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## 327 Miles of Life: College Admission Essay Sample

As we rode down the hill toward Henley Island and I caught my first glimpse of the boats, the food tents, and the hundreds of rowers, I realized that I now knew what it meant to have a life-changing experience. Over the last six weeks, I had been at a girls' summer camp called Row Ride Race. We spent every day rowing in the morning and cycling in the afternoon in order to prepare for the 327-mile bike ride to Saint Catherine's, Canada, where we planned to row in the Royal Canadian Henley. I learned a lot about myself over those six weeks, and I developed many qualities that I had previously lacked, such as patience, open-mindedness, and thoughtfulness.

During my four weeks in Saratoga, I lived and trained with nine other girls. At first I secluded myself because I felt that the others had little in common with me, and I was not open to the idea of making new friends. My goal was to become a better rower and further my athletic career in preparation for college. After a few days, however, I began to realize that my camp experience could be as rich as I made it. Moreover, sitting alone was not going to make me a well-rounded person. I slowly started to participate in group conversations and was pleasantly surprised to discover that we actually had a lot in common. As the weeks went by, I learned something from each of the other girls. The most important lesson was patience. Ironically, I learned that lesson from the one girl in the house who I wasn't able to befriend. We had our differences, but we recognized that even if we weren't ever going to be friends, we still needed to be civil to each other so that we could row together.

As we biked to Canada, I realized that the different parts of our ride reflected the different parts of my time at camp. The first day was entirely uphill and a constant struggle to keep going. That portion of the ride reminded me of my first week at camp when I just wanted to go home. The second and third days were primarily flat terrain with a few hills, mirroring the period when I started to settle in, make friends, and enjoy the experience. The final day was exhilarating but bittersweet because it represented the closing of camp. About three miles from the end of the ride, however, I was involved in a crash with two other bikers. The experience was nonetheless important because it showed me that the only thing to do when you get knocked down is to get back up and keep on going. Life is about taking risks. If you never take any chances, then you will always wonder what might have been. Of all of the risks I have ever taken, attending the camp certainly contributed the most to building my character and making me a stronger person. Because of my experiences there, I now feel that I have the capability to genuinely care for those around me and learn from their experiences, and for that I am truly grateful.

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