

Nantucket Book Festival Young Writer Award Winner 2019

Carolyn Butler: 9th grade

Haley Ray

Never let the fear of not being good enough get in the way of happiness. Carolyn Butler is a piano teacher at the Nantucket Music Center and in her spare time is the music director for the Dreamland Theatre's theatre program. I met her in early 2016 while auditioning for Schoolhouse Rock Jr at the Dreamland. At first glance, she seemed very tense and to the point but after only being around her for five minutes, I instantly fell in love with her outgoing and charming personality. She is an exceptional person to be around and an even better role model in the theatre. Her knowledge of music and passion for theatre is very admirable. Even though I was only in her acquaintance for two productions at the Dreamland, I will never forget how much she helped me improve in the theatre. Carolyn opened my eyes to the idea that I should be myself rather than comparing myself to others.

Confidence is always something I've struggled with. Despite my fear of being noticed, I had the bright idea to try out for a play at the Dreamland Theatre. In the first two plays I did, I was cast as small ensemble roles. Even though they were small roles, I still loved the intense burst of energy that surged through my body while up on the stage. Against all odds, in the third play I did at the Dreamland, Schoolhouse Rock Jr, I got cast as a lead. I thought that I would have the time of my life until I met the other leads. They were all outstanding in the theatre which made my confidence fall into a deep, dark hole. I had no idea what I was getting myself into by becoming a lead in a performance. After about two weeks of learning blocking, songs, and choreography the day finally came that we would learn the song *Adjectives*, which was a duet between another lead and me. This particular lead, a portion of the ensemble, and I gathered around Carolyn's piano in the studio theatre. Carolyn began pressing a combination of keys on her piano. My duet partner sang first and gave an angelic performance. Fear ran through my veins and it dawned on me that I wouldn't sound as spectacular as she had once I started to sing. After a couple of verses, it was time to embarrass myself in front of a bunch of children I barely knew. All of my focus was aimed at the words in my script and away from the dozen faces staring at me. My throat choked up and my hands became clammy. Once I began to sing, complete nonsense came out of my mouth. All anyone in the room could hear was off-pitch screeching. I had no idea what the tune of the song was or how to read music. I prayed in my head for a truck to crash through the walls and hit me in that exact moment. Carolyn stopped playing the piano and I ended my glass-breaking performance. My cheeks turned a harsh red as I picked my eyes up from my script to face Carolyn. Carolyn waited for an eternity then said, "Okay, how about you try that again. This time, I will play your notes on the piano and you can sing along. Do it just like you did at your audition. Be your confident self." Carolyn's support helped me realize that with a little push, I was able

to do what I thought was unimaginable. I had gotten so wrapped up in the idea that the other leads were better than me that I had forgotten the real reason I was doing the play in the first place. I loved how being on stage made me feel and I shouldn't let my fear of not being good enough get in the way of that. The directors cast me as this role because they thought I was a perfect fit. I felt a switch flip inside of me. As if the person I was before this play started to break free again. I signed up for the play because I love becoming friends with quirky theatre kids and having fun. I hopped back into reality once Carolyn's hands met the piano again. My shoulders became less tense and I sang along as she said to. Instead of worrying about what the others thought, I sang like nobody was watching. My voice didn't magically sound perfect the second time through but I felt better about myself. Even if Carolyn's words of wisdom were unintentional and she was doing her job, her words have stuck with me ever since that day.

Carolyn made me realize that to succeed in life, I have to be myself. I shouldn't have to worry about what others think of me. The only thing that matters is that I'm having a blast while living my best life. Although I have chosen to not continue with theatre, Carolyn's words still affect me in my everyday life. When I find myself thinking that my peers are judging me or that I'm comparing myself to them, I remember what Carolyn told me; be my confident self. I shouldn't be ashamed of who I am or how I act because this is the real me. Carolyn taught me that I am the best version of me and I should be proud of who I am. Even though sometimes it can be hard to find confidence inside of me, I know that I will always find a way back to being who I am. The only person to thank for my change of view about confidence is Carolyn Butler.

Nantucket Book Festival Young Writer Award Finalists 2019

First Runner Up

Let's Go Outside: Grade 9

Sonia Dhar

If you walk down the gravel path enclosed by various plants (which I happen to know the names of) you'll come across a fork in the path. As a mere eight-year-old, where the paths led nor what plants I could identify mattered as we approached this fork in the path. In between this said fork, were three trees. We called them broccoli trees; more formally known as Golden Arborvitae and each are practically identical to each other. Here on Nantucket, the deer enjoy snacking on these trees but simply can't reach the tops. This ultimately resulted in the shape or our namesake of the tree. I've been told the deer think it tastes of popcorn and although it does taste quite nice, I would have to disagree. Now, you may wonder as to why, I, at age eight, could name most of the plants at the UMass Field Station here on Nantucket, and well I don't know why either. What I do

know, is that I could've never appreciated nature the way I do today without my experiences at the field station. For years, my sister and I would walk down this very path as we were part of a group called the Jr. Rangers. We were a group of kids, most only slightly older than I, who learned about the wildlife from Lenny. Lenny and his wife, Sarah, lived and worked at the field station. Sarah was a scientist who did studies, mainly in the marshes of Nantucket and Lenny was no less than a stellar poet who took the time to learn about the wildlife on Nantucket. Lenny would teach us the specifics of the different plants and animals and how to identify them. We then would collectively give the occasional tour or do our own projects like setting color-coordinated cups of dish soap to attract insects. Lenny's appreciation and curiosity for nature and the world around us impacted my life in unexpected but significant ways.

Personally, the field station may be my favorite location on the island. It showcases a specific side of Nantucket that is preserved but also very visitable. Lenny was the perfect person to lead our group of Jr. Rangers and continually taught us more and more. The main thing that stands out to me more today, is how much he respected us; regardless of our age. I was only eight when I started and yet he still treated me with a respect that motivated me and embraced my curiosity as a kid. Through this and learning about the environment, he taught the importance of respecting nature. This is especially important since Nantucket is such a special place; unlike any other. Now this ranged from many different habitats including, but not limited to, the marshes, sandplain grasslands, and beach. Of course, it is important to share the beauty of the field station with others and we encouraged educating people about the area. Occasionally, people would visit and not treat the property as it should be treated. An act as simple as leaving something behind at the beach could negatively affect the environment. Of course, everyone makes mistakes, but mistakes are only beneficial if a lesson is learned.

You see, I was a very shy eight-year-old and to this day, avoid talking to people as much as possible. It was still only my first year being a part of the Jr. Rangers and we were casually walking down the beach, as we did most days. Though I can't remember exactly, I'm sure we were doing something along the lines of getting as much *Codium* as possible out of the water. We just explored, wandered the beach and reinvented lyrics to Beatles songs. As you would expect of Nantucket, it was an overcast but pleasant morning; a mild day but no worse than any other. Soon enough we became aware of the fact that we weren't alone on this beach. These weren't just people enjoying the nice day; rather they were climbing the bluff. Not only is climbing a cliff extremely dangerous but also dramatically damages the environment! We here on Nantucket know the true tragedy of erosion all too well; as houses continually get closer to the water. This means it's important to stay off the bluff and more specifically not climb them. Now I, the shy eight-year-old in a pink shirt brighter than the sky that day, calmly walked up to the strangers and said something along the lines of "Hey, you're hurting the environment by climbing the bluff, could you please stop." It wasn't aggressive or out of anger, but said out of a

place of care and respect. Anger never solves a situation. Instead, I merely explained to them the impact of what they were doing, they apologized and left. We continued our day; picking invasive seaweed off the beach in our own little world.

While this is one of many good memories from being at the field station, it displays Lenny's impact on me very well. In not even a full summer, Lenny had made a positive impact on my mindset and how I view the world. Through the Jr. Rangers and Lenny's leadership, I learned to appreciate the world without harming it. It became more obvious how people impact the environment without realization. Without Lenny teaching me about the environment here on Nantucket, I would never have known myself. Not only that, but he showed me that it's ok and important to tell someone respectfully if they are being harmful, rather than stand by and let it happen. Nature should be appreciated but we must be cautious to preserve its beauty. Although Lenny and Sarah have since moved, the field station is still my favorite location on the island, despite its changes. Overall, my experience with Lenny and the UMass Field Station impacted my life greatly in the way I view the world, and how I appreciate nature and our island.

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Second Runner Up

“Solfeggio”: 9th grade

Sarah Hanlon

Sometimes it feels like I will never be able to be to play a song by Beethoven or Bach, or never be as successful as they were; however, Diane Lehman has always told me otherwise. Diane Lehman is one of the most influential community members I know. Diane is a very knowledgeable, caring person. She is a pianist who plays at many community events, and has been my piano teacher for 4 years. Diane has taught me more than just how to play the piano. She has taught me what perseverance really is and that I shouldn't feel like it's not worth trying if I can not do something at first. Diane has shown me the true meaning of music and how it can reflect one's life.

When I started playing the piano with Diane four years ago, she introduced me to a new world of music. In the past, with other teachers, I was given music and it wasn't always something I wanted to play. Diane gives me the option to choose music I would like to play, and she finds a song that meets my requests, but also challenges me to learn new skills. At one of my lessons, I sat down in front of the piano and Diane asked me what I would like to do and what type of music I would like to play. My response to most of her questions was “I don't know. Something that sounds cool.” Diane took my vague response and picked out songs she knew I would like. She showed me songs from many different genres. It seemed like she read my mind because I wanted to play them all. I decided I loved one song written by Bach, “Solfeggio”, but thought I would never be able to play it. It was really fast and complicated and I felt like I was reading another language when I looked at it. Diane told me she had no doubt that I would be able to play the song in as little as a few weeks. After that class I went home and tried to pick apart the piece and figure out how to play it. Every time I played the song I hit a wrong note. I never got the right sound and I just wanted to stop playing it. I felt like I was never going to reach the end like I hoped I would. After a while I just stopped trying to play the song.

When I got to my lesson Diane asked how it went and I told her how much I struggled. I said, “I can't do it.”

She looked at me and said, “Yes you can.”

I saw such faith and confidence in her eyes, and at that moment, she reassured me I would be able to do it. I spent the next few lessons working on everything I tried to do at home. I came across many obstacles that made me want to quit. Everytime I wanted to quit I remembered that Diane said I could do it, so I kept trying. I kept trying different things to play the song correctly. Finally after a few weeks, I resolved all the problems I

started with. The next week I went to my lesson and played the song for her. At the end, I turned around to look at her, and she said, "I will never play that song for you again, because you can play it better than I can."

When Diane said this to me, she really made me realize what hard work and discipline can do. I realized there were many opportunities for me to quit, but because I didn't, I reached the goal I had set at the beginning. After my lesson I walked out the doors feeling ten feet taller and more confident than ever before. Diane showed me that music is more than just any old song. When someone writes a piece, they put all of their emotions and feelings into it, like Bach did in his song. You can tell by his song that he was very disciplined, and had a life full of music. When you play a song, you should love what you are doing, and since this song I have found a new love for music and the piano.

Diane has such a positive attitude and it rubs off on all of her students. She has given me the tools to learn how to overcome problems and live a more productive life. Because of her, I know if I keep on trying I will be able to reach my goals and become an overall better pianist.

Although I may not be Beethoven or Bach, Diane has taught me I can still make the same impact they did in my own life.

Nantucket Book Festival Young Writer Award Finalists 2019

Third Runner Up

The Habit of Not Giving Up : 9th Grade

Maryann Vasquez-Cruz

Sometimes it just takes being the tortoise to win the race instead of a hare. Jesus “Chuy” Partida has proven that to me. Most commonly known as Chuy, a Mexican nickname given to people by the name of Jesus. Chuy is a house caretaker and a soccer coach. Chuy has helped Hispanics around our island enjoy the sport of soccer, helping an indoor and summer league running and helping some Hispanics just play soccer. He tries to make a point of contact for the Hispanic community with soccer, something the community appreciates, and offers help or advice to those that need it. His charismatic character that keeps cheering me on no matter how well I do. Without him, I would not have become the Maryann people know now. The one that never gives up, tries her hardest and most of all, is passionate about soccer.

It was a cold fall day, the roaring winds slapping my face as I walked down the cracked sidewalk. I looked up, only to see my destination, the Boys & Girls Club. I had heard from many people that there was indoor soccer available at the Boys & Girls Club, and I decided that I should go and take a look. Ever since I started kicking around a soccer ball, I had become enamored with the sport of soccer. From the focus and quick reactions, the tactful positioning that allowed for good passes and most of all, the amazing and exciting goals that made my heart jump in happiness.

I followed the sounds of the squeaking sneakers and cleats only to find what I was looking for. A group of boys, tall, short, skinny, chubby, all playing soccer. Two teams were playing head to head, dribbling and passing the ball. Both teams being able to pass the ball to each other smoothly as if they were pegs in a pinball machine. The boys playing were very strong as their kicks seemed to send the ball 100 miles per hour, the impact of the ball bringing you to shiver in fear, even if it didn't hit you. I stood there for what seemed like an eternity until I felt someone tap lightly my shoulder. Chuy' kind smile greeted me. He asked me if I was interested in playing with the boys. I was hesitant but I nodded my head, not wanting to reject his offer since he asked so nicely. I stood silently next to him and waited till our team was up to play, my heart racing as if I had already played. When we got into our positions on the court, all the boys were questioning why a girl was playing with them. I ignored their blank stares and tried focusing on only playing, only to play horribly as my legs kept tangling up trying to dribble the ball. Every day I went it was hard to accept the truth; none of the boys wanted to play with a girl. Every time I would watch the teams being picked, I was always last to be picked or not even picked at all. Chuy would put me in his team and I thought it was nice of him to put me in his team and try to give me a chance, but I felt like I was being pitied. I would play anyways, keeping myself

open for a pass, but my presence was just ignored by all the boys. At the end of every day, I felt horrible, my mind flashing back to all the mistakes I had done, disappointment pilling up on my conscience. I walked into the court one day, the sun bright gymnasium lights blinding me again as I walked in. Chuy walked over to me and he asked me to do some drills with him. We began passing the ball to each other, him asking me to do multiple things. From chest trapping the ball to shooting the ball into the small indoor goal. He observed me, stopping me from time to time, explaining and showing me what I had done wrong. I mimicked his movements, replaying step by step in my head what he had taught me.

He kept giving me advice, willing to help me whenever I needed, and I took any chance he gave me, wanting to prove to the boys I could be like them too. Days, weeks and even months passed, and the unheard of was said. I was picked for a team and I wasn't the last one picked either. I was surprised to hear one of the boys wanting me to play in their team, which showed me that I was coming to their attention. After that day, the boys would pick me for a team and I noticed that indeed I was getting better, Chuy's teaching echoing through my head as I dribbled the ball. The shiny ball would now move with me through the court, as I kicked and passed it with life and purpose into net, achieving my goal and a goal for the team. Back then and even today, I stand next to the boys and play with them, not being considered a girl but as a teammate.

Chuy has taught me that giving up is not an option if I want to be better at something. If I gave up playing indoor soccer, maybe I would have never improved or made so much good soccer friends. His coaching has helped me improve and I want to be better, and prove to him that everything he has taught me is being translated into my playing. He's been there for me where my family hasn't, helping me improve and continue my passion for soccer. Today I still thank him for everything he's done, and hope to give back to him his efforts for mine and become the best I can be for him. My willingness to never give up, always try hard and my passion for soccer is all to be thanked for Chuy.

Nantucket Book Festival Young Writer Award Finalists 2019

Fourth Runner Up

This is Van: 11th Grade

Anya Mogensen

Throughout the course of every human life, we will all at some point in our existence experience the gift of inspiration. Whether it be from an experience you went through, a teacher who saw something special in you, or maybe even from within yourself, inspiration is out there. Whatever it may be for you, it is indisputably special, because it's moments and people like these who leave you with the rarity that is inspiration. When it comes to me and learning where my inspiration comes from, you'd first have to meet Van.

Since he isn't here with me right now, let me paint you a picture of who Van is. Van Kellogg is an up and coming first grader at the Nantucket Elementary School with a tremendous amount of energy and a beautiful spirit. As well as being a fabulous singer, he's the proud owner of a winning smile, and the giver of the greatest hugs this side of Massachusetts. I've known Van for around two years now and am lucky enough to be his babysitter and teacher at the afterschool program where I work on Wednesdays and Thursdays. What this means is I get to be inspired by Van nearly everyday, because while in addition to being a train enthusiast, and a completely awesome kid, Van is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Considering I can only give you an opinionated description of what it means to be diagnosed with Autism, I'll refer to the definition on the Autism Speaks website. "*Autism,*" it reads, "*or Autism Spectrum Disorder, refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication*". One thing that stands out to me within this definition, would be the social skills element. This is due to the fact that while Van may struggle with social skills, it most certainly does not prevent him from making meaningful friendships in or out of the classroom.

Ella, (names have been changed) a classmate of Van's and playmate with him after school would be a great example. When asked what she liked best about her friend Van, she replied, "I like Van because he likes trains so much and because he loves Ms. Bridget just like I do." Another friend of Van's would be his neighbour Sam. After seeing the two of them tussel it out in an intense game of tug-of-war, I asked Sam what he like best about Van. After looking thoughtful for a moment, Sam gave me the answer, "Van, *always* comes outside and plays with me." And isn't that all you could ever really ask for in a friend?

When it comes to Van's strengths, his mom Audrey can attest that Van has quite a good amount. "I feel that Van has many strengths," she tells me. "But I believe that his greatest strength is to make connections and to make those connections in unexpected ways." In my mind, I think that this description of Van is completely accurate and really does say a lot about who he is and the brilliant light he brings to the world.

To me it really is the little things about Van that make him so special. The way that he'll stop my hand from turning the pages of a picture book while I'm reading, just so that he can take in the beautiful artwork, or the moments when he'll look up at the sky spontaneously and marvel to himself, "the sky is blue". To this day, there's absolutely nothing that this kid can't do that won't leave me feeling absolutely inspired, and I believe that is truly wonderful.

