

Kona-California Scholarship Essay

A unique aspect of being a high school student in Hawai'i is having the opportunity to experience native Hawaiian culture, which is still very alive and important. Students are given the privilege to participate in Hoe Wa'a- traditional canoe paddling. This prominent cultural activity allows young adults to not only participate in a rigorous extracurricular sport, but also to learn and embrace the ways of the Hawaiian culture. Aunty Maile, our head coach, always entwined traditional beliefs into every day of practice. "Respect yourself. Respect each other. Respect the aina (land). Respect the culture. Always be thankful for what you have." To me, paddling has become much more than just a sport. It's has given me a glimpse into a culture whose values I have come to incorporate into my own life. Not only have I learned the true meaning of 'ohana in this culture-rich community, but also to take risks and try new things. I am hardly the shy freshman I once was, and my morals, values, and beliefs have been greatly influenced in a very positive way through participating in canoe paddling. I now flourish through learning with an open mind, and at the end of the day, I always try to find reasons to be thankful for the beautiful life I have been living. In the words of my coach Aunty Maile, "always be thankful for what you have."

The people I have met throughout my life have really shown me what Hawaii is all about. The "Aloha spirit" that I have grown up with is something you don't find anywhere else; people here are friendly, generous, humble, and very loving. In a community like this, you always have good company and great times. It also makes taking chances and big steps in life much easier. Steps like joining Paddling, a sport that I had never done before in high school, and joining Key Club, a club that requires a type of person that I never knew I could grow to be. The other part of my life, the part spent at or close to home, has shown me beautiful and fragile life can be. A rainforest is a very pristine place, home to a countless array of species of plants and animals. A volcano has an amazing amount of raw power that can be felt just by viewing a venting lava lake from a mile away. I am so lucky to live in such a diverse place, where multiple cultures are weaved together to form a very unique and loving community.

My prospective major is Mechanical Engineering, which has always been a dream of mine. I love figuring out how anything works; understanding ideas and concepts are how I survive. I am also excited by the opportunities as a Mechanical Engineer to possibly create and/or refine technologies that can changed the way people live for the betterment of this world. That's the goal I am working towards. If I received this scholarship, it would help me get to the college of my dream and attain a quality education.

With this education I would love to come back to Hawai'i if the jobs are available and either work with the NASA branch that is stationed on Mauna Kea, or work with whatever renewable energy source companies there are on the islands to

help build a sustainable lifestyle for everyone on the islands. Sustainable technologies already exist, but they need to be refined and simplified for the public market. If they are not economical or easy to attain, they won't be used. It is up to prospective engineers like me to refine these technologies and take them a step further into the future.