I did. I did not expect to gain the knowledge and skills I learned from being a mentor. However, I underestimated my role as a Junior Mentor. At first, I did not think I would be able to have an affect on the Apprentices' lives like mentors do: I was only fulfilling my surface duties. For instance, I was helping the Apprentices with homework, distributing snacks, and helping facilitate activities. Meanwhile, the relationships I established between the Apprentices became less surfaced and deeper over time. They began placing their trust in me and looking up to me as an older brother. I started to take on more responsibilities like assisting the Co-Educators in the classroom with

assignments and tasks for the Apprentices. I led the Apprentices in practicing and preparing for presentations. I took initiative in facilitating discussions on different, difficult topics, such as how to change common everyday challenges into possibilities. Once, I shared with the Apprentices one of my report cards. When they saw my report card they were all amazed and asked “How did you get all A’s and B’s?” I explained to them that getting good grades required hard work and I had to sacrifice my social life to earn and maintain my grades. Any idle time that I had was used as an opportunity to get an early start on my assignments. I want the young boys to understand the keys to getting good grades in school are working hard, showing discipline, and making smart choices. Also, I want them to know that they can achieve great grades as well and to not let anything stop them from succeeding.

As time went on I started to invest more of my time, mind, and body into being a mentor for these young boys. I became a positive example that they could look up to and rely on. I realized that being a mentor was more than just a job title, within one year, it presented me with the opportunity to gain the courage to use my voice to speak up and share my opinions in school. Having a job at Life Pieces To Masterpieces was not solely about having a source of income anymore. My selfish need for money quickly turned into dedication and commitment to these young boys. Being a mentor gave me the opportunity to transfer my ignorance into wisdom by educating my peers on problems in our community. Being a mentor to these young boys is a part of a bigger picture than I could have expected. I realized that as much as they needed me, I needed them. As a mentor at Life Pieces To Masterpieces I was able to change my anger into courage, greed into compassion, and ignorance into wisdom. I was able to transform from a child into an adult within my community.