Along with the inspiration he gives me just by being himself, Van has also helped me in shaping my plans for the future. As a junior in high school, my dream for after school is to attend college and study psychology. Afterwards, my hope would be to go into a profession that would allow me to work with kids like Van who are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. I don't believe I would have ever considered this an option if I had never met Van and I am so grateful to him for being who he is. It's rare that in your life you will come across a person, especially one so young, that will have such an impact on the way you view the world.

Somehow, I was fortunate enough to meet Van.

Works Cited:

"What Is Autism?" Autism Speaks, www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism.

Nantucket Book Festival Young Writer Award Submissions 2019

Brian King : Ninth Grade Macy Crowell

Everyone has moments where they struggle to remain positive, it's hard to remind yourself that it's okay to fail, that everyone does, thanks to Brian I don't always have to remind myself. Brian King is many things, he works a full time job as a Frito Lays distributor, a husband, and a father of two, and he still finds the time to make his way out to the soccer fields. He's funny, considerate, and encouraging. Brian plays many roles in our community and I have been lucky enough to be a part of one of them, his role as a coach in our soccer community. He has been coaching for his third year and I have been fortunate enough to play under him for two of those. He has made such impact on me not only as a coach and on the field but in everything that I do. Brian has taught me how to keep my head high even when I'm not feeling or playing my best. He is always there to remind me to stay positive and the psych me back up during a game.

During the spring of 2018 my soccer team and I prepared to play in the biggest game of our careers, the outcome of this game would determine whether we attended the MTOC state soccer tournament over the summer. As the goalie of the team I had a lot to prepare for, whatever the outcome, I knew I would feel responsible. Before I knew it the game had started, I was beyond nervous. By halftime the game was tied 0-0 we were exhausted, and worn out but excited and ready to get back on the field. Soon we were losing 1-0 because of a mistake I had made. Brian could tell that I was beginning to get discouraged and upset with myself so he called a timeout so we could talk. He spoke to me about staying upbeat, that there is no way to change what happened, you only have the power to change what will happen, and the only way to change that was for me to stay confident and to play with my head up. I had to stay positive for the rest of my team, play with an attitude that showed them we were still in it, and we were in it to win. So as soon as the timeout was over we headed back to the field and began to play, I kept Brian's words in my head repeating them over and over again "Head up, stay positive, head up, stay positive." Soon we were tied 1-1 but the game was almost over, I couldn't let them score.

Finally the whistle blew, the game was over, I hadn't let them score, but they hadn't let us either. We were going into overtime. I was terrified but I kept repeating Brian's words over and over in my head. The whistle blew for the second time, and still no one had scored and it was time for a shoot out. Brian took me aside again, he told me that I wasn't going to save all of them, but that I had to stay positive and keep my head up, that it's not my fault, the shooter is supposed to score. The whole time all I can remember thinking was "Head up, you can do this" I saved three of the eight shots that were taken on me. Mashpees goalie only saved two, we were going to states!

Brian has always reminded me to stay positive, to keep my head up, but this was the first game where I really listened. I repeated those words in my head countless times during that game, I was like a broken record but I made sure it stuck. To this day I hear Brian's voice in my head and it reminds me of that game, the game where I kept my head up, stayed positive and it paid off. Thanks to Brian I am now a little bit better at picking myself up, reminding myself that everyone fails. He has made a real impact in my life, not only the way I play soccer but in what I do everyday. I hear Brian words in everything I do, from writing an essay, taking a test, and of course, playing soccer.

Sam Chambers: 9th grade

Justin Zadroga

Try and try again until you succeed. This is the lesson I learned from my seventh and eighth grade lacrosse coach, Sam Chambers. Sam Chambers is the U15 boys' lacrosse coach for Nantucket youth lacrosse. He was coaching the league long before I even entered the sport of lacrosse, and continues to coach it today. Sam showed me how much I can improve with hard work and dedication.

When I moved up to the U15 lacrosse league in seventh grade, after playing in the U13 league in fifth and sixth grade, I felt intimidated. Almost every boy on the team was much bigger and stronger than I was. I could not play as well as most of the other players, and did not have much confidence in myself. My low confidence led to me dropping passes and making bad plays. While nobody ever said anything to me directly, everytime I dropped the ball or messed up, the thoughts of the other players rushed through my head: "What is this kid doing on the team"; Why hasn't he quit?" I could feel them all staring at me, looking at me with disappointment. These voices in my head just led to even lower self-confidence, and worse decision-making when playing lacrosse.

I was one of only a few seventh graders who joined the team that year which didn't help my case either. It made me feel isolated, as if I was in a glass box everyone could look into, but I could not look out. To me it seemed like everyone else was just naturally good at the sport, when that was not the case at all. Every athlete has gone through something similar as to what happened to me, but I didn't know that at the time.

Sam saw my weaknesses and immediately tried to help me improve and eliminate them. When I came into the league I was playing the attack position. Coach Chambers suggested that I give defense a try, as he thought it would suit me better. So I picked up a D-pole, (a longer stick used for defense) and gave it a shot. He taught me the basics of how to play defense, and how to use the longer stick to my advantage. Almost

immediately, I could feel that the position suited me better. Even though I had grasped how to play good defense, I still had trouble with catching and throwing, so Sam continued to work on me with those basic skills. Once I starting to see some improvement, I gained more confidence in myself. I could finally through a pass and know that it was going to connect with the other player. I would see the ball coming back at me, and with no doubt in my mind, catch it. By the end of my seventh grade season, I was arguably one of the better defensive players on the team. I continued to improve through my 8th grade season, and started to learn some more advanced techniques. I even started switching on and off of a new position, long pole middle.

Coach Chambers has taught me that as long as you keep going at something, and maybe go at it in a new direction, you will eventually succeed. I use what I learned from him whenever I am in a situation where I am intimidated or do not feel confident. When I have trouble with schoolwork or in sports, I will use this to help me get through it. This is a very valuable lesson that, in different ways, I use every day.

My Unsung Hero: 9th grade

Maclaine Willett

An unsung hero, to me, is able to positively impact others despite their personal responsibilities. A hero behind the scenes, without a cape. Someone who constantly volunteers their time to coach, mentor, and teach young individuals. Behind the scenes is a man who works in the kitchen in the back of a small town pizza shop, Sophie T's. Inside, softball teams are seen bonding with fellow teammates while feasting on delicious pizza and celebrating a season of hard work and dedication. Along the restaurant's vintage-style walls are framed photographs of Nantucket Little League championship teams with Rob Noll pictured next to the young players. Rob Noll, who was my coach in Little League and middle school softball, has selflessly given his time to teach aspiring softball players to be successful players on the field, and even better teammates outside of the dusty dug-outs. Rob influenced me in athletics but also impacted another aspect of my personal life. He taught me what it means to be dedicated, have discipline, and be a valid member of our community.

Without the constant support from Rob, I would not have learned how important dedication and hard work is in athletics, but also in life. Whatever the goal may be, I now know that I need to dedicate myself and occasionally sacrifice my time, as he did for me. Along with regular practice, Rob Noll agreed to work with me every single day, offering his time to a firecracker of a nine year-old. Our team was a burst of energy and probably a lot to handle, but there was never a day where Rob Noll's smile while walking onto the field didn't lighten the mood. He had asked me in the beginning of our first season together, as coach to player, if I was interested in pitching. At the time, I had no knowledge of the amount of extra effort that must be put in to

develop my skills as a pitcher. Honestly, I wanted to give up at first, it was so difficult for me to grasp the mechanics of pitching. I had thought that maybe that position just wasn't for me. I felt as though it would take a million years for my pitch to reach a decent speed to be competitive. But mostly, it was the mental aspect of the game that got to me the most. He informed me that I had to focus on learning from my mistakes, not dwelling on them. Through my personal struggles in confidence and perseverance, Rob was there to lead me into maturing enough mentally to continue to pitch. Specifically, he decided to pull me aside after a long, hard day of pitching and full-team practice. Rob described to me that athletes must start somewhere, and I couldn't have been expected to be at such a high level right away. In the middle of our conversation, a group of older, more experienced softball players walked by. As I gazed enviously at their starting pitcher, he reassured me that I could be there someday. Rob also reminded me that I nailed down other aspects of pitching rather than just speed, like accuracy, so I had no business comparing myself to the pitchers ahead of me. Additionally, I hadn't fully understood what it meant to be on a team. To share your lowest times of defeat, and your highest moments of victory with the players around you. Initially, I believed that in the game of softball, or any other sport, an individual was only responsible for themselves. I had no clue that I was able to positively impact others as much as my coach did for me. My whole mindset changed once I experienced not only the incredible coaching from Rob Noll, but also the tremendous support. He was continuously picking others up who were down, congratulating players for even the tiniest accomplishments, and building everyone's confidence. To this day, I strive to be just as supportive to my teammates and to younger players as Rob was, and still is, to me.

Not only is Rob Noll an incredible coach, but he is a valid community member. For as long as anyone who lives on Nantucket can remember, Rob has built the softball program to be successful on the island. As you walk along those pictures in his restaurant, many years go by of young women who learned and improved from the assistance of Rob Noll. He always volunteers to build young women to compete at the varsity level, even it that means arriving an hour early to every Little League practice to teach girls to develop as pitchers and catchers. Along with building it to be successful, Rob also ensured that the players enjoyed the game of softball and how exciting it can be. He would always find a way to spice up softball practice, whether it be adding mini contests to drills or just constantly cracking corny jokes. Rob persuaded many girls to begin softball and help the Little League program grow by spreading his delightful spirit and amazing attitude. I, and many others also, appreciate Rob Noll's effort toward the softball programs on Nantucket. Fortunately, I have been able to observe the way Rob interacts with our fellow community members and I hope that I can transform a community in the future as much as he has here.

Rob was the epitome of what I needed when I began softball to mature and learn to cooperate with others. He impacted me in ways I never knew possible, athletically and emotionally. Throughout my four or so years of being mentored by Rob Noll, he has given me so much. Aside from the countless hours taken away

from his time, he taught me how to dedicate myself when striving for a goal, to support others around you, and what it means to transform and build a small community. To this day, as I am winding up on the pitcher's mound, I catch a glimpse of my former coach observing proudly. Just his presence pushes me to achieve and improve more every time I step foot on the field. I can't help but smile to know that he still believes in, and supports me. From now through the rest of my life, I strive to be that unsung hero for a young adult like Rob Noll was for me. To constantly reach for my peers', and my own, full potential. I would not be the athlete, teammate, or community member that I am today without Rob Noll guiding me at the beginning of my softball, and life journey.

An Inspiration: 9th grade

Philomena Topham

“Everyone looks forward to the future, but it's what you do in the moments leading up to the future that really count”. Vincent Debagis or as my religious education class and I know him, Vin, is a Nantucket island resident, a member of the Catholic Church and plays a big role in the Christian community. For the past couple of years he has been volunteering to teach the ninth grade CCD religious education class, which is not easy because we can be a handful. Despite that Vin does it anyways, because he believes that the upcoming generations should be good Christians and good community servants. He knows that within us we have the ability to fulfill those wishes. Vin has impacted me in a big way. For only knowing him for less than a year he has taught these lessons that I will always carry with me throughout my life.

I have been going to religious education also known as CCD and Church all my life; It has become habit and something that I know well. My family and I go to the same Church, and my sister and I go to the same CCD, which has always been at the same time, and day of the week and has been in the same location, at least since I have been going. But for my ninth grade year it was different. This time it was in a new location at a very different time and I was nervous and had no clue what to expect because I had taken a year of CCD off the year before. When I first meet Vin it was a Sunday evening around 5:30 in September, I went into a Church, that I had never known was a Church, early with my dad because we had papers to give. When we walked in the room was warm from the summer air and we saw two large tables that had yellow and orange chairs arranged around it. There was a green colored divider that split the large room into two smaller rooms. There was a high platform that was in the very front of the room that had many Catholic figures on it and an arch that someone could stand under and there were also two small pictures on the far wall of the Pope. Vin who is a white, middle aged male who is tall with grey, brown hair and brown eyes was sitting in this open room, just writing down

things in his book. When he started talking I didn't know what to make of him, was he nice or was he going to be mean. I sat down and people from my grade and class started coming in. Our class watched movies, which was something I had never done in CCD before, and I wrote in my book. After the movies he gave us snacks and I was starting to feeling like Vin was going to be very nice and influential. After a couple months with Vin I know that those two words describe him exactly. Vin has made such an impact on me and has taught me very important lessons about the Christian faith, how to be a good Christian and how to be a community servant and to be more involved in the community, which are things that I can carry with me throughout my life. Doing all of those things has set a good example that people should be more involved in the community and faith and should help out whenever they can. One of our requirements that Vin has asked of us for getting confirmation is to complete 15 hours of community service. Through this I have made many connections and have felt more apart of the community. I am so grateful for that and the opportunity to do that and continue to do that. One of the main people that I thank for that is Vin, because I probably would not have done the community service that I have over this year otherwise.

Vin has impacted me and taught me how to be more a part of my community and faith. Those are things might seem small but are big parts of my life and I will carry them with me throughout adulthood and beyond. I will use those lessons to help me to become a better person and to help others in need and in my community. I am so grateful and blessed to have had the pleasure to meet Vin and to be a student of his, it really feels like i have known him forever. So I would like to thank Vin for all that he has done for me and what he continues to do for the upcoming Christian children, church and the community.

The Power of Influence: 9th grade

Lilla Sherman

Everyday, people influence us and shape us to be the best versions of ourselves. The impact that certain people have on our lives will often change us for better or worse. One person who has changed me for the better is Madison Duce. She truly shaped me into the person that I am today. Madison is constantly influencing me with her wise judgment and superior knowledge. From her, I have obtained life lessons that are essential for me to exceed, not only in school but also in social atmospheres. Madison portrayed an honorable example for me because she is consistently involved in the community. We first encountered each other because of her moral respect for the community. She was hired as a counselor at Strong Wings, which further emphasized her passion to guide and inspire others. Madison helped shaped me because of the life lessons I acquired from her, the

inspiration she supplied me with, and the support she always granted to me as a role model, a friend, and a mentor.

School is a big part of any young adult's life, and it is what prepares us for jobs and families. Madison set a good example for me of how important school is for our futures. She attended the Nantucket High School for all four years of high school. During High School, she worked very hard and ended up getting into a challenging college that reflected her intelligence. She then went on to complete Medical School and is currently working as a doctor. Talking to Madison about my classes was like a taking in a breath of fresh air, because I knew she was trustworthy, and would guide me in the right direction to be successful. I had attended the Nantucket Lighthouse school for my whole life, so beginning high school provoked a lot of nervous feelings. Working with Madison this past summer left me with the instruction and advice I need to succeed in high school and pursue my passions in college. Madison advised me on what classes to take for my four years of high school. Her kind action helped shape me because she had the experience, and the ability to point me in the right direction.

Inspiration is the key to shaping one's self. I wouldn't be where I am today without the continuous encouragement and enthusiasm supplied to me by Madison. I had been a camper at Strong Wings for five years, and I am excited to start my journey as a Counselor in Training this summer. My journey as a camper to a Counselor in Training erupted from the strong support and inspiration of Madison. Madison has taught me how to interact with children and adults. She brought me out of my shell. Madison helped me gain a new found confidence that I steadily use in my everyday life. I will often spark conversations with many of the campers' parents at Strong Wings. Not only has Madison helped me communicate with adults, but she has also helped me communicate with children in a way they will respond to. The communication skills I acquired propelled me to start working, not only as a CIT but also as an active member of my community.

During my years as a camper at Strong Wings, I was always more drawn to being the leader of the group. I knew that one day I would make a great counselor. Madison was a counselor who worked with van camp, which is what I always wanted to do when I became old enough. As a CIT, it can be challenging considering that I am only 15, but in some ways, it is beneficial because the children can relate to me more. Madison taught me how to be patient with the kids, rather than getting easily frustrated. I soon learned how to relax and have fun with the kids while still bring educational learning into their lives. I am particularly fond of the memories filled with laughter while driving around in Van Camp with not only the kids but also Madison. I can still hear the laughter in my ears of the jokes being spilled. On the hot days, it was a relief to get in the cool, air-conditioned van and have a conversation as we drove to our destination for the day. From her, I learned how to stay calm in high-pressure situations. I remember on a hot summer day in July we were preparing to take the group of kids to the beach. Taking a large group of kids is a stressful and exhausting process. Each camper has a

personality of their own and they all want to do different things at once. Madison taught me important lessons in order to respect their needs but to also control them before they got out of control.

The lessons Madison taught me as a camper and CIT at Strong Wings have changed me for the better. I have acquired the knowledge of how to communicate with the campers in a way that allows them to still have fun and be safe. When looking after a big group of kids, you have to be organized and calm, and that is exactly what Madison showed me how to do every day. Her love for her job and community inspired me to become a CIT and follow in her footsteps. She did not only act as an inspirational role model but a close and trusted friend. I will never forget the memories we made together and the lessons she taught me. Certain people impact our lives every day and teach us the necessary lessons to succeed in life. The lessons that Madison taught me will stay with me forever, and inspire me to succeed and follow my passions.

Striving for a Goal: 9th Grade

Margaret Culkins

Everyone has a person in their life who is always encouraging them, but when you start to actually listen to them, it means so much more. Jami Lower is a fascinating and significant person in the Nantucket community. She is always busy, being a mother and a physical trainer, but she always finds the time to be a coach and a mentor. When a coach was needed for the Varsity field hockey team, Jami stepped up. When there was no place on Nantucket for girls to pursue hockey she launched the program. When girls wanted to become better athletes she started a training class in the off season. She made a massive impact on me whenever support was needed for my future or when I wanted to be better, she was and is always there to help. It may not have been just for me but because she cared about all girl athletes on the island, she made a difference.

Practice, practice, practice. A quote that Jami Lower pushes on all the girls she coaches. I was at lacrosse practice just a few weeks ago when she brought this up again. We were learning new ways to pass the ball. It was as if I was as blind as a bat when trying to do the behind the back pass. No matter how hard I tried the ball was shooting for the moon and not for my partners stick. It may have only been the first day practicing the skill but I was still unsatisfied with myself that no matter how hard I tried I couldn't aim the ball. When practice ended my teammate and I went to Jami to tell her about our struggles. She quickly replied with "How long have you been working on this pass?" Obviously it was our first day. She went about saying, "what were you doing when using the new skill?" We replied "practicing." She continued on saying, "how do you get better?" "Practice," was our reply. "So how are you going work on this skill," was the last thing she said.

"Practice." Every day at practice she continues to encourage me and every girl on the field teaching us we can be great but we need to work for it.

“It’s hard to beat someone who doesn’t give up.” Recently in the lacrosse group chat, Jami not only encouraged me but everyone on the team. It is not everyday you have a great relationship with a coach who actually cares about the team and not just winning. Jami took the time out of her day to send everyone on the team a text to encourage us for the game. Some people take it to heart, others don’t. When I get a text from a coach who actually seems to care and is encouraging us in a positive way I pay attention to them. She keeps the team motivated and encourages us, it changes the way I think about the game and how I am going to play. She shapes me into never giving up and continue to work to get the results I want.

Jami advised me in many ways, being a coach and a mentor to me. She made me believe in myself as a lacrosse player, a hockey player and an athlete. Every day she changes the game that I play, listening to her words and encouragement I become the best person and athlete I can be. I have known Jami for about five years now, no matter the sport I am playing or if I am not playing, she encourages every other girl and me. She has made the most impact on me and many other girls who play sports on Nantucket. Everything Jami has supported me in and encouraged me to do in the past and today is making me a better person and a better athlete.

“I” In Team: 9th grade

Maya Phillip

Sometimes it’s hard to listen to others when your own thoughts are overwhelming. Ryan Watson dedicates his time to the youth athletes of the community to better expose them to the sports offered around the island. Ryan has a lot on his plate. He balances out his time working in restaurants and being a team coach. Ryan was my JV soccer coach. When Ryan first started coaching me he was really tough and I felt that he did not like me. It seemed like everytime I made a mistake he would notice and say something. I felt as if I was being watched over by a hawk waiting to criticize me. Little did I know that this criticism would lead to my success, and that overtime I would come to respect and admire this coach. Ryan impacted me by not only helping me become a better athlete overall, but by teaching me a valuable lesson in life.

When soccer season first started I believed that there was an “I” in team. I was as tough as they come. I did not like being told what to do. I never listened to my coaches feedback and consistently did what I thought was correct. It was like talking to a brick wall. I did not take practices seriously, or learn from any of my mistakes. I was not improving to my full potential. Ryan noticed this and pulled me aside to talk to me. He told me that listening to his advice will only improve my soccer playing. He said that I needed to start working

harder for my starting position and taking practice more seriously. There is a time for fun and games and there is a time for seriousness. I could tell that he truly wanted the best for me. At that moment I realized that I could succeed and become a better athlete if I was only open to hearing the constructive criticism given to me. After that day I started to listen to the advice I was given by not only Ryan, but the advice given by my teammates. I began to take practices more seriously because I was determined to become a better player. This determination had taken me over as if Ryan had lit a fire under me. Within a few weeks, I became one of the strongest players on the team. My passing had gotten better and my shots on goal had enhanced tremendously. I was able to achieve one of my biggest goals and become a varsity flex. At the end of the soccer season, I was one of the few freshmen selected to play in the varsity playoffs. Now I stand overshadowing my past, I look back and think how incredibly insane the impact one person can make into molding your future.

This lesson was meaningful because it made me realize that when someone gives advice to help you, it's best for you not to ignore the advice, but to learn from it. When someone goes out of their way to try and help you improve, it shows how much they really care and want to see you succeed. Ryan taught me that being a good listener is the best way to becoming a successful individual. I know now that there is no "I" in team, and that learning from my mistakes will not only impact me, but impact my whole team. Just as Prof Basu Mali, a motivational speaker said, "Despite failure, only the person trying to learn from mistakes can advance in life." Sometimes when your own thoughts are overwhelming it's best to push them to the side and listen, because that's when you will start to flourish.

My Cousin Francisco: 9th Grade

Angelica Oviedo-Fermin

All my life people have told me to think before I speak, but their words never seemed to stick with me. Now that I realize this, I believe that just telling people not to do something isn't enough, people have to experience what happens when they speak thoughtless words to properly understand why it's so important. The person who opened my eyes to this was my cousin Francisco Sanchez or Cisco as most people call him. Cisco does not have a specific or permanent role in my community, my Florida community at least, that is where he lives. He's a recent high school graduate and works for Spectrum (cable company), his life is simple, however, he is going to have his first child soon. Cisco is also seen playing soccer with his friends quite often. He is the kind of person who would walk up to a stranger, or a lost kid to help them, and make them feel better. At least that's how I view him, in my family he has always been some sort of divine being, and he can still be so much more. The one person who immediately pops into my head when asked who impacted my life, in my community, is Francisco.

I remember, when I was young, around eight or nine years old, my grandmother fell extremely ill. I was always an angry kid, always have been. Bushy brown hair, hazel colored eyes, too smart for my own good, I was basically Hermione Granger, but I was, like most kids, careless with my words. It was a hot Florida day, the sun beat down on our trailer house so we had to keep all the doors open. When my grandmother became sick everyone felt dismayed, our home's air was morbid, her illness was completely unexpected. All of the adults that weren't slaving away at work rushed grandma to the hospital. My cousin was the one who stayed behind to watch us, the younger kids. I remember, no one would talk, The doors of our house were still wide open, and by now the heat was being blasted inside. We all sat side by side in our tiny living room, but the house was dead silent. It was as if when we spoke, the brutal reality would come crashing through the windows. No one said a single word. Then, my younger cousins, who could not grasp the gravity of our situation started to fool around, it was as if little monkeys had broken into our living room, and I got angry. I started to yell at them, steam evaporated from my ears, I told them to "stop and sit down." I remember exactly what I said next, "*Grandma could die...*" My words seemed to echo on forever. That's why what happened next seemed so sudden, in a flash Cisco had his hands on my shoulders, he looked extremely angry, might have been as red as a tomato. He looked me in the eyes and wailed: "Don't say things like that!" I was petrified, it was like my body had suddenly solidified, I froze. Maybe it was the fact that he was as tall as a giant, he had monstrous height. Still, that's all I really remember from that day, the rest was a blur, maybe I sat quietly on the couch, maybe I cried, I'm not sure, but from then on, I would always stop to think about how my words might affect others before I spoke them.

To think before you speak might seem like a simple thing, but being taught that lesson by my cousin is extremely important to the person I am today. I like to view myself as an intellectual, someone who can thoroughly think things through, including how to tell people things, both good and bad, without them having an extremely negative reaction. I also like having strong connections with people, so knowing what to say, more importantly how to say it, means a lot to me. I wish to see the way he views the world because his words seemed to have changed mine. I still struggle with putting more thought into my words, but the struggle has lessened over my time with him. I've said some questionable and strange things in my life, but luckily, everyone just laughs my words off because they often sound funny. I don't think that Cisco realizes what a strong influence he has been on me, I honestly don't know if I want to tell him. He would probably just laugh at me and call me an idiot, but that's just the way he is. I feel like he completely transformed me as a person. He taught me to be more thoughtful towards other people, to be careful with my words and that's a lesson I know I won't ever forget.

Phil Taylor's impact on me: 9th grade

Dylan Ottani

How has someone in the community impacted your life directly, and shaped you into the person you are today? Phil Taylor is an active member of the nantucket soccer community, he takes pride in his coaching, and his passion for the game of soccer. Other than coaching, Phil has many other areas of expertise. Phil is an electrician, a DJ, along with being a friend to everyone he meets. Phil makes sure to get to know all of the kids he coaches on a personal level, and always gives insight on how they could improve their game. He always has a smile on his face, and is a great role model to look up to. Phil has been a part of the nantucket soccer community for as long as I can remember, and to my knowledge does not plan on leaving any time soon. Phil was my first coach when I started playing soccer in third grade, being that I am now a freshman at Nantucket High School, that was six years ago. Phil has voluntarily sacrificed countless hours to coaching for Middle school, Highschool, and club teams on and off Nantucket for many seasons. These acts show just how much Phil cares about the youth of Nantucket, and for the game of soccer, as well as being a prime example of his generosity, and helpful manor. Today Phil is still one of my coaches, the way he has pushed my team and I has payed off, and has shaped us into some of Nantucket's finest players to this day.

Last spring Phil offered our team a position in an elite international club league, we played for Liverpool International Academy, in the EPL Division, which was a leap of faith for our team, because we had no idea what we were getting ourselves into. Fortunately it turned out well. This was a great opportunity for our team thanks to Phil, the league was more intense, and had a higher level of play than we had been used to in our town league. Being on Liverpool's international academy, along with playing for Nantucket towns team made me and our team somehow click. we started to obtain a greater understanding of the game, along with making our team work much more efficiently together throughout the season. Playing in two leagues meant twice as many games, which meant you had to work twice as hard in practice. The NPL division was a u15 league, which at the time, our team was u14. This made the games much more challenging, which pushed me and my team to get better, faster, and stronger, or face defeat, which was never an option. Phil coached our team into the championship game at a showcase tournament in Nauset, which had some of the best teams in the state competing. We lost the championship game, but Phil was still proud of our team for giving it our all the entire tournament. It was great being one of Phils players, he pushed me into improving more than anyone had made me before, along with the fact that we won a lot of games, and, we had a lot of fun in the process.

Some things that Phil, along with playing soccer has taught me, is that soccer is a lot like life. Playing for Liverpool, something that is emphasized a lot in our training, is switching the lanes. This technique is useful

for many reasons, one being that if you get stuck, or in a bad situation, you can just switch sides, and look for a new angle to work the ball up the field to the goal. This is very similar to life in the fact that if something, or some strategy that you have for getting to your goal is not working out well, you can always switch your approach, and try something new to inevitably help you in reaching your goal, whatever it is that it may be. I know this is a simple concept, but it has really helped me out on my in game tactics, and just life in general. For example, I was not getting good grades persistently in a class on tests, I would read over my notes the night before, and maybe read a little bit about the topic, but it was just not working out for me. I realized this, and tried a change in my study habits. I started to read over the entire chapter multiple times if necessary, do a quizlet on the topic, and read over my notes until I understood the material. My new method payed off, and I made it to my goal of getting better grades on tests. Another thing that Phil has done for me, is he gave me a love for the game of soccer. Phil made going into a game feel like we were heading into battle. Before every game we would chant, “NO PAIN, NO GAIN”, this made the entire team, including myself feel as if we could have ran through a brick wall. This gave the games some sort of energy that was such a privilege to be a part of. It was the type of energy that made the ball feel alive, that made you feel like the ball was doing all of the work, and you were there spectating. This is one of the greatest feelings I have experienced in my life, the feeling that came from an entire team working together, dominating the game in every aspect possible, which was satisfying at the least, giving that this was the direct product of the work we all put in during practice.

In conclusion, Phil Taylor has helped me become the person I am today, by pushing me to improve my game, which has directly correlated towards my life skills. Phil has been there for almost my entire soccer career, and is still around today. He has been someone who is always there to support me and my team, along with the fact that he has been a great role model to me. I am proud of what I have learned and what I will continue to learn from him as my life goes on.

My Moral Compass: 9th grade

Yilmin Moreno

“ I know you can do it just keep trying. ” This is a phrase that I hear quite often in my life so far. Many encouraging me with words that just felt so dull, so lifeless. This scene just felt so overplayed, with the same encouragements not getting in my head and the unsatisfactory feeling bubbling up inside me as if an empty endless whole swelling up inside me with its negativity. I just felt so incomplete and lonely. The negativity took me down a wrong hill and I am still currently healing from that point of my life. I know that it was not any of

these people's faults that I did not take their advice to heart and that they kept trying so hard to help me with my problems and my lack of self-confidence. All these problems had affected my behavior at school and at home, it caused me to have so many different types of mood swings, one moment I'm calm and the second I am angry at everyone, even myself. I knew that I needed help and a lot of it, I wasn't the same person as I was before a happy normal girl, who lived her life to the fullest. Once I entered middle school it changed, I did not fit in with any of the kids at my school and felt as if everyone was judging and looking at every single step I took, I was just in such a bad position for a middle schooler. I was not that happy kid anymore instead I was the person you'd find at the back of the class by themselves with a fake smile as if everything was fine even though it was not fine. I was hiding from the world, hiding who I really wanted to be all because of how self-conscious I felt and embarrassed of who I was as a human. Every time I would be myself there was always that one person who would judge me and saying stuff. I was aware that I shouldn't be afraid of who I am, but I turned out to be a weakling that was afraid of everyone. One day, I specifically remember this day where I officially met that person who impacted my life so hard and made me realize that everything I knew was wrong. This person is none other than my best friend, Maryann Vasquez. She was not in the best position as well, I could tell because I was the same as her. When she first entered that day in my life, I felt free and that I could be anyone I wanted to be, she inspired me to be someone, that somebody I aspire to be. The impact that she brought me was just so amazing, that day was one of the most memorable days of my life.

The day had started off like any other day gloomy and lifeless. I was not feeling very well like usual and I looked over at my classmates to see how happy they looked, wishing that I could be like them, having fun with their true friends. When the teacher started the lesson, they had assigned partners. This made me feel insecure about who I was gonna get and how they were gonna act towards me. When they called out my name and Maryann's name I was afraid of the thoughts of her making fun of me. I was always afraid of Maryann and had always envied her for the friends that she had. When we were working on our projects, I surprised myself I didn't hold back from being myself for once, I felt comfortable. She talked to me while I was being weird and annoying. After that day on, I continued talking to her and opening up to her, I never felt so comfortable before with someone. From that day on I started slowly going back to my older self more happy and alive, I felt human again. Then the people I sat at lunch with started to judge me again and my weird antics. This caused me to talk back from once, which I had never done to someone, but I snapped. I couldn't hold it anymore. I stood up and left them and looked around, the first place I went to without hesitation was to Maryann. I walked up to her group and asked them if I could sit down. Maryann spoke first and said, "Don't ask just sit." I sat down and watched them talk, I laughed and smiled, I felt euphoria surge throughout my body as if I had no care in the world again. I belong with this group is what I first thought, I looked at Maryann and saw a small smile on her face as she looked around the table. The next days with sitting with them brought me joy I acted the way I

wanted to, I acted like myself, a weird alien from another world who loves her friends to death and would do anything for them. Suddenly it went downhill because of someone telling me that I was weird. Despair filled my body up as fast as it could that day. I had cried in the school bathroom feeling hopeless and lonely again. When I went back to class, I just ignore everyone for the entire day. When I went home I looked at my phone and saw a notification from Maryann. She texted me and asked about why was I acting so different that day. Confusion filled up my brain, why does she care I am nobody, a nobody. Next thing I know is that I snapped and rambled on about everything. It was like being a 5-year-old again and having a tantrum about life not being fair. After I sent a long paragraph, I didn't get a response back, "of course she didn't respond back! She probably is annoyed by me! I'm so useless!" I told myself. That was not the case after 20 minutes, I got a notification. When I looked at it, it brought tears to my eyes, I do not remember it specifically, but I know it said, "You are not useless, You are not selfish, You are not alone, You aren't the nobody you say you are...I love you as my friend and I know how you feel, but life isn't fair, but I just want you to know is that you are not alone." After reading that I cried harder than I ever did, I was not alone. This made me wake up and realize that no one was judging me and that no one was making fun of me for being myself and that the one person who was attacking me...was just myself. I was self-attacking myself with all this negativity and hatred for who I am. Maryann taught me to love myself and to accept who I am as a person. She's the type of person to not back down on anything and if someone's in need she will not abandon matter the situation or the consequences.

These days true friends are hard to look and I'm glad that I found a friend that got me out of my depression and made me into the social being I am today. Back then the more I wanted to have friends with someone, the more lonely I felt. She had introduced me to my friends and created a person that loves herself. The other members of our group helped me more as time went by, they brought me out of my shell and became one of my weaknesses. Now the only time I'm mostly in pain is when they are in pain. I try my best to help others, which was something I always wanted to do but was shy or self-conscious of myself. Presently, I'm not like that anymore, I'm still self-conscious and that's never gonna leave me, but I am now stronger to fight my doubts most of the times. This is all thanks to my best friend Maryann even if she does not really consider me as her best friend, she will always be my best friend. Even when I fall and hurt myself I keep running towards my dream all thanks to her and my friends. I owe my friends so much and I want them to know that they are the ones that impacted my life the most. I wrote this to say thank you to Maryann, who introduced me to my friends. I will always be there for them no matter what even if they hate me, I will be here for them. They might not know this but they shaped me into this person, who does not care about anyone else but them and my family. Thank you so much, Maryann Vasquez, if it weren't for her I would not be the person I am today, thanks to her introducing me to my friends, I am currently running towards my dreams and nothing is gonna stop me from making them come true.

My Sister: 9th Grade

Silas Moore

Angry, loud, strong, caring, these are all words to describe my sister. If my sister has an opinion about something, best believe that she is going to say it. While at school she may be the quieter and more studious type, at home, she is another monster. My sister is Rowan Moore, it is her third year attending Nantucket High School, each term she passes with straight A's. My sister has a special bond with all animals, she has given many community service hours working at various barns around the island. My sister has taught me about the importance of doing what you believe in. Even if the workload feels like too much.

Last summer my sister spent six weeks working for an association called Green Mountain Horse Association in Vermont. Six out of ten weeks during summer she spent off island working from 5 o'clock in the morning to 8 o'clock at night. My sister kept working and I've never heard her complain about it once. Even working for minimal pay, and suffering from tax cuts, she kept working her hardest for all six weeks. She kept working hard because she was doing what she loved. I could see how tired my sister was the day she got back. She had been working so long, I could tell that it was a relief to get home. Even so, when I asked her what it was like to be working so hard for so long, she replied with "If you love what you do, you never work a day in your life."

I thought that that was pretty funny but I did take it to heart. Every time when I'm tired and don't want to study for the biology test or do Spanish homework, or even go to my practices, I think of my strong sister and all that she did it just one summer. My sister has motivated me to push through all the hardships. My sister takes all the AP classes that she can get her hands on. And even with the massive workload of a Junior she still finds time for my nonsense. She has given me this lesson to always strive for the best because I know that if I work as hard as she does I can reach any goal. I have adopted her work ethic and am trying to follow in her footsteps. Having somebody to chase helps me to better my effort. I am trying to summit all the peaks my sister did when she was my age.

My sister isn't perfect though, I have seen her stressed, angry and irrational. But she always manages to push through and meet her deadline. Rowan has always been helping me with the little things too. She will remind me to my chores, such as folding the laundry and picking up my dishes. Even though sometimes it just feels like incessant nagging, I still realize that she isn't doing it in my best interest. In the heat of the moment Rowan can seem just like a classic older sibling being awful. But eventually I come around and realize that most of the time she is right.

Rowan has impacted me in one major way. She has given me a lesson which will stay by my side for my life. No matter how hard any task may seem, it is important to keep fighting. This can be applied to nearly every challenge in somebody's life. Now on the night before biology test, or when I'm staring blankly, at my Spanish homework, or feel that I am too sore for practice, I remember this lesson, that is my sister.

Sisters: 9th grade

Emerson Milne

My sister, Wyeth, and I have always been close. When I was really young I had a speech delay and impediment. When everyone else had a hard time trying to piece together what it was that I was saying, Wyeth would always know, and translate on my behalf. She has always been there for both my brother and me. Although we are six years apart and now live in two different states, 90% of the year, she makes sure to facetime me at least once a week and will persistently text me until I respond. She also takes the time to hangout with us, her younger siblings, when she's back on Nantucket. Wyeth has a great work ethic when it comes to both school and jobs.

Through thick and thin and the occasional sibling fighting, Wyeth has unconditionally been there. She's the one I can go to for anything; advice, answers to questions, and even a good laugh! She's the one who taught me most of the things I know...which includes the things that annoy our mom the most. She has taught me how to bake, cook, ride a bike, and be funny. But most importantly she taught me how to be myself and succeed. Not only is Wyeth a great sister but, she is an even better student. I look up to her when it comes to school, and I know that she works really hard to get good grades. I am inspired and determined to do the same.

Throughout the years I have observed Wyeth work extremely hard to do well in school. On every assignment she tries her hardest and is often rewarded for her efforts, in the form of a well deserved good grade. This has inspired me to do the same, both in and out of school. Although this can sometimes be challenging, I know that she will be here to support me.

Wyeth has had a summer job every summer since she was 12 years old and has managed her money wisely. Now all of the money she earns during the summer goes towards college. She has also taught me to manage my money and has for many years through simple things. A number of years ago, while our mom was at work, and Wyeth was in high school, she would take my brother and me to town to get candy and lunch. We would spend the morning counting all of our spare change and some money that our mom had left us, to be able to use the most out of it. We would then take the bus to town and spend the rest of the afternoon there. I would

look forward to these days and be so excited when they happened. Even from small things like this, Wyeth has managed to teach me so many things.

Wyeth has taught me so much already, from doing well in school to having a great work ethic. She will continue to teach me new things and help me grow. Without her who knows what kind of person I would be today.

Impact on my Life: 9th grade

Keith-Anne Maynard

In a new community, it is rather difficult to get a sense of belonging and to find important places to go and how to get around. As a new student in a community, making friends is also difficult. Nantucket, being a small island, it is said that everyone knows everyone, and you don't want to be the new girl on the block. When coming from my lively community in the Virgin Islands, being an active church member, and school, I am very willing to continue with it wherever I go, because it is something dear to my heart. That being said, imagine being somewhere and feeling like the highest tower is not as tall as you because you helped your community just by singing. For some reason, it didn't feel like that would be the outcome, but I was wrong. Someone named Diane Lehman taught me otherwise. Mrs. Lehman is a mother and grandmother. Her passion is music; whether it's piano or just using your voice. She is a voice coach and piano teacher. She also gives up her time to serve in mass playing the piano and organizing the music. She has given me a great deal of respect for her. She has taught me a lesson that every single person should abide by.

I was eager to resume my religious activities in the church, such as being a cantor and being an active member of the choir, but when confronted by the actual activity I suddenly developed cold feet. I became shy and reserved and believe me I am not. Something unexplainable had overcome me and I felt as if I was held back. My mother was conscious of what was going on and encouraged me to talk to Ms. Diane. No encouragement was needed because she came up to us first and she was so warm and welcoming. She immediately started up a conversation and invited me to choir practice, we instantly became friends. She had such a great personality and had a smile like the sun. She was so impressed that I was capable of reading music, singing, enjoying what I was doing in the church and whatever she asked me to do I would do it. She loved that about me.

One cold, rainy, wintry morning with every single article of clothing wet we entered the Church. She was so happy to see us, overwhelmed with joy that I showed up. She could not stop saying how grateful she was that a young person was here to help and to sing in front of a large congregation. I felt on top of the world,

higher than a cloud. After that Mass, she realized what it took for us to get to Church on time. Without thinking, she offered us a car to drive during the months of February into March so I could be in school on time and attend mass on Sundays. All thanks to her we were able to get around the island with no problems. I was then able to arrive at school early without having to ask anyone for anything. Thankfully I am now an active member in the church choir and a chantor and I plan on helping in many more areas, which I thoroughly enjoy. Ms. Diane, in my opinion, went beyond her call of duty to accommodate my family and to help make us more comfortable here.

Mrs. Lehman taught me that no matter what, whenever you get an opportunity to help someone as small or big as it may seem or cause you an inconvenience do it with joy because that someone might have it worse off than you may imagine. She is very talented and in my opinion an extraordinary individual who will go the extra mile to make everyone smile. Ms. Diane is my first friend on the Island of Nantucket who made me feel so welcome and comfortable. She is a great encourager and very resourceful to me and I love her dearly. Now look at me, at my family. We now have our own vehicle, I am at school on time every morning, I proudly take part in the mass and have friends on Nantucket. I can safely refer to Mrs. Lehman as my role model of Nantucket and emergency contact.

My Brother: Grade 9

James Mack

“Always try your best. If you fail, you move on and do better.” Christian has motivated me with this saying many times in my life. My strong, caring, brother has slowly changed me to be a better person in today’s confusing world. My brother Christian has been my role model since day one. Christian is a 10th-grade student at Nantucket High school. My brother works like a bull every week helping our community one step at a time. With Christian making different decisions than me, I know what is wrong and right. Christian has shown me what good there is in the world and what the recent conflict is. A strong characteristic about him is he never stands down. Christian always stands up for what he believes in. My brother has taught me a very important lesson. I now know to never stand down. To always prove your point and to be confident in your opinion.

My brother really likes to stand up for what he believes is right. No matter the consequence he always proves other people wrong. Christian has taught me the lesson of being confident in your opinion by him going out and protesting for what he thought was right on gun safety. Seeing my brother go and march with his friends showed me that he is mentally strong. This lesson made me more confident in believing in what I want. Christian proved to me that if someone judges you, you ignore them and move on. Both at school and in public,

my brother is strong in how he is seen and expresses himself. Being beside him only makes me bolder in the way I express myself. My brother standing up against gun violence showed me that it is okay to go and fight for what you believe in. It taught me to be bold and to contribute to a cause. Christian has never shown weakness when it comes to him being courageous. It's almost as if he has become invincible. Him being my role model has changed my overall personality and outlook on the present world. My brother is so strong, he changes the way I see good and bad in the present day. I am now stronger with not holding back and watching. I now want to go and change for what I think is right. Christian taught me that. Christian showed me how to be the person I am today.

Being my role model since the beginning, Christian has taught me a lot. I have always looked up to him when I am confused or in need. The overall lesson Christian taught me was how to be confident in what you think is right. Christian proves this through self-motivation and going to get what he wants. He doesn't sit back and get anything. Christian goes and earns whatever he works for. Because of Christian marching against gun violence, I see the world differently. I now see more distinctly the good and evil on earth. Christians actions have helped me navigate my way both through middle school and 9th grade. He has shown me how to stay strong and to never give up. My brother has shown physical and mental strength which I plan to work towards. He has shown me he can swim like a shark and run like a cheetah. These are goals he has set for me and I plan on achieving some day. All of this represents my brother. A good brother. Christian overall has taught me to be disciplined and confident in myself. He has set goals for me to achieve and pass. My brother has taught me how to become a loyal, caring, strong, contributing person in our world today.

Maile Manejit: 9th Grade

Kathryn Kyomitmaitee

When people go back to reminisce about their past, they usually realize how much they've changed and how much they improved from the young child they once were. Usually, people don't stop to realize that the people around them usually influence them the most. Mostly, parents or teachers help develop the individual that you are, but what others don't realize is that the close friends you've had in the past also impact who you are on a major scale. For me, that person would be an eighth-grader named Maile. Maile and I have been together for as long as we can both remember. Although we would argue from time to time, we would always have a blast with each other. While our bond grew, our disagreements shrank, and we became inseparable after awhile. What she doesn't realize is that she really did impact whom I became today. Without her, I would've

never gained three important qualities of my life: my passion for volleyball, my for traveling, and most importantly, becoming more confident in myself.

Ever since I was younger, I've always been very unathletic. I terrible hand-eye coordination, I wasn't very strong, and to top it off I had asthma which prohibited me from performing my best. As time went on, my asthma improved to the point that I wouldn't experience any symptoms, and as a result I became a better athlete but I was still unathletic to the core since I didn't play in any sports since fourth grade. I wasn't introduced to another sport until eighth grade, which was volleyball. Maile and I were introduced to a show that was based on the sport, which both piqued our interests in it. Later, we both decided we were going to play on the volleyball team by the time I got into high school. After playing and practicing volleyball so much, I began to love the sport to the extent that I would wait weeks just to play volleyball at the club. This sport also taught me how to effectively manage my time. Being an athlete while handling all of my honors classes was extremely stressful, but the sport taught me how to relieve stress and have fun despite being under so much pressure. Without her, I wouldn't have grown the love I have toward this sport than I would have without her. Volleyball became a huge part of my life, and passing the ball back and forth with her would help me more than she'll ever realize it.

Another important factor that she had on my life was my love for traveling. Ever since I was a child, my family wouldn't travel very frequently. The only places that I've ever gone to with them were Quincy and Boston. This got remarkably repetitive since they were the only two places that I've ever gone in my life, which became boring and unamusing for me. Since I've traveled to basically the same place every single time, my curiosity for traveling grew and I wanted to understand what "real traveling" was like. With that, Maile's family finally allowed me to get exposure to my goal. Whenever her family would go onto trips, they allow me to tag along, and I finally got to go to places like Washington DC and Vermont which were much more interesting than Boston. To the memories that we made to the beautiful sightseeing to eating the delicious food was something that I couldn't leave out of my life any longer. Traveling has allowed me to see the world in a different perspective then just a tiny island in the Atlantic Ocean, and for me to experience how beautiful life truly is. Without her family, I would have never known how much I loved to travel, and they allowed me to gain experience of what traveling feels like and I will be always thankful for them for introducing this part of my life to me.

Lastly, Maile was the person that help me become a confident and outgoing person. If you were to ask someone that knew me from the past, they would describe me as a really shy and wouldn't really talk to people who weren't my friends. But whenever I would hang out with Maile, I found myself becoming a completely different person and I would have a more loud and outgoing personality. Later, I started acting like the person I would when I was around Maile with other people. Now, I enjoy the new person that I am than the person in the past. I like being more outgoing since I can have confidence when I talk to people than be reclusive, it was like

being set free from an iron cage for the first time in my life. I sometimes act shy in class, but that's only when I don't have anyone to talk to. Now, I can easily talk to people and socialize which is definitely something I couldn't do in the past. Without Maile, I wouldn't have this essential life skill with me today, which is definitely something that everyone needs in their everyday life.

Overall, without Maile, I would definitely wouldn't be the person that I am today. Volleyball has helped learn to love sports, and most importantly learn how to manage my time. Traveling has allowed me to see the world outlook and to see how lovely the world is. Lastly, becoming more confident in myself has helped me more than I could ever thank Maile. Being more confident has given me life skills that I would need later on in my life, like being able to express who I truly am which is one of the most vital factors for expressing your identity. If I had never met Maile, I wouldn't have some of the most important qualities of my life, and not having them would be like living in another universe and I couldn't imagine myself without them.

Time Flies by Like A Blink of an Eye: 9th Grade

Viktoria Krasteva

Nantucket is a very tight knit community. It's a small island with not many people. Everyone knows everyone. This isn't really the case for my parents. My parents moved from Bulgaria to Nantucket in 2003. They didn't know many people or much English. As cliché as it sounds my parents met a lot of people at Bulgarian parties. That's how they met Jessica's parents. They connected because they were both Bulgarian and they understood each other.

Jessica was three years old at the time, meanwhile I wasn't alive yet, but on my way. My parents met Jessica and her parents and from then on they started talking more. On October 13, 2003 I was born, her family was in the room. She is obviously a little older than me and she taught me basically everything I needed to know. I am the first child in my family and so Jessica was like the sister I never had. She played that role in my life and taught me everything I needed to know about school, boys, friendships, and even fashion. I learned so much from her and hope that she knows that.

It was November 2015, I was in elementary and she was in middle school. My family and her family were having dinner together, as usual. While our parents were talking in the living room, Jessica and I sat on her bed talking and playing with dolls. I would sit on her bed and braid the dolls hair. She had just finished talking about how she's having less and less friends as she got older. I was thinking to myself, *that will never happen to me, it just can't*. My childhood was fun, I can't deny that. We would have playdates, at her house and tell ghost stories, play with dolls, talk about boys and do pretty much everything a girl would do in 2015. We got older.

She started working, I started hanging out with friends that were my age, she started talking to more boys. Everything was so different. The most different thing was, I stopped going over to their house. Everytime my parents said “We are going to Jess’! Want to come?” I simply just declined. I gave excuses and sometimes reasons why I couldn’t go. One of my excuses were “Sorry too much homework” or “I’m too tired.” Lies. Big, lazyish, lousy, lies. The real reason I stopped going is because Jessica wasn’t at her house anymore. She started going places at night, and being a real teenager. Sometimes I would go over without knowing she had left, so I ended up just sitting on the couch on my mom’s phone playing games for hours, while my brother was playing with her older brothers in the basement. It wasn’t fun. But the times she was there we wouldn’t really talk. Some time went by and I stopped going. The only time that my family forced me to go to their house was Thanksgiving. I understood that, since you gather with your friends and family and feast. It was important to my parents so I wanted to make them happy, even if I wasn’t happy. Now Jessica has a boyfriend. She was invited to go to his house for Thanksgiving dinner. To be honest, you could smell the turkey from miles away and did the turkey taste good as well. When I arrived she was still at her house getting ready. I took my shoes off and jumped on the couch. I sunk right as if I was jumping into a pool. She saw me sitting on my phone and came to hug me. She was the mommy bear and I was the cub and she was protecting me, that’s how it felt when she hugged me. She always does that. It made me happy. We ate some dinner, talked, laughed and felt it like the good old days.

Now that I am fifteen years old, I learned many things from her. Being a teenager isn’t fun, but it has it ups and downs. It doesn’t sound like a whole lot of time but to me it flew by. I’m happy for Jessica. She really showed me the importance of my teens years. She got accepted to a college for art in Atlanta, Georgia and I couldn’t be any more happy for her. She has inspired me to go for my dreams (as basic as it sounds, its true.) I see her in the hallways everyday and I always make sure to get a little wave or a “hello”. Although we didn’t spend too much time together, she really was the only person who understood what I was going through, because she was the closest family friend I knew and really cared about me. If I ever got hurt or got in an accident and my family wasn’t picking up the phone, she would be the person I would call right away, that is how important she is to me.

The Lesson That Changed Me: 9th Grade

Kevin Johnson

When most people are challenged with adversity they choose to give up, but a few take the adversity as motivation to be better. Todd Bohannon taught me many lessons that have changed me into the person I am

today. He is the former head coach of Nantucket Dolphins and Wack Swimming and coached me for three years. He has spent endless hours working hard in his office trying to improve every swimmer he has coached. Todd is an expert at what he does and he produces many of the top swimmers in New England. He has faced tough injuries in his lifetime and even though they held him back, he always gave his best effort. He has taught me many lessons that have shaped me into who I am, but one lesson that stuck with me is to work hard through the good times and the bad because hard work will always pay off, you just need to trust the process.

A great example of the lesson that Todd taught me was when I fractured my collarbone on a nasty November night while roughhousing with friends at a Whalers game. It felt like someone had smashed my shoulder with a jackhammer. I wasn't able to swim for six weeks. I had a swim meet the next day and I remember going to Todd to tell him what had happened. I told him that I had injured my shoulder, he reassured me that everything would be alright and I just needed to rest it. Then I realized the MIT Invite was coming up in seven weeks, the thought of missing it hit me like a ton of bricks. I feared that I'd miss the biggest meet of my life. Over the course of my injury, all I could think about was MIT. I worried constantly. I would often have talks with Todd after practices and he told me to rest my shoulder and not to rush the process or else it would affect me in the long run. He told me that so many times it was like he was on repeat. He just wanted me to trust the process. Finally, the time had come, after a week of kicking, I was finally permitted to swim. The only thing was there were only four days until I had to travel to MIT University. While I talked with Todd, we decided to swim easy that week so I could swim as fast as possible at the MIT Invite. All the time out of the pool made practices feel like swim lessons. After what felt like years of waiting, the day had finally come to travel to Boston for the meet. I was excited and nervous at the same time because I was unsure of how I would swim with four days of training under my belt. Once we got to the pool, Todd reminded that I shouldn't put too much pressure on myself to swim fast. He told me that big things would come down the road and I just needed to trust the process. I swam well considering the situation I was in. After coming back from the MIT Invite I was motivated to work hard and swim fast. When I had gotten back in the pool and started swimming tough workouts again it was like a slap in the face. I hadn't done a hard workout in over a month and I was feeling it. Todd reminded me of the goals and swim meets I was training for. Those reminders helped me get through many practices. As I got back into the swing of things Todd started ramping up the workouts telling me and my teammates no pain, no gain. I would go to meets extremely tired and not swim to the expectations I set but Todd would remind me to trust the process. We were one month out from Regionals, the end of season meet which I had been training for all year. Everyone was getting very excited. The final practice was over and it was time to swim fast and show off all the hard work in the pool. It was easy to stay calm before my races knowing that Todd had trusted me and all the work we had done in training. As the meet went on I was swimming extremely well. I felt like a dolphin racing through the water. At the end of the meet, I was extraordinarily

proud of how I swam. I had broken three records, records that I thought were unrealistic goals before the meet. I felt like I had conquered the world. This was a great example of Todd teaching me to always work hard and trust the process because he encouraged me to put in the work even when the times aren't so good, like when I had my shoulder injury. He also taught me to trust the process, such as when he told me not to worry when I wasn't swimming to the expectations I had set because of the fatigue from working so hard in the pool. Todd said that hard work pays off and it did at regionals when I smashed my expectations and broke three records. I wouldn't have been able to achieve these goals without Todd teaching me the importance of working hard and trusting the process.

All things considered, working hard through the good and the bad times while trusting the process is important because it will help you succeed as it did for me in swimming. This moral also shaped me into who I am today and can be used in more than just swimming, it can be used in life. For example, I use this lesson in more than just the pool, I use it in school when I am struggling with work that I don't understand or with my family when we have a disagreement. Throughout the years Todd has shaped me as a person by teaching me how to work hard and not give up when I am faced with adversity.

Canadian Inspiration: Ninth Grade

Danielle Holmes

Who would've thought that my wonderful Canadian Grandmother would shape the way I look at things. Yvette Petitclerc, my Grandma, lives in Saint Hubert, Québec. Every April break and in the summertime I go to visit her. She speaks fluent French and only knows around five words of English. She has taught me some French along the way and taught me to be bilingual. She also has taught me to never give up. The last few years have been very tough for her with sicknesses in and out of the doctor's offices. Recently, she got better but not 100%.

In 2017-18 she got sick. In Canada it's super cold and dry so it is easy to catch a cold, even though, it doesn't help that her house is always 85 degrees fahrenheit. Her sickness progressed and she was in the ICU. Those were hard times for her and my family. We traveled down to see her and I was a little bit sick at the time too, so I couldn't see her as much as the others. Once she saw us she felt a need to carry on. Then she was moved, just to a shared hospital room to make sure she was ok. During Easter she was in the hospital and we would celebrate it with her. It was affecting our family tremendously because my mother and I would be sad and worried for her. My Grandmother was sad, sick, and sensitive. But she persevered and seeing us made her happy. She was stronger than a lion in her recovery. Two months later she was in her own home and happy.

Though we can't communicate everything, she makes me happy and has taught me to never give up. She shows so much affection and it warms my heart.

During my last trip to Canada, in April, she was making sure our bed was in perfection. Clothes had been on the ground and she tripped on them. She fell onto the blow up bed we were going to sleep on for the week. She took about ten minutes to get up to make sure she was ready for us. My uncle and mom had to slide her on a seat so she could get up in a safe spot. When we saw her, her face dropped and she gave me the saddest look, automatically I could tell she was embarrassed that her grandchildren had to see her in the state she was in. She got a huge bruise and the next day she slept for a long time. Later when she woke up, she was able to walk again. I was so proud of her and inspired.

In sports and even my homework, when I feel like giving up I try my best to keep going because I think of her and how much she went through. I believe that other people should think the same way. From ups and downs in her health, she still shows all the love I could ever ask for, takes care of us when we come, continues to teach me French, and inspires me in my daily activities.

Flipping Forward : Ninth Grade

Arielle Holmes

Growing up we learn lessons in all different ways, through fairy tales and books, movies, and of course, the parentals. Though, some of the most important lessons I have learned, aren't from my family, they are from my community. I have learned to take chances because of Hillari Chatti. During 2016, Hillari was one of my gymnastics teachers. In the present, the roles have slightly reversed and I now have the pleasure to teach her daughter in CCD. Hillari is an avid community member who has an impressive, lengthy title of mom, teacher, leader, and above all a friendly face. I am so content to have had her impact my life and the way I live it. Whether it was a new skill, or an upcoming opportunity in my life, Hillari has taught me to just take the chance.

During a gymnastics practice one evening, Hillari pulled a few girls over to a secluded mat. She stood near the middle of the mat, leaving just enough room for a person to tumble and room for her to spot. I was in the center of the line, curious as to what skill we would be learning. The first girl prepared herself and that is when it dawned on me, we would be doing backflips. My stomach felt as if it were flipping on the mat as the line got shorter. All of a sudden my feet were on the intimidating mat and Hillari was there to spot my back. Feeling my nervous energy, Hillari filled me with encouragement, telling me, "You got this" and "Try it, you'll be fine." She counted down and when she reached one, I flipped backwards. I could feel her hands helping me throw my legs backwards and land on my feet, the world turning around me. I don't think I took a breath the

entire time, and was stunned when my feet hit the mat. “You did it!” Hillari exclaimed. I was shocked, a little dizzy, and felt as if I had just gotten off of a roller coaster. Though the most memorable feeling was confidence. Thanks to Hillari, I anticipated my next skill, life opportunity, and took the chance.

Three years later, that confident feeling is still with me. It led me to try cheerleading, and guided me through tryouts. All thanks to Hillari, learning a new shot in lacrosse isn't scary, it's opportunistic. Now when I travel to new places, I don't holdback when it comes to trying new things, everything deserves a shot. Even if I know there's a possibility I could miss the goal, lose the chance, miss the mark, or be completely disappointed, the drive to try smokes all the outcomes thicker than the fog on Nantucket. Had Hillari not chosen me to try that notorious backflip, not fed me with confidence and shown faith, my life would be insanely different. My decisions would be inclusive and my life would be on a tight reign. There is a very high chance I wouldn't have taken this Honors English class or have played three high school sports if it weren't for her roots of encouragement that have sprouted a budding tree in my life. All in all, Hillari Chatti has taught me to take chances and just go for it.

Coach Phil Taylor: 9th Grade

Justin Ho-Shue

To make great achievements, you must make a commitment and be willing to take the challenge. You need to work hard for success. The important community figure in my life is my Coach, Phil Taylor. I've known Phil since the day I began playing soccer with Nantucket. He had been there during recreational soccer when I was a young kid, and he's still here with my travel soccer. Phil has been one of the most enthusiastic people I have ever met. His motivational and supportive words have not only inspired me, but all others who have known him. Coach Phil is not only significant in the soccer community. He contributes to the town community by volunteering and participating in fundraisers. Phil Taylor is also a family friend and a former DJ. In the past few years, I have gotten to know Phil more than ever. Three years ago he volunteered to be my team's coach for Nantucket Soccer. He became my team's favorite coach, his way of training us was fun yet critical. This continued for a couple of years and our bond only strengthened. However, just last year he introduced us to a top tier league where we would play for the Liverpool Football Club Academy. He promised would be there every step of the way as our coach. My team accepted the challenge because we knew Phil had the potential of making us a highly skilled team. Because we have transferred from playing soccer for Nantucket to the LFC Academy, I now know Phil as a seriously dedicated LFC Academy Coach. To further extent, I also know Phil through our one on one connection about my goalkeeping. I've been the goalkeeper for

my team for some time and Phil has always given me tips, provided goalie training, and supplied gear for me. These things he has done for me in my soccer community have taught me how to play my role on the team, work hard, and take difficult challenges. This has not only had an effect on the field but also in my life.

A perfect example of a time when Phil taught me an important lesson was when we entered and won the Needham tournament. It wasn't just the tournament, but the practices and games leading up to the Needham tournament are what made the experience so momentous. When the season started we all knew about the Needham tournament and its difficult competition. We expected a highly strenuous season comprised of heavy conditioning. That season's training felt like flames on our calves. Day after day, scorching sun, seas of sweat, it was all part of working hard and advancing our skills. Phil was teaching us how to work hard for success. My training was different from the others, I would be the one in the net. Every game, I would have the pressure of sandbags on my shoulders, and the and the only way I could get them off was through pushing myself to do better. Coach Phil understood this more than anyone because he happened to be a goalkeeper when he was younger. Because of his better understanding of my situation, he tried his best to make sure I was improving. He hosted goalie clinics with me and always tried to implement goalie work into the rest of the teams training. During the season he also encouraged to invest more of my time into exploring goalkeeping. He also taught me how to play my role by teaching me leadership and independence. He taught me leadership by always showing me how to direct and command my defensive line. This was important because my communication with the team would ensure we didn't concede goals. The season continued on like this until it was time for the Needham Tournament. The Needham tournament was going to be the toughest competition we would ever face. The week leading up for the tournament my stomach was filled with butterflies and I couldn't get it off my mind. The weekend came sooner than ever, and before I knew it, my gloves and cleats were on. I remember hearing the first air piercing whistle of the tournament and feeling the soft tacky texture of my goalkeeper gloves. The first and second game went amazing and we were on our way to the finals. In the finals, Phil was the best Coach imaginable. He was making all the right calls for the team and the team line-up he directed made us an unbreakable wall. I can still picture the sight of my defense in front of me working harder than ever. In the end, we came out victorious in a 1-0 win. The lessons he taught me paid off and we became the first ever Nantucket team to win the Needham Tournament. After we received the individual medals, the trophy stood in our hands, rising in glory. The sole reason why we earned that trophy was that Phil forced us to work hard and overcome.

The importance of Coach Phil's lesson is how they impact my present life. There are perfect examples of this in my life constantly, it can be found in school and at home. In school, I'm always putting time and effort into getting A's in every subject, and I'm always responsible when it comes to studying. Additionally, at home, I'm always on my own doing things making myself food and dealing with my own priorities by myself. Lastly,

I express my leadership when I do group activities. I'll usually express my ideas and try to finish the job. Given these points, the way I do things now would never have been the same if it wasn't for the lessons Phil taught me. With his help, I learned how to make great achievements, and with that, I thank him for shaping me to who I am now.

My influencer: Grade 9

Sara Gazaille

In life, we all experience ups and downs, but along the way, we have many people to guide us in the right direction. Over the years there have been many people in my life that have helped guide and shape me into the person I am today. One huge influence in my life is Sunny Lund, a person that has helped get me where I am today. She happens to be a close family friend and someone that I always look up to. Her affectionate and joyish personality makes her someone that you want to be around. When you are talking to her you feel a warmth inside of your body, which makes you feel better instantly. She is always there for you when you are having a bad day or just when you need someone to talk to. I have learned a lot of important lessons from Sunny that I always keep in mind. But the most important one that Sunny passed down to was to be kind and caring to everyone that you meet.

Kindness, something that over the years I have learned from many different people in my life. Whether it was to show kindness to the people that you meet, or teach others to show kindness. Sunny, a person that told me that in a world with many bad people that we have to be the good the world needs. This made me want to help people and give back to the community, which has done so much for me. Whenever we would have people over and Sunny was there, she took the time to get to know them. She would ask them questions and get to know them better, showing each person that she cares. I always try to take notice in the ways that Sunny interacts with people seeing that she makes them feel good about themselves. Sunny is as caring and loving as a person can be, and this helps her everywhere that she goes. The words of wisdom that she has passed on to me are words and phrases that I will never forget. Sunny has shaped me into a person who is caring and kind to everyone. It is an amazing piece of advice that should be passed on to everyone to help rid the evil in the world.

Change is something that everyone ends up going through in life, some change can be bad, some can be good. What has changed me into who I am today is the people in my life and in my community. Sunny is someone that has changed me in the best way possible, she told me to be kind. Kindness has a huge effect on people all around the world as it brings out the best in us. Sunny said that if we are kind to people, kindness and gratitude might be returned to us in the future. Thanks to Sunny I always keep an open mind and try to show a

little bit of kindness to others wherever I go. Everyone has their ups and downs in life, but it is important to show people that you are here for them and that you care.

The Person Who Shaped Me: 9th Grade

Emily Dussault

Always helping the community and serving others is how you can be such a positive and great community member. Vin Debaggis is supportive, understanding, and is always open to helping people. Vin is a husband, father, and community member. Vin has taught me the importance of helping the community. Vin is a religious educator for our freshman Confirmation class and helps out at the Nantucket Community Dinners where we serve people a free three-course meal on the second Tuesday of every month. Vin has taught me the importance of helping the community, and he has helped me be the person I am today.

I have known Vin Debaggis for a few years, and he has taught me the value of helping the community. Vin helps out at the Nantucket Community Dinners, where we serve a free three-course meal to people all over Nantucket. At the community dinners, Vin usually helps out in the kitchen, and my friend Sara and I help out by greeting people when they walk in and giving them name tags, and also giving out the food to people and cleaning up after. Whenever we see Vin he is always cheerful and has a smile as bright as the sun. Vin has made it enjoyable for me and my friend to help the community in this way. When we show up to help, Vin is always working hard to do whatever he can to help out, his impact on the community has a ripple effect, which makes us want to help too. Vin is also the CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) teacher at Saint Mary's church where he teaches a group of freshman students on Sunday nights. He is teaching us about Jesus, and how to be a better Christian and to be better people in general. With Vin teaching me the importance of helping the community and taking the time out of his day to teach us about God, I think this has a big impact on my life, who I am today, and who I will be when I'm older.

One time I was at the Nantucket Community Dinners doing community service, and I was not totally focused on it, because I had a lot of homework and I had a biology test the next day that I had not studied very much for, and I still had to go to swim practice after. Vin helped me realize that helping the community will make you feel good and that a bad grade on one biology test out of the whole year is like a grain of sand on the whole beach. He made me realize it is not as big of a deal as the way you are impacting these people's lives in the community, and how happy you are making them feel by spending time out of your day and being positive

towards them. Vin taught me that in life, later on, you can't let the little things in life slow you down from doing anything. Vin takes time out of his day to help the community all the time and on Sunday nights to teach us about Jesus. Vin has taught me the importance of helping the community and how doing a little thing can make someone feel so good, and I think I will always remember that.

I now think it is important to take time out of your day to help the community even if you are stressed about other things. Vin has shown me how much he cares about our CCD class and how much he cares about the community. I will always think about helping the community in a different way now. I now know to go in with a positive attitude and don't let the little things discourage you.

Book Festival Essay: 9th Grade

Cole Evens

For so many years people have told me to always keep trying and to never give up. I have always listened to it, but never really took the advice in. This changed this past year when someone gave this advice when I really needed it. The person that really taught me perseverance is Joe Verderber. Joe is a native of Walpole, Massachusetts and a frequent visitor of Nantucket. He is a house builder in Walpole. Joe does so much for his community. Joe played hockey for Walpole High School, then went on to play at Brown University. He now coaches three youth teams for the Walpole Express. Joe also coaches Walpole's girls high school hockey team. Joe is the type of person that will push you until your legs are like jello. But in the long run he is doing it so that we can succeed. Joe wants everyone to do the best they can and succeed in life. Joe Verderber taught me a very important lesson, to never get up.

This past year I was playing fall hockey for Nantucket's youth hockey program. During a game in October I was hit from my back into the boards. My arm hit the edge of the boards, and broke. With the initial shock I didn't feel a single thing, until I got off the ice. My glove slipped off and my arm was all twisted and deformed. With adrenaline running through my body, I had to move it back to its place. All I wanted to think was that I was ok, but the truth was the total opposite. I finally had to admit to myself that I was not ok, and that I had to go to a hospital. During an ambulance ride to Boston, my mind was moving so fast. I couldn't stop thinking about what had just happened to me, the fact that I would have to sit out from participating in the thing that makes me the happiest, hockey. The only pain I could feel was not being able to play my favorite sport. After many hours in Boston Children's and a mini procedure, I left the hospital devastated.

While I sat in a cast for two months just watching everyone play and have a good time, many people in my community were very inspiring and encouraging. One person in particular, Joe Verderber helped influence

me a lot during this time. When I got my cast off and a brace on, my whole left arm felt incredibly weaker than my right arm. When I started to play hockey again in mid January it hadn't gotten much stronger or normal looking. I was not the same person on the ice anymore. My confidence and strength had gone way down in the time that was away from the game. I had been with on the high school team while I was hurt. When I got back, I only practiced because I was not yet physically ready for games. Near the end of January the coach of the high school told me that my arm was too weak and not ready for games. From then on I just practiced and played with JV hockey. It wasn't exactly what I wanted, but it was what I got. After this Joe was very encouraging towards me. I immediately went and played for the team that he coaches. I went off the island every Thursday and Sunday to play hockey. I also started to work out three days a week to get stronger. Joe Verderber gave me many opportunities to play hockey off island and get back to the player I was. He taught me to persevere and to never stop trying. He helped me push through a rough time. Joe taught me a very good lesson, to never give up.

Joe Verderber has taught me a lesson that will help me during life. While I was hurt and sidelined from my favorite sport, he helped me get back into it. When I got cleared to play again he gave me many opportunities to get stronger and get back to playing. Joe Verderber taught me to persevere and to never give up.

My Aunt Stacey: 9th Grade

Emma Davis

It's always a relief to have that one person that you know will constantly have your back. Ever since I can remember, my Aunt Stacey has been that person for me. Stacey is my father's little sister, and the mother of my two hilarious cousins, Brooke and Dylan. She works at Nantucket Cottage Hospital, and is very committed to her work there. She has taught me many things in the past fifteen years, but one in particular has stuck with me. She has taught me to always be confident in who I am and where I come from. This message has shaped me to become more confident in myself, and has also helped me in times of doubt. My Aunt Stacey has helped me become who I am today.

Out of the many instances where my aunt has told me to be proud of who I am and where I come from, one time in particular has really stuck with me. It was my twelfth birthday, and my first without my dad. As you can imagine, I had a mix of emotions on this day, and I honestly couldn't wait for it to be over. That misty, mellow, March day felt as if it lasted a year. Even the cake that my mom made me every year didn't smell of dark, rich chocolate. And when I bit into it, it didn't taste like it had in previous years. It felt as if it was missing

something. I had opened gifts from both family and friends earlier that day, but I had saved a few for later on. One of the gifts that I had saved happened to be the one from Stacey, my uncle Nate, and my cousins, Brooke and Dylan. Before I opened the gift that my they had given me, I noticed that there was a card hidden underneath the tissue paper that made a crinkling noise when I touched it. I lifted the card out of the bag that the present had been in. The card felt light in my hand. When I opened it, I saw that my aunt had written me a little note at the bottom of the card underneath the big “Happy Birthday!” that almost jumped off of the card at me. It read, “Never forget who you are and where you come from. Keep shining your light.” This simple little note that she had written at the bottom of a birthday card changed my entire mood for the remainder of the day. I can’t even remember what the present was that I had received from my cousins that day, because it didn’t matter to me after reading the card. At the same time that it made me feel happy, it also made me feel comforted. It gave me something to be proud of, and helped me feel more confident in myself.

To this day, I continuously remind myself of this message when I need it the most. Whether it be at home, at the pool, on the lacrosse field, or at school, I use this message as a source of motivation. If ever I feel upset, or in need of some confidence, I repeat the message over and over in my head. I also find this message helpful because it came from my aunt. I look up to my aunt in so many ways. She is such an inspiration to me. My Aunt has been through quite a lot in her lifetime, and still manages to be an incredible wife, mother, aunt, and most importantly a shoulder to lean on. “Always be confident in who you are and where you come from,” is an uplifting message, and one to live by.

The Long Road to Dreams: Ninth Grade

Hannah Dalton

Almost everyone you will ever talk to has someone in their life who has helped shape them into who they are today. For me, this person is my Aunt Holly. When one thinks about what they wish to be like as an adult, she is exactly the type of person who will come to mind. She has worked hard her entire life to become a successful businesswoman. Holly was living on her own until about two years ago, but that never stopped her. She is independent, caring, and smart, all things I aspire to be. Because of this, she is one of my biggest role models. Holly has taught me to never give up and to always work hard to achieve what you may think is impossible.

Holly spent her life working to get to where she is with her career and became a strong and independent woman in the process. I remember the day she got married last October to a wonderful man named Jason. Of course this was something she had always wanted, but she was not going to change herself for anyone. She just

waited for the right time and the right man and now another one of her dreams has to come to life. Now, getting married and having Jason in her life wasn't going to make her who she was, but just add to the people she made happy. This showed me that other people don't make you who you are, they just add to your life.

My Aunt Holly is also one of the most caring and empathetic people I know. She is consistently willing to help and take care of others no matter what. For example, she is always there for my Grandpa Eddie when he needs her. Although they live in different states, she travels to see him whenever she can. She helps him out with whatever he needs, whether it is taking him shopping or just spending time together. Although she already has so much on her plate, she sacrifices a little extra time to spend with him. This shows me that there is always a way to help someone else, even if it means sacrificing something else you want to do. It will usually pay off more because you made someone feel good and in return you feel good about yourself.

Holly is always one to have fun and make light of unfortunate situations. One day, when I was visiting my grandmother, Holly and I went roller skating and rollerblading. She had white roller skates with hot pink wheels and I had lilac purple rollerblades. After what was probably close to an hour, Holly tripped and broke her ankle. At first, we were unaware of the seriousness of what had happened. Thinking she had only twisted her ankle, we started laughing and laid out on the pavement pretending like we were hurt from our adventure. Little did either of us know, she was very hurt. She ended up having to get two plates and seven screws put into her ankle in order for it to heal properly. However, she didn't let this dull her sparkle. She was only thinking about the fun we had. After getting the surgery to repair her ankle, Holly decided to joke around about what had happened. She even had to use a knee scooter which she "bedazzled" with countless colors of jewels to match her personality. To this day, she still makes fun of herself, laughing about what she had to go through just from a small fall. This showed me that even when there is something bad going on, you can always look on the bright side to make yourself and those around you a little less upset.

Because of my Aunt Holly, I know that I can do absolutely anything I put my mind to and I am the only one who can achieve my goals. No one is going to work hard for me. I set high goals and do everything I can to reach them. I try my best to help others whenever I can, something she has shown me is always important. When something doesn't go my way, I try to make the best of it. Even though this is challenging for me, I think of her and how she acts in those types of situations. I hope to go to college and try my best in everything I do in my future. I hope that as an adult I can be at least half as great as Holly, someone who is strong, independent, positive and kind.

Someone Worth Learning From: 9th grade

Alexis Connole

There is always someone in your life who shapes the person you are becoming, that person for me is my oldest brother, Liam Connole. Liam is currently 18 years old and attending Santa Clara University. He is relatively short, has dark brown hair, is often antisocial, and has taught me so much throughout my life so far. He has spent more time with me than either of my parents combined. Although it's hard to find a moment when we are not fighting, the moments that exist have taught me more than most. Liam has taught me how to control myself because sometimes appearance is more important than rage. He has taught me how to be better through my mistakes as well as his and to not be knocked down, persuaded, or pushed around by anyone. I still struggle with all that he has taught me and all that I have and continue to learn from his silent presence.

One particular memory I have with Liam is the time that I wanted to join the diving team and Liam decided to join soon after. I was furious with him at first because this was something I wanted to do on my own and have him not be involved. Obviously, my reasons were selfish and do my dismay Liam ended up joining the diving team with me and turned out to be pretty good. He even made some friends on the team, which was surprising since he was relatively antisocial. Anyway, as we both started to progress in diving, Liam got into trampoline tricks which he found quite intriguing. This majorly helped improved his diving skills, I could see him getting better than me and most of our other teammates. Liam had suddenly become a likable star on the team which motivated me to want to get better. Although it killed me to ask him for help, I knew he would help me further improve.

After asking him for help, he decided to teach me some trampoline tricks to improve my skills on and off the diving board. Even though I knew that it would be difficult to learn and I may not get to be better than him, I enjoyed him helping me and teaching me how to improve. On the trampoline and at diving practice for days in a row, Liam would push me to try new things although I wouldn't always have the strength to do them. It was actually quite funny that my brother, who was shy and quiet and didn't necessarily like to take to many risks, had been taking so many on the trampoline and diving board. I never understood why taking risks on the trampoline and diving board was easier for him then taking social risks, but I think I'll never fully understand him. Furthermore, Liam always told me and continues to tell me how I make my own decisions and that I can do anything that I set my mind to. As I still dive today I'll never forget how much he helped and inspired me during that time.

Moving forward, he showed me how much he had taken a liking to what he was doing and I couldn't imagine him not doing diving or doing tricks on the trampoline. He showed me how small things can shine the

brightest if put in the right light. I still continue to learn from him every day even though he is 3,217 miles away, which sometimes feels like a million. Though he drives me insane the majority of the time, when it's just him and I, everything feels better. I'm aware that our relationship has and will always be rocky and twisted but he teaches me so much in school, in diving, in mistakes, and in life.

Overall, Liam Connole has and will always be a huge part of my life no matter if we're a world away or a room. He knows how to make me mad but also teaches me when I don't want to learn. Liam always pushes me to do my best, and be the best version of myself. Although he has the power to make me feel so weak, he also has the power to make me feel strong. I have learned so much from him and the ups and downs of our relationship, it's what has made me the person I am today, as well as helping me move towards the person I want to become. For this I want to thank him for loving me, hating me, teaching me, and everything in between.

Who has influenced you? 9th grade

Rowan Callahan

The path to success is the one that you carve out with blood, sweat, and tears. The hours of practice, the pain, the focus, the flame in your heart that fuels you further. Mrs. Brannigan is the Nantucket High School AP U.S History teacher. She is a mom of three awesome kids with fire-bright personalities. Mrs.Brannigan is an amazing lacrosse coach with more than two lifetimes full of experience. Like me, she is also a new member of the Nantucket community. Mrs.Brannigan has taught me about dedication and hard work, about not caring about the preconceived ideas people have about you, and that the only limitations you have in your life are the ones you set for yourself.

It was the second day of lacrosse tryouts in my freshman year of high school. As I stood at the field with anticipation, I could feel my heart beat harder and harder like my own personal drum company. As the girls around me filled the crisp April air with conversation about today's topic of practice, my mind began to wander with possibilities of failure. You see, the day before this I had just been cleared to return to athletics after a very bad injury that I had endured during basketball in the previous season. The head coach Jami called the herd of girls into the center of the field. The loud chatter fell into heavy silence and anxiety to see what she had in store for us today. She explained that we would be running the standard two-mile run and that it would be quick and easy. I knew this would not be the case. We line up in preparation for our run, the conversations becoming lively once more. We began marching like toy soldiers around the faint white field lines.

Our feet began to move in a unified cadence that no one knew we could perform. Our cleats hit the ground like rolling thunder in a storm. Our cylindrical cleat spikes cascaded into the muddy grass. As we

approached the second lap everyone fell into their own rhythm, and I started to fall into a staggered pace myself, every step matching the beats of my heart and the puffs of foggy air. With every girl that passed me, my mind went to the inevitable thoughts of being judged on my performance. It came to be my fifth lap. I was so close. When I hit the line to start my sixth, the timekeeper had called my time assuming I had finished. I thought to myself, that if I were to stop now I wouldn't be the last, and I wouldn't fail. At this point, my heartbeat rang like a silent symphony throughout my tired body. My morals spoke in my head telling me that cheating would do nothing but put me below everyone else. I swallowed my pride and disregarded anyone's opinions about me. I began to move my feet at a new beat. One that carried a heavyweight of pride in myself that I had taken a truthful and honest path, the fear of judgment and sense of doubt rolling off my back like rain off the petals of a flower. With each strike of my feet, my anxiety dissipated more and more. I didn't feel as if I was running anymore, I was simply there. I noticed a sleek figure creeping up behind me. It was my new coach Mrs.Brannigan. She looked happy to be there, even though we were all drained from the days before. She told me to keep my head up and to go at my own pace. She said with faith in her voice that she knew that I was trying hard, and she was proud that I had been truthful. The fact that someone believed in the slow kid, or even the new kid made me feel important and like I had a purpose on this team. She saw potential through the shiny black helmet and the baggy sweat pants that most didn't. She put her effort and faith into me and I will never be able to thank her enough for that. She is not only a strong member of the Nantucket community, but she is also a strong role model for young girls hoping to go through life with flying colors, the embodiment of a strong woman.

She gave me undiscovered confidence that I have never had before. Having such a strong role model has helped form me not only into the player I am today but the person I will always be. I have never stopped working as hard as I can and going after my far-fetched dreams, and that is because of her. Thank you, coach.

Lesson Learned: 9th grade

Abigail Boylan

The person that helped shaped me today, taught me that failing is just another reason to try harder. Also that you should never give up. The person that inspired me is Renee Roos.

She lives on Cape Cod and she is a coach. Renee is a figure skating coach in different rinks in Massachusetts. She has been my coach for 4 years. I have been skating since I was 4. Her service to the community is to coach kids and teach them how to skate and give them the knowledge they need to be

successful in the sport and have a passion for it as well. She also does community service in the skating community by helping at different competitions, events, and showcases. The person that shaped me today showed me that I shouldn't give up even if you don't succeed.

One day two years ago, I was taking a skating test and I had to go in front of a panel of judges. I got really nervous and I was sick when I was skating it. I was about to get on the ice and my lace broke. I was terrified. I had to quickly race to put my laces back together minutes before going on the ice. She told me to do the program and relax but, I just couldn't stop freaking out. I got on the ice and it felt as if I had never skated before. My blades were dull and my skates didn't feel like my own. I was finally ready to start. I looked up and gave the signal to start my music. The music then started. I could feel the rhythm of the music move through my soul. I knew it was playing, but I was so scared and nervous that I couldn't hear the music. I started to skate and somehow my hearing came back to me. I started my program and I couldn't hit any jumps or spins. I finished the program and knew that I didn't pass. I was so mad at myself. I worked so hard and my nervousness got the best of me. My heart was beating so fast it felt like it was in my throat. Although I knew I messed up, I still had to hear what the judges had to say about my performance. To my surprise they told me that they knew I could do everything in the program. It was just that I let my nerves get the best of me. I got off the ice and my coach Renee told me that failing is just another reason to try harder. After listening to her advice, I was determined to do better. I worked on that program for a couple of weeks and then tested again and passed. This helped calm my nerves.

The lesson I learned from this experience was that failing is just another reason to try harder and to never give up. This lesson has helped me today in so many ways. It helped me deal with my nervousness when I do everyday life things. It helped me in skating because I worked that much harder at skating moves. This lesson also helped me in other sports such as basketball, soccer, and tennis because if I play against other teams and opponents and don't win, it only will help me get better long term. This person is meaningful to me today because she helps me improve in skating and is a very kind person. She gives me words of encouragement and is very helpful.

Katherine Ann: Ninth Grade

Elizabeth Borneman

Sometimes when we find ourselves in difficult, heart wrenching situations, we have trouble finding the positives in things. My little sister, Katherine Borneman, is one of the sweetest people I know. She is very involved with the S.T.A.R. program which stands for specialized, therapeutic, accessible recreation, and

adaptive sports, their goal is to give children with a wide range of challenges and disabilities, opportunities to do sports and other activities that otherwise wouldn't be available to them. Katherine also goes to Autism Speaks events and with them she gets to experience many new things. Katherine also goes to church often and loves volunteering at the shelter. While she's there, plays with animals, preferably cats. She participates in local fundraisers and annual activities in the community, such as The Fourth of July water fight and St.Pauls Fair. She has impacted me and the rest of my family greatly, with her genuine, and kind spirit. She always finds the positive in things, and lights the room up with her smile.

When Katherine was diagnosed with Autism, there was a whirlwind of emotions associated with it. As a family, we felt that we needed to shield her from the world. We had no idea of the struggles she would have to overcome and the problems she would face. She now is able to handle uncomfortable situations with a positive attitude. One example of this is the first day of school, she was very nervous and had no idea what the day would hold, or what difficult situations would lay ahead. In her first class of the day, she didn't know anyone, and got very anxious and uneasy. Throughout the day she had lots of trouble adapting to the new environment, trouble navigating her classes in a new place, and finding out what spaces were quiet and peaceful. For her it was like a crazy tornado spinning around her with no shelter to go to. In the mid point of the day, her TA brought her to the hallway and Katherine discussed her frustrations and made a game plan for tackling her last few classes with grace. After this talk she opened up to her peers and was laughing and having fun like any other normal kid. At the end of the day she made new friends and came home with a smile on her face. She was ecstatic and couldn't wait to tell us about all the great things she did and the people she met. As always, despite the challenges she faced, she did a great job communicating how she felt and becoming her happy self at the end of it all.

She has made a huge impact on me, and in my life today she has helped me as I have struggled recently with finding reasons to persevere and be happy. But, when I think of her during those hard times I remember that the simple things in life can make you the happiest person alive. Everyday I think about this lesson, especially while participating in sports. Before, it used to be really easy for me to get down on myself for doing things wrong. But now I look at the things I've done right and the ways that I can improve. Without out Katherine, I know for a fact that I would almost never find the positive things in life. I am forever grateful for the lessons she taught me. She may never know the impact she has had, or may not understand it, but I will always remember this lesson. It is because of her that I have done some pretty good things lately. She is the reason I strive for greatness as well as why I now find the positive things in life. Now, I find the sunshine on the dark, rainy days.

Who Inspires Me: 9th grade

Annabelle Betar

Lessons are what teaches us and makes us better people in life. My inspiration is Cole Betar, he is a surf instructor at Cisco and has volunteered for many things. He is my super funny, caring, and very outgoing, older brother. Cole has and will always have my back and would do anything for me without a doubt. He has taught me multiple lessons in my lifetime that have changed me for the better. Cole has inspired me to do more things outside of my comfort zone and to be more outgoing.

Throughout the years, Cole has shaped me and changed my view on how I do things everyday. This year I have done the most things out of my comfort zone. There is no one memory of Cole in particular that sticks out, but I have looked back and reflected on what he has said to me in the past. When I was younger I was shy and would hangout with only one friend. Ever since I can remember Cole had pushed me and questioned why I only hung out with one friend. At the time, I would get offended and tell him to leave me alone. Now that I am older, I see things differently and appreciate him, I realized he was only looking out for me. I have made more friends and hang out with people outside of school more frequently. When the time would come to go to my friends house, I would not want to go at all. Then I would think of what Cole would say to me, "Just try it, you will have a lot of fun, you will regret if you don't." Once I would get there, I realized Cole was right, I was fine and had a great time. If he hadn't pushed me in the beginning I wouldn't have branched out and be the same person I am now. This year I decided to try a new sport, it was extremely outside of my comfort zone. While signing up I was beyond nervous, I had nerves rushing through my body, but then I remembered Cole had tried out for basketball last year and didn't make the team. After remembering this, I made the realization that I will be okay if I don't make the team. Also I am not the only one who is nervous, lots of other kids are in the same boat as I am. Cole has also made me more outgoing through his actions. When my family and I would go out to a restaurant, on vacation, or anywhere, I would watch Cole making conversation with strangers and wish I could be like him and do that without feeling awkward.

In conclusion, this lesson Cole taught me, has shown me it is good to do things I may not like or is out of my comfort zone. I can't say I don't want to or don't like something unless I have tried. I am very grateful that Cole has taught me this lesson, it will always stick with me and has made me who I am today, it has been beneficial to me. If Cole hadn't taught me to get out of my comfort zone I think I would have a very boring life. As my life goes on and something I am unsure of comes up I will think of Coles words of encouragement to me. I will carry this lesson into my adult life and hopefully pass it on to my kids.

Seconds: 9th grade

Evan Belanger

Time never stops, it just keeps plugging away forever with no end, and with each second gone, that is one second you could spend making the world a better place, one second you could spend doing something you love, being with somebody you love. One second can make all the difference in the world. The unpreventable advancement of time leading us all toward an inevitable death is what keeps us going, what persuades us to make the best of the minimal amount of time we have in this life. This is why we need to make the best of the time we have. I have learned this lesson the hard way, multiple times as a matter of fact, but the one time that really stands out to me is when my best friend, Marcus Toney, moved to California.

The air was really humid, dense almost, and I had known that Marcus's parents had been looking for a new place in California for a while, they were just waiting for someone to purchase their house on island. It was the day before I left for Alaska, the last day I would have with Marcus and his family before they left. I, of course, hadn't known this. It was just like any other day to me, I got up early to catch the morning cartoons before going out to play with Marcus, his brother Jayden, and his little sister Jenna. I watched a few episodes of *Spongebob* and heard voices next door, as our houses were literally three steps apart. I knew Marcus wasn't up yet, since, as I had told him many times before, he *really* needed his beauty sleep and he was always the last one up in his family. I sauntered to the kitchen to get some cereal out of the homemade wooden cabinet that stood next to the sink. I snatched a bowl from the same cabinet, on the opposite side, and poured the cereal in. They were Panda Puffs if I remember correctly, a staple cereal in my household at the time. I grabbed the milk out of the refrigerator and dumped it into the bowl whilst listening to the verdict of Judge Judy that my parents had apparently turned on. The second I jostled some silverware around to get a spoon, knowing there was food, my puppy ambled out to the kitchen, putting less and less weight on her right hip. I reached down and ran my hands through her smooth, lax hair, and gave her a few Puffs. I wandered into the Living room to find Jayden at my back door. I opened the door and promptly asked "Is Marcus awake yet?" He told me yes, he was making Portuguese bread, another prominent breakfast at the two houses. I told him I'd be out in about five minutes, after I finished breakfast and put some shorts on instead of my long pajama bottoms. I rushed to the kitchen and gobbled down my cereal, milk running down my chin, and jumped into some shorts, purposefully waking up my sister just to get on her nerves. I chucked my bowl into the sink and rushed out the door into the bright rays of sun that temporarily blinded me on my way up the stairs. Once I was out of my house, I opened the fence that surrounded my yard, the squeak of worn down wood on worn down wood coming right after the third inch or so. After living there for so long, listening to the fence squeak for years and years, I knew exactly when it was

going to squeak, and by how much force was exerted on the push, I could tell who had opened it. Once I was outside the fence, I hopped onto one of the rock slabs that was placed in the ground for stepping stones. With one daring leap, I was on the second step of the two step staircase in front of the Toney household. I did the all-to-familiar seven knock ritual, pounding harder with each knock. I could see Jayden bouncing up to the door. He looked at me for a second and took off like a bat out of hell out of the door shouting “C’mon Marcus!” on his way out. Marcus looked up and bolted out the door chasing after his brother. Without saying a word, the game had begun. We were all extremely fast for our ages, and hard to catch. I could hear Jayden screaming and laughing as he got chased by his brother, around my house. I waited at the edge of the fence, and once Jayden came tearing around the corner I took off, gaining on him and eventually taking him over, right by the holly bush that stood out front. I threw n the afterburners and once I got back around to the door, I pushed on the fence to make it squeak which tricked Marcus into thinking I had gone inside the fence. I hid behind the shed and listened for the squeak of Marcus going inside the fence. Soon enough it happened, and I chuckled to myself. I could hear the fence squeak as Marcus flew around the corner, a race car chasing for first place. I had that sixth sense feeling that he was coming to look where I was, so I bolted, and like a dog chasing a cat, tag was on again. This went on for around an hour, and once we got tired of tag we sat on the sun-bleached front porch steps. “What do you wanna do?” came up several hundred times before I went inside to make lemonade. We were all dripping with sweat because of the heat and exercise combination, so I brought out popsicles to cool us down. We decided to go into my house and play Just Dance with my sister and Jayden. I only danced to songs sung by men, which for some odd reason made me feel more masculine even though I was a 13 year old boy playing Just Dance, which is not very masculine in and of itself. After what seemed like a surplus of my sister winning, I went to the bathroom and noticed the sun setting. After a whole day of not eating, us esurient children ravaged the house looking for food. Luckily, another household delicacy of grilled pizza was cooking outside on the grill. We decided to go outside and play Kill The Man, a game where the goal is to tackle other people to get a football. Jayden ran inside his house to get a unicorn mask he received from his cousin. The person with the ball had to put on the mask to make the game extra hard. After tackling and getting tackled countless times, it was Jayden’s turn to wear the mask. He slid it on, seemingly unaware that his brother was about to pummel him to the ground for the ball.. Marcus always went a little hard on his brother, as most brothers do, and was out for blood. As Jayden was being trailed by his brother, behind the setting sun, I was sitting on the third step on my porch sipping at a glass of water I had just gone inside to get. Marcus raced after his brother, right on his heels. Jayden tried to pick up his pace, but because he was already going as fast as he possibly could, he physically couldn't get any faster. With the nose of the unicorn mask bouncing around and the only way to see through it is through the nostrils, he couldn't see where he was going. Right in front of the holly bush out front, there is a flagpole, I watched and I could see it coming from a mile away, but I was

paralyzed, speechless in anticipation for what was about to happen. *THUD*. At full speed, Jayden had sprinted straight into the flagpole, crumbling once he struck it. Soon after, we were again on the step, dying of laughter, unable to breathe. I made up an excuse to go back inside so I could watch TV and we all headed in for the night.

Looking back, I wish I had spent just a little longer with them, the TV show I wanted to watch doesn't matter now, but they do. I wish I had stayed outside and spent time with them. Even if it was just a second, a singular second. It would have made all the difference in the world. After that moment, I've learned to try and spend as much time as I can with those that I love and I try to make the best of every moment I have here on this earth with my fragile life. Even if it is just one second. Life only lasts for a miniscule amount of time before it's all over, and you can't go back to change things. To this day, before I don't do something, I ask myself, "Will I regret not doing this?" If the answer is yes, I'm going to do it. Life is too short to have regrets. It is also filled to the brim with seconds. What you decide to do with those seconds is the defining factor in whether or not you have regrets at the end of your time here. I suggest you heed my advice, because once it's over, it's over, and you'll wish you had done something with those seconds.

My Grandfather Lesson: 9th grade

Mimi Belanger

Don't let someone else dictate your day is something that my grandfather used to always say to me when I was younger. My grandfather, Albert Coffin, one of Nantucket's shellfish warden for 20 years. Also, a member in the coast guard right out of high school for 4 years. He was also a carpenter for many years during his life until he retired. But, personally, he impacted me by always telling me not to let others control you and always do what you want to do. He would always tell me to forget about other people and to do my own thing which has helped shape me into the person I am today.

The first time I remember him telling me that was about 10 years ago. Due to my parents both working, I was at his house along with my older sister. We were sitting on his baby blue, embroidered couch that had a tan blanket over that kept falling over so we would had to keep pulling it up. We were most likely watching Baseball with Tom and Jerry on during the commercial breaks. My sister was doing homework while I was talking with my grandfather and playing with a dog toy that did flips. At that time, my sister and I would go over many days after school. One day, I was upset because someone took my turn during school. I was only about 5 so my problems were much different than what my grandfather was used to hearing with my sister, parents, and his friends. After, about 30 minutes of complaining, he finally looked at me and said: "Don't let someone dictate your day". At the moment, I realized it wasn't a big deal. I went back to school with the new

motto and I've been trying to live it ever since. I used to and still do base what I do and how I feel on what others want me to do and how they want me to feel. So my day was mostly what someone else wanted and not what I wanted. As if they were living through me, which isn't a fun way to live one hundred percent of the time. As I grew up and kept hearing him say this to me and others around me I will always remember this phrase and I try to live up to it. As a matter of fact, there have been many days when something happens to me and I want to just stop and be in a bad mood, but then I think about what he said to me and I toughen up and try to move past it. He has taught me throughout the years to move past what others say and stick to what I want.

The lesson my grandfather taught me many years ago was meaningful to me then and still is very meaningful to me today, because it taught me many things. First, he taught me not to worry about what other people do to you and worry about yourself. Second, he taught me not to copy other people and stick to my own, I'm the only one in charge of my life so I better make it count. Third, don't dwell on the past, if someone did something to you try and move past it. My grandfather has taught me many things that I'm still trying to put into my daily life in the present. Not only to make me a better person, but to make me who I want to be. And all I can do is thank my grandfather.

Alex Grant: 9th grade

Max Beebe

When life gets tough, I have learned that you have to keep pushing forward and caring for others, even if it's not easy. The man that inspired me to think this way was my Grandfather Alex Grant. Alex Grant was such a kind, gentle, creative man, he would always put others before himself. He lived in Maryland and we made many visits to see him when I was younger. Some things that remind me of Maryland are the smell of the art studio. The studio was my Grandfather's playground, that's where he created all of his artwork. I also remember the taste of the crab chips. We always had crab chips when I went to Maryland. Lastly, I remember the heat of Maryland, Sometimes, it could get up to around 100 degrees, and it felt as hot as coal. A devastating diagnosis of mesothelioma may cause some people to give up, but this was not the case with my Grandfather. He was diagnosed with mesothelioma when I was less than a year old, which is a cancer that affects the lining of the lungs, heart, or abdomen. He lived with the illness for over eight years, and he really helped to shape who I have become today. When my Grandfather was sick it didn't stop him from caring for his family, and he continued his work as an artist. His artwork was very unique, it was almost as if it came to life. He showed me that each day matters. My Grandfather knew that his illness was fatal, but this didn't stop him from enjoying life and being such a positive role model. Without this man in my life, I'm not sure I would recognize how

important kindness is. I learned that if he didn't give up with all the odds against him, when things get tough for me, I should never give up.

My Grandfather has inspired me and taught me many things in life. One specific event was when I was about four or five years old. We had spent a couple summers in Maryland at my Grandparent's house because my mom wanted to help take care of her parents. I remember being afraid to try to swim. About a year before, I didn't have any experience with swimming and I fell into a pool and I had to be rescued by my father. I was always nervous to try and swim after that, and just the sight of the water scared me. That summer, my Grandfather encouraged me to keep trying. By the end of that summer, I was much more comfortable in the water, and I was as fast a fish. I definitely wouldn't have gotten there without my Grandfather. Some words that he told me that have stuck with me through my life are, "you can do anything if you practice." These words have helped me to improve at multiple things like soccer, basketball, learning to snowboard, and my school work. Sometimes when I'm struggling to learn something new, I remember hearing what my Grandfather said, and it pushes me to keep trying.

Another impact that my Grandfather had on me came from watching how he acted during the summers I spent there. My Grandmother was recovering from a kidney transplant because of her polycystic kidney disease and all complications that go with it. Every morning, he would bring my grandmother breakfast in bed. He took care of basically everything around the house. For example, the yard work, cleaning, cooking, the taxes, and much more. What surprised me the most was that he stayed positive through it all. My family and I believe that he stayed alive a couple extra years, just to take care of my Grandmother. My Grandfather was nice to everyone he came in contact with and he cheered everybody up. I was inspired by this because even though he was very sick, he was making so many people happy.

The importance of the lessons that my Grandfather taught me was to be kind and help other people as much as I can. Also to keep trying and working at things even when it gets tough. I think almost everyday, there is something I struggle with that I want to give up on. Whether it is studying for a bio test, or learning a new skill in soccer. My Grandfather's helping and loving attitude has really shaped who I am today. I always do my best to live my life in a way that would make him proud. I am lucky to have had such a great Grandfather who has influenced me and taught me many things.

Sisters: 11th grade

Elizabeth Freed

It was three years ago that I first set foot into the intimidating hallways of Nantucket High School. I was scared and excited for my first day, something I had been anticipating since I was a mere elementary school student. I remember an unwavering feeling of anxiousness hovered over me, as I navigated my way through the vast sea of students from class to class for the first time. As the teachers would go through their class lists, it was almost a guarantee that when they called out, “Elizabeth Freed”, at least one of them would ask, “Are you Samantha’s sister?” and I would reply with “Yes, I’m Sam’s sister”, with a smile as if by routine. I was used to it by now, most people remember Samantha even though we’re six years apart. Sam has always been in my mind, a magnet; people are always drawn to her. Maybe it’s her outspoken personality, her bountiful humor, or her deep empathy and understanding for those around her.

As an older sister, she has always been someone I can follow blindly, and look up to as a role model. She has paved the way for me, and gone through many trials and tribulations to make my life a little bit easier, and with that she’s taught me many unforgettable life lessons I will never take for granted.

This past Summer when I got my job as a dock attendant at The Nantucket Boat Basin, I got more than just a summer job. I was given the chance to spend my summer working 6 days a week alongside my sister. It was a learning experience for me since I was completely new to the job. I was extremely impressionable, and Sam who has over 7 years as an experienced dock attendant, took the time to show me how to tie up the boats correctly and told me that “It’s better to take time and do something correctly than to do it wrong.” The other Staff members at The Boat Basin absolutely adored Samantha, and to me it seemed like she was a part of another family. She knew all the customers and remembered them from the past summers before, she really knew what she was doing. At first I wasn’t confident in my own abilities, I thought that no matter how hard I tried I would never be able to live up to my sister. I still had so many questions, and was scared that I wasn’t good enough. Sam reassured me and told me that being good at something comes with lots of practice and to ask questions when I had them. She taught me that I am enough and that I’ll be able to live up to my potential through the use of hard work and determination. I’m glad that she was there for me, because I probably never would have realized this important lesson without her.

Sam continues to set examples for me in everything she does. She left the island, and attended college at UMass Amherst, where she got her degree in public health. She makes it possible for someone like me to believe they can go to college and succeed, even when it feels like the whole world is telling them they can’t do it. When I was a little kid I was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, also known as ADHD. This made it more difficult for me to focus and concentrate in school. ADHD is an obstacle I’ve had to face day to day in my

life, but I don't let it hold me back. Just when I felt like I couldn't achieve my goals and that I was worthless and thought I should give up, Sam was there for me. She also has ADHD and is living proof of what being successful looks like despite having personal setbacks. She has given me the hope and strength to be able to aim high in life. I embrace my Adhd, it's a part of who I am. Without it I wouldn't be the creative, random, complex person I am today.

Not only has Sam helped set many examples for me, she's also one of the only people I can comfortably confide in. She's someone I can have complete trust in, and go to for sisterly advice. She's showed me how to be a hard worker, loyal friend, and a compassionate learner. Without her I wouldn't possess as much confidence in myself or have the many qualities that I've always admired her for. I'm more than lucky to have someone like that in my life because there's so many people who aren't as fortunate as I am.

Silent Battles: 12th Grade

Britney Anderson

People are quick to judge others without knowing them. My original judgement of two girls was simple, full of anger and sadness without reason. I had judged them incompletely, without knowing their stories. I had never taken the time to consider that the emotions they projected were derived by painful experiences. Getting to deeply know these girls shaped who I am today. I now know that there is always more to a story. My friendships with them has shown me that everyone faces challenging experiences. Now I know, whether you portray your life as a ray of sunshine or as a storm, everyone faces obstacles behind closed doors. Both of these girls come from broken homes and damaged families. They have both had troubled childhoods, which I never would have expected. One girl lives with burning rage, and one is drowning in despair.

The girl sinking into a sea of darkness, has to come home to her heartbroken, and tormented, mother. She hears her mother's sobs. Tears rush down both sides of her swollen face. An artificial smile is flashed. At public events, her parents, smile and act cheerful. Both of them wear masks and parade around like they are genuinely happy. They hide the darkness. When they get home, the tears rush down again. Hiding the despair is no longer shocking, but merely a recurring event. Her father cheats on her mother. She loves him and he loves his own desires. They're heartbroken by this scandal. Her father neglects her. He doesn't know her. He supports her financially, but has been incapable of playing the father role. Her father is unaware of any of her interests. He doesn't know what makes her happy. He doesn't know what makes her sad. He doesn't believe she's his child. All she feels is rejection. He makes her feel unwanted. She tries to be the perfect daughter to be acceptable in his sights. He makes her isolate herself from others. She's lonely. He's the cause of her trust

issues. Because of him she doesn't know compassion or affection. She feels hollow and meaningless. The words worthless and no value spin in her mind. His neglect makes her fearful of the world. Struggling to make new friends is common for her because she fears letting people in. She has been prescribed medication for depression. She has to take pills in effort to feel emotion, emotion which her dad stole from her life. She's ignorant to happiness. She can't remember what joy feels like. As soon as she enters the door to her house, a weight crushes her heart. The house doesn't feel like home. Her mind goes grey when she approaches. Everything is dismal. Life has no meaning. She feels no purpose. The sorrow in her eyes indicates her broken soul. When her father is present and not cheating, he abuses her mother. He chokes her. He hits her. He beats her. He gets the nearest sharp object and hurts her. She wishes to stop feeling misery. She desires to feel something stronger than sorrow and despair. All she feels is hopelessness and emptiness. She wishes for an end and dreams of death.

The girl bursting with hatred in her heart has to go home to her depressed mother and abusive father. The bitterness in one girl's heart is derived from the pain that her father burdened her with. To grow up witnessing her mother's pool of tears when he cheated on her. When he pulled a knife on her, she was there watching the burning fear in her mother's eyes. I suppose she heard silence as her mother shrieked, being crippled by the sight. She had to feel the terror in her soul when she heard the thumps and lashes of the hands he put on her mother. Doors would slam, items would shatter, hearts would break, and physical pain would rise, but never be superior to the emotional agony. Objects would fly across the room in a projectile manner from furious throws. Glass would shatter. The sharp crack and boom would give her goosebumps. She felt cold. Terrified. She heard the miscellaneous profanity and outrage in their voices. The stomping indicated the darkness approaching. She heard the footsteps continue to grow louder. As the volume maximized the panic increased in her heart and she did nothing. She stood back in anguish. She felt tremendous heartache when it was over. The terror would leave, but it was always temporarily. When that dreadful fright left her body she still was never at ease. This only put her in more agitation. She felt scorching pain and fire on her heart for the pain her father had put her and her mother through. When she glances at her mother she feels emptiness and stinging regret. Her heart is filled with bitterness towards her father. She views her father as toxic. She refuses to ever look him in the eye again. She never speaks to him. She wishes death upon him. She carves her skin, in efforts to make the physical pain from cutting overpower the emotional pain he's placed upon her. She makes herself bleed. She desires to take her own life.

This experience of getting to know these girls completely, is significant to me because it reassured that everyone fights battles behind closed doors. This was even more notable to me because, I found their stories relatable. It made me think that they easily could have judged me incompletely in the way I did them, and never know that we have fought the same battles. It allowed me to stop judging people before knowing their story.

Discovering these personal experiences provided me with a better understanding of why so many kids grow up without relationships with their fathers. If I had just stuck with my initial judgement of them and never gotten to know them, I would not have realized how much more there is to a person than I first imagined.

Don't Hold It In: 12th grade

Marjory Nolasco Ramirez

“I am not going over there, are you kidding? After what she said to me?” I said, speaking spitefully to my best friend.

“She didn't mean that, plus it was over a month ago! You can't take stuff like that to heart, she's sorry and you can't sit alone forever!” she replied walking away to sit with her. I knew the right thing to do was to go with her, yet, I couldn't move my legs and my body ached at the thought of even sitting at the same table as her. So I sat alone, while the rest of my friends sat with her.

Over several years, I replayed this conversation over and over in my head, but now I replay it with laughter; I was so consumed in how people saw me, that I didn't care how many countless lunches I spent alone. I wanted to convince people that I was strong, and I was a force to be reckoned with, at least that's what I was telling myself.

Growing up with strong women beside me, I learned more from some than others; One woman that I got most of my tendencies from was my aunt Felix. She was a traditional woman who had her priorities set straight, she took care of my brothers and I when I was young, so she was very intimidating. Getting to know her for three summers gave me just the amount of time to comprehend her personality. She was the type of person that wouldn't forget what you did wrong or even forgive you for it. I learned those characteristics rather quickly, and incorporated it in my life. Subconsciously, I started to get mad at people over simple things, and hold long grudges just like she did. I stuck with these qualities for years, until she passed away; on that day, my mother couldn't stop thinking about how my aunt couldn't get on good terms with her sister before she died. She had not talked to her sister for three years prior to her death because of some silly argument that she couldn't forgive her for. She pushed almost everyone she loved away from her because of her pride. I took this day as a message from her telling me that I had to change my ways, I had to learn to forgive, respect and overcome.

I started off with helping myself first, I had to learn why I held grudges. As I spent endless nights thinking about this, I finally found out why; I felt weak, I was insecure with myself and I felt that if I couldn't get someone else to respect me, I couldn't respect myself. I worked on these qualities and eventually overcame

them, I started to raise my self esteem and apologize when I was wrong. I started to understand the perspective of people around me, I would think before I spoke and this cleared by mind of stress. I brought colors into my black and white world and it felt great; to this day, I feel that alleviating myself from suppressing emotions was the best decision I could have made, and I'm sure my aunt would agree too.

This Toxic Town : 12th Grade

Barynn Boucher

My family has been Nantucket natives for six generations and counting. My mother takes pride in the fact that her relatives built this town. They whaled for the town, they fought the great fire, and my great great grandfather was the last lighthouse keeper. When people ask me about Nantucket, that is what most would expect to hear about their favorite vacation destination. Tourists do not want to hear about the immobile poisonous community that tears families apart. People don't want to hear about the town officials wasting town time at the Chicken Box or about the kilos of cocaine that vanished out of the evidence locker in the 70s. People especially don't care about how this communities inappropriate behaviour as a whole has affected the future generations of Nantucket.

The summer of 2016 was a time when my life was a hard thing to watch and be a part of. I was using drugs and alcohol like everyone around me in this community, even though I was only fifteen. I felt accepted for a short time. This alone shows a lot about the toxic town of Nantucket, children feel pressured to do drugs and alcohol early on to feel accepted. My best friend of thirteen years was concerned with my actions. We'll call her Mya; Mya was worried I was making mistakes. She had found out that one night when my "other friends" had left me in town drunk, her older brother wanted "to make sure I get home safe". We'll call him Ted. Seems harmless right? I had known Ted and Mya since I was about two or three, I considered them my second family. I want to talk about Ted and the MANY men in the community like him. But specifically Ted and what he put me through as a young girl in this intimate, unjust, idolized community.

That night in town I was at the bus station waiting for something or someone to tell me to move or go home. In the moment it seemed like the perfect thing to do. Ted got off the bus and saw me. He got me on my bus with me and walked me home, it seemed very normal. I went to bed and he left, of course only after he told me I was beautiful. Yuck. I remember saying thanks probably slurring and I went in. I thought that was like the end of that, which didn't even really start yet to begin with. The next day he came to my house with Mya and just chilled. Ted was eighteen at the time so it seemed a little weird but he wasn't focused on me. It was like he had been my best friend too or was trying. Over the beginning of the summer Ted got comfy at my house even

around my mother. He made sure my mother trusted him. He had my whole family, specifically me wrapped around his dirty little finger. Things took a turn for the worse towards the middle of the summer. Ted had convinced me to “hookup” with him sometimes and he would bring me free weed and alcohol. The sad thing is at this time my friends were being pressured into very similar situations, as almost every young girl in this community has. It seemed fine to me. “Normal”. The summer of 2016 felt like a trance, almost as if it should never have happened. That summer my self worth depleted to almost nothing. I let him have his ways with me for too long. I told him it was wrong but he continued to get me drunk and fucked up only to try to fuck me. Some nights he wouldn't take no for an answer. ALL that summer I treated myself like I wasn't human.

Mya found out about me and Ted and was furious at me. I tried to explain to her that I didn't want it to ever happen the way it did. I plead that I was breaking it off, I vowed that it would never happen again. At least with my permission. At this time summer vacation was ending and school was starting. Mya and I were sophomores and Ted was a Senior. Once school started Ted began harassing me at school, trying to talk to me and touch me. After I had told him to leave me alone and that summer was over, we were over. I could see his blood boil. I was at cheer practice after school and some of the older teammates asked me if I was dating Ted. I got so embarrassed that they even asked that, I put it in the back of my head. Just like I did with Ted. I didn't hear from Ted for a while after that incident in school, I figured it was over. I was so grateful that Mya wasn't mad at me then. I thought we could move on and grow from it as best friends. I was honestly humiliated with myself when I had gotten my head on straight.

On an early Saturday morning after partying with a few of my close friends, we were being stupid in my basement. The basement door to outside was open, it was an early September night. My closest friends would come in and out as they pleased. So I was shocked when Ted walked into my basement and sat down like he was my best friend. We asked him to leave practically immediately and he was out of our sight, out of my basement. Very shortly after my friends left because I was passing out. Before they left, they got me in my bed. Safe and sound. I floated into dreams of bliss and joy... sweat dripping in my face and the smell of hot trash woke me up. He was already inside me. Already taking what I am supposed to give. I said no. Over and over and OVER. All he said was to stop moving, and SHUT UP! I opened my mouth to scream but he covered it and held me down until I stopped fighting. I let him finish, I didn't want to be hurt anymore. In what felt like a decade, Ted got off and left. Said nothing just like he came in, sneaking and creeping.

In the shower the water couldn't get hot enough, I couldn't scrub hard enough. I still felt him on me, in me, all around me. How would I be able to trust anyone ever again? How can I show my face in public? What do I do? Do I tell Mya? Do I tell my mom? Will she be mad at me? Will Mya be mad at me? Should I say nothing and act like nothing happened? What else would I do? I had never been in shock before. The next

morning I woke up in the bathroom. I glanced in the mirror and saw someone I hadn't seen before. A girl that was broken in every way imaginable. A girl marked with the sign of a victim. Victimized and branded.

I thought I could act like nothing happened and move on but I knew I couldn't. I knew I couldn't after going back to school the next Monday the whole school was asking, why would I let Ted smash? I cracked by the end of the day. I had told my friends. I went home and told my mom. We called the police and pressed charges. I only wish It ended there.

...

Because Ted was on the football team and had told every guy on the team, that I was letting him smash. What felt like the whole school, turned on me overnight. Within weeks I had gone from varsity cheerleader to practical drop out. I was starting to receive messages on social media telling me it was my fault and I should just kill myself. It was so much pain because our community is such a small knit community whether we like it or not. I continued to try to go to school but I would start to have panic attacks at the front door and collapse. My last day at Nantucket High School that year, someone threw their hot lunch at me. I left and didn't look back for almost a year.

During that time I was hospitalized over four times for attempted suicide. I was diagnosed with PTSD, anxiety, and chronic depression. For the longest time I didn't think I would make it past 18. It was the toughest fight of my life but through many hospitalizations and extensive therapy I made it out. And look at me now, I actually did three years of school over two years to catch up with my class. I will be fighting my interior demons with Ted for the rest of my life. Ted taught me that you always have to ready for the unexpected. And ESPECIALLY trust NO ONE, ESPECIALLY the closest people to you.

Because Of Her: 12th Grade

Faith Hensley

I always wondered why she never spoke much. She was timid and stared down at her shoes to avoid eye contact. Her dark hair covered her face and through the spirals of curls, curious brown eyes peered out. She is a bit older than the rest of my grade. She was different, not in the sense of strangeness but a fresh type of different. Her tanned face wore no emotion, her lips wore no smile. The times she did speak, her voice was soft and barely louder than a whisper. The words that would flow from her mouth were either "yes" or "no", nothing more, nothing less. This was my first time having a class with her. She sat in the desk furthest to the back, the teacher welcomed us warmly. Our first activity was to go around the room and introduce ourselves while

including a fun fact and something we like to do. When it was her turn, she whispered her name and the rest of her sentence was just mouthed. From there on out, I had one goal. I wanted to know more about this girl.

I moved my seat to the back the next day. I pushed my desk closer to her while respecting her personal space. I would often try to start small conversations with her. I would make sure to ask general questions so she wouldn't have to feel uncomfortable. I like to say that at that point we were somewhat friends. Our friendship continued on that way. I'd ask my questions and she'd nod or shake her head, while at other times she'd verbally answer me. Just when I thought that our friendship was progressing, it suddenly felt as if she was pushing me further away. I didn't understand it. Did she not want to be my friend? Did I come off as creepy? That had to be it. I did move my seat fairly close to her, I did somewhat invade her space. She's probably uncomfortable. Thoughts bombarded my mind. As the weeks went by, I moved back to the front. The girl still unfazed didn't seem to mind.

My other friends were weirded out by her. She never made sense to them, but that's what I liked. Her quietness was loud and urged to tell a story that only my ears were waiting to hear. I told my parents about this girl. How for some reason I found her so interesting, and different. My mother's answer was, "Invite her over." I was ecstatic. I was already picturing the perfect hangout time. We'd have popcorn, watch a movie, gossip then laugh about what we just gossiped about. Everything would be great. I even made a homemade invitation that at the bottom I wrote in bold black letters, **PS: NO ONE ELSE IS COMING** As sketchy, as that may sound now. I just wanted her to feel comfortable, this would be the time she'd open up to me.

That day, the car ride to school took extra long. I smoothed down the folds of my wrinkled linen top and impatiently tapped my foot. Out of all the days for traffic, why this day? In my clammy hands was a badly folded envelope with her name written largely. This was it. I ran to my first class, eyes quickly darting to the back. My heart dropped, but not just a little plop to the ground. Instead, it plummeted from my chest forming into a big puddle below me. She wasn't here. I took a deep breath in and sat in my original spot. Everything was going down the drain. The picture of us separated by a big bowl of popcorn as we laughed at Spongebob became a misty cloud in my mind. Every time the door would open, my head would pop up. Disappointed, I'd sulk back down resting my head on the desk. She never misses a day of school. That wasn't like her. The class seemed eerie without her, almost as if she'd never existed. No binder, or loose paper to mark her presence.

A week went by and still no sign of her. I had no way of contacting her. Which made me question the type of "friendship" we actually had. Was I imagining it the whole time? She returned to school that Wednesday. Her hair pushed back this time, revealing her in a way I never saw before. She sat in her usual seat. I turned around and waved. I was so happy to see her. She returned my gesture with a small wave and the slightest of smiles. It was now or never. I pulled the crumpled invitation from my bag and hurried to the back

sitting in my abandoned seat. I laid it on her desk, she nodded acknowledging it and folded it up neatly stuffing it in a pocket of her bag.

That Saturday, I waited for her. I waited for what seemed like an eternity. My phone vibrated, it was an unknown caller. Usually, I'd never pick up these calls, but something urged me to answer. It was her. Her voice soft and low, she explained why she couldn't come. She told me about how her father had recently passed away, and she'd been struggling with depression. She asked me not to pity her, and for us to continue on the way we were. I was disappointed she didn't come but happy she told me this. Even though, we'll probably never have the day I imagined. She still impacted me in ways words cannot describe. She made me experience sadness, happiness, and confusion by only sharing a few words. She taught me that everyone has a story, but not everyone is willing to share. I still talk to her to this day, her quiet shell has somewhat broken. She is surrounded by her own group of friends now. She'll never really know how much her existence impacted me, and it's perfect that way.

fois pas manqué: 12th grade

Deshawan Burton

Most of the time when we are asked by someone to answer this great question about that special person who inspires us we find ourselves searching, but for this assignment, I knew who this person in an instant. He is a great friend of mine by the name of Nathan Maurer. I first met Nathan when we both entered the fourth grade and ever since then we have continued to be close friends. He is like no other person I know and would be hard for me to compare him with anyone else. I clearly recall the time when we went sledding and my hand became cold. Without hesitation, he took off his gloves and gave them to me to use. Or the times when we would talk with each other and he would say that he knew I could do better in anything that we tried.

Every year, I would play soccer in the spring and fall. The group of students that I had played soccer with was mostly consistent each year. But one year Nathan decided that he would join. At first this was no easy thing for him to do, due to the fact that had all been playing for years. He was just starting but this meant nothing to him. What he would struggle with I excelled at and the thing that I struggled with Nathan would excel at. Nathan was determined to learn as much as he could so I would practice with him sometimes that meant kicking the ball around or even just making passes. Nathan saw that I wasn't the fastest so he would take me on runs before practice so I would get in better shape. Nathan was so determined to become a better soccer player that he would later gain the attention of many coaches and would often be challenging me for that top playing position. When it came to school work, on the other hand, Nathan was a better student than I am. Unlike others, he never once used this to hurt me instead he would challenge me again by insisting that I should read

more books when I have free time. He also encouraged me to move from College Prep classes into Honors level courses. We would join the same school clubs and would even become leaders within them.

Nathan became president due to his leadership skill and with myself becoming the treasurer because I have always been interested in finance. On the weekends, he would pick me up so that we could go clean up parts of the Island. At a time when I felt most alone or just need someone that I could talk with I found Nathan standing by me. When he noticed that I had been having a bad day or had been getting affected by things in the past he was kind enough to drive over to my house just to check that things were all right. From times when we went seeking adventures on weekends or summer nights which didn't always end right because my parents would lock me out but he has always looked out for me and even provided me a place to stay. I found high school can either strengthen or weaken the bond that you share with friends, incite of this we have continued to still be great friends through the good and bad that has been thrown at us. Nathan has taught me true strength which starts with believing in one's self, responsibility in the form of being accountable for any action that I have committed, dedication in the way he was able to help me overcome my weaknesses and true friendship by always being there as a friend should be. My hope is that he will later have the chance to read what I have written to see that he has indeed changed and impacted my life for the better.

The Impact of a Humble Mentor: 12th Grade

Matthew Nesselrodt

As humans, there exists a need for societal acceptance. As children, we primarily learn how to behave from our parents, receiving punishment for what we do wrong, and reward for what we do right. We are primed to behave in a certain way, following conventional standards set by numerous generations of human kind. Sigmund Freud describes this priming through a process known as the superego. The superego is theorized to be a personality process responsible for dictating one's moral principles, learned from the parents, and learned from society. The need to exist as a unit of a group comes from the instinctual need to survive. As humans, the chance of survival dramatically increases when living symbiotically with others.

From the general inherent need of social acceptance stems the concept of the "role-model," which for the sake of this paper will be defined as a human being with whom another human being admires, respects, and attempts to model their behavior after. By modeling the behavior of the role-model, the person hopes to obtain

some of the qualities of the role-model. Role-models tend to be well-liked people who have navigated their ways to acceptance in a certain social sphere: the same sphere that the admirer wishes to be a part of.

The difficulty youth frequently face when picking role-models comes from the complexity of navigating personal identity. Why model the behavior of someone that exists in one social setting if you do not wish to exist as a part of that given social setting? As media continues to have an ever growing presence in our lives, children and adolescents are left to model their behavior and cultural ideologies after celebrities they are exposed too in popular culture.

I have always struggled to find a role-model. I do not yet know my place in society, but as an eighteen year old, I am just beginning to cross the threshold of what constitutes a significant member of society. Most functioning members of society that I know are through the public education system. The authority a student operates under serves as a barrier for self-identity. A student in grade school always exists under an external source of control.

But at Nantucket Community Television, I am an adult, working with another adult to further my knowledge of film production. Andrew Cromartie has taught me numerous things. He has taught me everything I know about film production. But more importantly, he has demonstrated one possible path of life that I may follow. Getting to know Andrew over the past three years has been wonderful. He has encouraged my creativity and passion for filmmaking and helped me understand the possibilities that exist for me within the field. Moreover, he has displayed unparalleled kindness on frequent occasion. Not only is he kind to me, but the way that he treats every community member that I have seen him interact with is truly admirable. I have worked with him on creative projects a number of times, as well as volunteered with him on occasion and helped serve as a part of a film-crew during the Nantucket Film Festival. Film and Television can be a stressful occupation, but every time anything goes wrong, Andrew is remarkably level-headed and calm. His ability to navigate the stresses of a live shoot impresses me and I hope to behave in a similar manner.

Andrew is a relatively young man with a humbled spirit, and he treats me with unrivaled respect. His humility enables a friendship that I have yet to have with any other adult. The mutual respect we share for one another reassures my faith in the validity of my competence. Andrew's ability to stay positive and enjoy life has given me hope as I struggle with the transition to what I previously believed to be a dark and dreary adulthood, full of serious conversations, and dreadful responsibilities. But now I am excited for the future and all of the opportunities I have. Andrew has given me another form of self-expression and supported me on multiple occasions as a writer, director, and actor. He has given me the tools to express myself and helped me to develop confidence in my abilities. This allows me to bring my ideas to life in ways I never previously thought possible. Without Andrew's continuous encouragement and support, I would have never considered film as a career option for myself. Now, the course of my life may forever be altered, and he played a hand in that.

Andrew exists in a satisfactory manner, effectively exemplifying a style of life in which my superego deems acceptable. More importantly, he has demonstrated one possible social sphere that I can become a part of. The world of film allows me to express my thoughts and emotions, sharing them with others. My ability to produce the internal musings of my mind is a gift that I will forever cherish: Andrew Cromartie gave me that gift.